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Pwo Karen writing systems 2:
Western Pwo Karen

Atsuhiko Kato

Abstract

Western Pwo Karen is a dialectal group of Pwo Karen spoken in the Ayeyarwady Delta, Myanmar. This article discusses the correspondence between orthography and phonology in this language. The Christian Pwo Karen Script is used as the writing system for Western Pwo Karen. This script was originally created by Baptist missionaries for Eastern Pwo Karen. Western Pwo Karen and Eastern Pwo Karen differ considerably in terms of phonology. However, when the missionaries started using this script for Western Pwo Karen, they did not make any changes to the script. They only changed the readings according to the regular phonological correspondences. In addition to showing the correspondence between orthography and phonology, this article also clarifies how the missionaries changed the readings.

1. Introduction

This study is a sequel to Kato (2021); thus, the title is, "Pwo Karen writing systems 2". In Kato (2021), I mentioned discussing the correspondence between the Christian Pwo Karen Script and the phonological system of Western Pwo Karen on another occasion. That is the primary purpose of this study. In addition, I will show the phonological correspondence between Western Pwo Karen and 19th-century Eastern Pwo Karen, which was the basis for the creation of the Christian Pwo Karen Script. This will clarify the linguistic context in which this writing system came to be used not only as a writing system for Eastern Pwo Karen but also for Western Pwo Karen.

Western Pwo Karen is a dialectal group of Pwo Karen, spoken in the Ayeyarwady

Delta of Myanmar, with many speakers in the Pathein District, Myaungmya District, and Ma-ubin District of the Ayeyarwady Region. The variation of Western Pwo Karen that is treated in this article is a dialect spoken in the town of Kyonpyaw (Kyonbyaw) in the Pathein District of the Ayeyarwady Region. Hereafter, "Western Pwo Karen" refers to this dialect. The phonological system of this dialect is not substantially different from that of the dialect spoken in Pathein (Bassein), about 70 km southwest. For more information on the dialects of Pwo Karen, see Kato (1995, 2009, 2017, 2019a), Dawkins and Phillips (2009a, b), and Phillips (2017, 2018). Among the Karen people in Myanmar, it is generally believed that there are two varieties of Pwo Karen: Western Pwo Karen and Eastern Pwo Karen. Intelligibility between the two is very low. This tells us that a considerable amount of time has passed since the two dialects diverged, and correspondingly, that a considerable amount of time has passed since the Karen people began to live in the Delta. Kato (2019b) estimated that the split of Eastern and Western Pwo Karen occurred in the 17th century; however, this could have occurred earlier.

As mentioned by Kato (2021), the most widely used writing systems for Pwo Karen dialects are the Buddhist Pwo Karen Script and the Christian Pwo Karen Script, both of which have an abugida system (for more information on Pwo Karen writing systems, see also Kato 2001a, 2001b, and 2006). The Christian Pwo Karen Script was created in the 1840s by American Baptist missionaries, including Wade, Mason, and Brayton (cf. Mason 1846). I call this script the Christian Pwo Karen Script because it was created by Christian missionaries. Note that Stern (1968) calls this the Mission script. Henceforth, the Christian Pwo Karen Script is referred to as CS (Christian Script). The CS was created based on the Christian Sgaw Karen Script, which was created by Wade in the 1830s using symbols in the Burmese script. In the early stage of the CS, there were some novel innovations not seen in the Christian Sgaw Karen Script, such as the use of Roman letters and the juxtaposition of basic letters and vowel signs. However, these innovations seem to have caused problems in reading and writing. Therefore, it was modified by the early 1850s to be closer to the method of Christian Sgaw Karen Script. As shown in detail in Kato (2021), the CS system fits very well with the phonological system of the Hpa-an dialect, an Eastern Pwo Karen

dialect—and even better with the presumed phonological system of the Hpa-an dialect of the 19th century. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the CS was created based on the phonological system of the 19th-century Hpa-an dialect.

Although the CS was created for Eastern Pwo Karen, it later came to be used as the script for Western Pwo Karen spoken in the Ayeyarwady Delta, as I already pointed out in Kato (1995, 2001b, 2006, and 2021). It is not known precisely when Western Pwo Karen was first written in the CS. I have been working since 2017 with Hitomi Fujimura, a historian who specializes in Karen Baptist history, reading her selections of the Christian documents written in Pwo Karen and Sgaw Karen in the 19th century. To the best of our knowledge, the earliest printed material written in Western Pwo Karen is an article by an anonymous author entitled, "An account of the Churches in Sandoway", which appeared in *The Instructor*, No. 7 (1851)—a Pwo Karen journal published by the Maulmain Mission Press. Thus, it is certain that an attempt to write Western Pwo Karen in the CS had already been made at a very early stage in the CS history, that is, at the beginning of the 1850s.

In Western Pwo Karen texts written in the CS, many words and expressions with Eastern Pwo Karen origins can be observed. For example: ဒဲ /dɛ̌/, a particle with the meaning 'and', which is considered originally an Eastern Pwo Karen word, is frequently found in Western Pwo Karen texts (it will be referred to again in Section 4.4); and လိၢ်ဖှဲၩ /lâ sheiʔ/, which is originally an Eastern Pwo Karen optative expression placed at the end of a sentence, is also common in Western Pwo Karen texts. Western Pwo Karen speakers use such Eastern Pwo Karen elements in their written language because they consider them to be orthodox. This can be attributed to the fact that Eastern Pwo Karen was used in authoritative Christian literature, including the Pwo Karen Bible. The orthodoxy that Western Pwo Karen speakers feel in Eastern Pwo Karen elements still exists, and such elements are frequently found in present-day literature written in Western Pwo Karen. It should be noted, however, that these linguistic elements of Eastern Pwo Karen are not considered by Western Pwo Karen speakers to be of Eastern Pwo Karen, but rather of "literary style". Most Western Pwo Karen writers and readers are probably unaware that these expressions are of Eastern Pwo Karen origin.

Since Western Pwo Karen texts use many Eastern Pwo Karen expressions, they may appear at first glance to be of Eastern Pwo Karen; however, in texts written in Western Pwo Karen, words and expressions specific to Western Pwo Karen appear with a greater or lesser frequency. Therefore, a careful reading of the texts enables us to identify them as of Western Pwo Karen. For example, if တ (read as /kə/ in Western Pwo Karen) is used instead of Eastern လ (read /lə/ in Eastern Pwo Karen) as the numeral for 'one', then the text can be identified as of Western Pwo Karen. Similarly, if the Western irrealis marker တ (/kə/ in Western Pwo Karen) is used instead of the Eastern irrealis marker မိ (read as /mō/ in Eastern Pwo Karen; Western Pwo Karen reads it /mô/ and the meaning is 'want to'), then the text can be identified as of Western Pwo Karen. The 1851 article in *The Instructor* is also identified as a Western Pwo Karen text through such a process.

However, identification is challenging in rare cases. The Pwo Karen Bible, published in the 1880s, is written in Eastern Pwo Karen, but the Psalms of the Bible contain some elements of Western Pwo Karen. For example, the verb meaning 'to listen' is ဆိုႊနꩲ /chônná/ in Eastern Pwo Karen (Western Pwo Karen reads it as /shàuɴnà/), but in the Psalms the Western Pwo Karen word ခိꩫနꩲ is used for the verb meaning 'to listen'. Western Pwo Karen reads it as /khoʔnà/, and the Eastern Pwo Karen reading of this spelling is /khònà/. It is likely that some Western Pwo Karen speakers participated in some way in the compilation of the Psalms. It is difficult to determine whether the language of the Psalms is Eastern or Western Pwo Karen; that is, it is unclear whether the writer intended to write Eastern Pwo Karen to match the rest of the Bible but unintentionally mixed Western Pwo Karen words, or whether they intended to write Western Pwo Karen in a "gorgeous" literary style filled with Eastern Pwo Karen elements. It may be possible to regard such texts as being both Eastern and Western Pwo Karen.

Today, the CS is mostly regarded as a Western Pwo Karen writing system by the Karens, because Eastern Pwo Karen speakers mainly use the Buddhist Pwo Karen Script and the CS is mainly used by Western Pwo Karen speakers. Moreover, in Western Pwo Karen-speaking areas, the CS has also become increasingly popular among Buddhists over the last 20 to 30 years. Books written by Buddhist monks, such

as /θəmèiɴ mûi pláɴ/ (2005)—a collection of commentaries on the Dharma of Buddhism—have also been published in this script. Therefore, we can safely say that this script is now establishing itself as an orthography of Western Pwo Karen.

The following Section 2 presents the phonological system of Western Pwo Karen. Section 3 presents the phonological correspondences between Western Pwo Karen and 19th-century Eastern Pwo Karen. Section 4 shows how the CS corresponds to the phonological system of Western Pwo Karen, and how the Baptist missionaries replaced the 19th-century Eastern Pwo Karen readings with those of Western Pwo Karen in order to use the CS as a writing system for Western Pwo Karen. In the last part of this section, some of the problems in using the CS to write Western Pwo Karen are pointed out. Section 5 presents a Western Pwo Karen text written in CS. Section 6 concludes the study.

Hereafter, Western Pwo Karen and Eastern Pwo Karen will be referred to as WPK and EPK, respectively. When it is necessary to distinguish between 19th-century Eastern Pwo Karen and contemporary Eastern Pwo Karen, the former will be abbreviated as 19c EPK and the latter as CEPK.

2. Phonology of Western Pwo Karen

The phonological system of WPK presented here is basically the same as that presented in Kato (1995) as the phonological system of the Kyonbyaw dialect, but there are a few parts that have been modified after subsequent research. As already mentioned, the phonological system of this dialect is not substantially different from that of the dialect spoken in Pathein (Bassein). The phonological system of the Bassein dialect was presented by Jones (1961). Given that his interpretation is unique, the phonological system of the Bassein dialect may appear different, on the surface, from the system shown here, but in fact it is not as different as one might imagine based on the differences in the transcription.

The syllable structure of WPK can be represented as C1(C2)V1(V2)(C3)/(T). "C" stands for a consonant, "V" for a vowel, and "T" for a tone. C1 is an initial consonant, C2 is a medial consonant, and C3 is a final consonant. One or two vowels may occur and are represented by V1 and V2. Bracketed elements may or may not occur. The

part of C1(C2)- is called an onset, and that of -V1(V2)(C3) is called a rhyme.

As shown in Table 1, there are four tones: low-level, high-level, falling, and checked tones. In the table, they are shown with /a/ with tone marks. The exact phonetic realization of /a/ is [ä]. Additionally, there are atonic syllables, and they are represented by not adding any tone marks. The only rhyme that can appear in atonic syllables is /-ə/. These are pronounced short and weak.

Table 1: Tones in WPK

à	[a11]	low-level tone
á	[a55]	high-level tone
â	[a51]	falling tone
aʔ	[aʔ51]	checked tone
ə		atonic

The pitch of the checked tone is almost the same as that of the falling tone. Therefore, some speakers confuse the checked tone with a falling tone. Giving a phonological interpretation of the checked tone is not a simple task. The following two possibilities must be considered: (1) it is a distinct tone from the other tones, with a final glottal stop as its inherent feature; and (2) it is a falling tone that appears in the syllable ending with a glottal stop. If we adopt interpretation (1), there is no need to phonologically recognize syllables ending with a glottal stop, because the final glottal stop is a feature of the tone. If we adopt interpretation (2), we need to phonologically recognize syllables ending with a glottal stop. In Kato (1995), I adopted interpretation (2) because the pitch of the checked tone is almost the same as that of the falling tone. However, the possibility of interpretation (1) remains. Therefore, in this article, I adopt an interpretation that combines (1) and (2); that is, the final glottal stop is an inherent feature of the checked tone, and at the same time, it is also regarded as a phonological syllable-final consonant.

Simple onsets consisting only of C1 are listed in Table 2. A total of 30 phonemes can occur at a simple onset.

Table 2: Simple onsets in WPK

p	θ	t	ɕ	k	ʔ
ph		th		kh	
ɓ		ɗ			
b	ð	d		g	
		s	ɕ	x	h
		sh			
		z		ɣ	
m		n	ɲ	ŋ	
w			j		
		l			
		r			

The phonetic values of simple onsets are as follows: /p-/ [p], /θ-/ [t̪~t̪θ], /t-/ [t], /c-/ [tɕ], /k-/ [k], /ʔ-/ [ʔ], /ph-/ [pʰ], /th-/ [tʰ], /kh-/ [kʰ], /ɓ-/ [ɓ], /ɗ-/ [ɗ], /b-/ [b], /ð-/ [d̪~d̪ð], /d-/ [d], /g-/ [g], /s-/ [s], /ɕ-/ [ɕ], /x-/ [x], /h-/ [h], /sh-/ [sʰ], /z-/ [z], /ɣ-/ [ɣ], /m-/ [m], /n-/ [n], /ɲ-/ [ɲ], /ŋ-/ [ŋ], /w-/ [w], /j-/ [j~ʝ], /l-/ [l], and /r-/ [ɽ~ɹ].

The phonemes that can appear as C2 are /-w-/ [w], /-l-/ [l], /-r-/ [r~ɹ], and /-j-/ [j~ʝ]. The combinations of C1 and C2 that have been found to date are listed in Table 3.

Table 3: Possible combinations of C1 and C2 in WPK

		p	θ	t	k	ʔ	ph	th	kh	ɓ	ɗ	s	sh	x	m	n	j	l
	w	+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
C2	l	+		+	+		+	+	+	+					+			
	r	+			+				+									
	j	+				+			+						+			

As previously mentioned, the structure of a rhyme can be represented as -V1(V2)(C3). Among the components of a rhyme, the position of C3 can only be occupied by /-ɴ/ or /-ʔ/. The nasal /ɴ/ is a phoneme that can only occur as a final consonant. It is realized as [ɴ] or nasalization of the preceding vowel. Rhymes can be divided into three types: open rhymes without C3, nasalized rhymes with /-ɴ/, and stopped rhymes with /-ʔ/.

There are 12 open rhymes, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Open rhymes in WPK

Monophthongs				Diphthongs	
i	ɨ	ɯ	u	ai	au
e		ə	o		
ε		a	ɔ		

These rhymes are realized as follows: /-i/ [i], /-ɨ/ [ɨ], /-ɯ/ [ɯ], /-u/ [u], /-e/ [e̞], /-ə/ [ə], /-o/ [o̞], /-ε/ [ε], /-a/ [ä], /-ɔ/ [ɔ], /-ai/ [äi], and /-au/ [äʊ~äo].

There are eight nasalized rhymes, as shown in Table 5. I place /-iɴ/ in parentheses because it appears only in loanwords from Burmese and those from other languages that have entered via Burmese.

Table 5: Nasalized rhymes in WPK

Monophthongs		Diphthongs		
(iɴ)				
	əɴ	eiɴ	əɯɴ	ouɴ
	aɴ	aiɴ		auɴ

These rhymes are realized as follows: /iɴ/ [ɪɴ~ĩ], /-əɴ/ [ɜ̃~ə], /-aɴ/ [ɐɴ~ɐ̃], /-eiɴ/ [eiɴ~eĩ], /-əɯɴ/ [əɯɴ~əũ̃], /-ouɴ/ [ouɴ~oũ̃], /-aiɴ/ [äiɴ~äĩ], and /-auɴ/ [äʊɴ~äõ̃]. The nasalization of /-əɴ/ is very weak and may be completely eliminated. In that case, /-əɴ/ loses its phonetic distinction from /-ə/. Therefore, in some speakers, /-əɴ/ has merged into /-ə/. The nasalization of /-eiɴ/, /-əɯɴ/, /-ouɴ/, /-aiɴ/, and /-auɴ/ is also often weak. As a result, the distinction between /-ai/ and /-aiɴ/ and that between /-au/ and /-auɴ/ may be ambiguous for some speakers. The occurrence of /-əɯɴ/ is very rare, as will be discussed in Section 3.

There are eight stopped rhymes, as shown in Table 6. These rhymes appear when there is a glottal stop at the end of the syllable. As mentioned earlier, the final glottal stop may be an inherent feature of the checked tone rather than a syllable-final consonant.

Table 6: Stopped rhymes in WPK

Monophthongs			Diphthongs		
	iʔ		eiʔ	əɯʔ	ouʔ
eʔ		oʔ			
	aʔ	ɔʔ			

These rhymes are realized as follows: /-iʔ/ [ɨʔ], /-eʔ/ [eʔ], /-oʔ/ [oʔ], /-aʔ/ [äʔ], /-ɔʔ/ [ɔʔ], /-eiʔ/ [eiʔ], /-əɯʔ/ [əɯʔ], and /-ouʔ/ [ouʔ].

3. Phonological correspondences between WPK and 19c EPK

The CS, created in the 1840s, seems to reflect the phonological system of EPK from the end of the 18th century to the middle of the 19th century. What I call "19c EPK" is the EPK of this period. As mentioned in Section 1, WPK adopted CS slightly later than EPK. This adoption was achieved by replacing the 19c EPK pronunciation, represented by the CS, with the WPK pronunciation of the same period. WPK during this period can be assumed to be the dialect of Pathein (Bassein), which was the center of the Baptist mission in the Ayeyarwady Delta.

The details of the pronunciation of the WPK in the 19th century are no longer well known. Therefore, for the sake of convenience, the discussion in this article assumes that the phonological system of WPK in the 19th century is the same as that of WPK today. In other words, we assume that the phonological system of WPK, to which the missionaries applied the CS, is the system described in Section 2.

The phonological system of 19c EPK has already been presented in Kato (2021), but in order to make the discussion easier to understand, the outline will be presented below.

The syllable structure of the 19c EPK can be represented as C1(C2)V1(V2)(C3)/(T). There are six tones: low-level, mid-level, high-level, falling, low-checked, and high-checked, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Tones in 19c EPK

à	low-level tone
ā	mid-level tone
á	high-level tone
â	falling tone
àʔ	low-checked tone
áʔ	high-checked tone
ə	atonic

Simple onsets consisting only of C1 are listed in Table 8. Four of these, /w/, /l/,

/r/, and /j/, also appear as C2.

Table 8: Onsets in 19c EPK

p	θ	t	c	k		ʔ
ph		th	ch	kh		
b		d				
			ɕ	x		h
				ɣ	ʁ	
m		n	ɲ	ŋ		
w			j			
		l				
		r				

The structure of a rhyme in 19c EPK can be represented as -V1(V2)(C3). As C3, /-ɴ/, which does not appear as C1, and /-ʔ/, which also appears as C1, can appear. There are 10 open rhymes, as shown in Table 9; seven nasalized rhymes, as shown in Table 10; and eight stopped rhymes, as shown in Table 11.

Table 9: Open rhymes in 19c EPK

i	ɨ	ɯ	u
e		ə	o
ɛ		a	ɔ

Table 10: Nasalized rhymes in 19c EPK

Monophthongs		Diphthongs		
əɴ	oɴ	eiɴ	əɯɴ	ouɴ
aɴ		aiɴ		

Table 11: Stopped rhymes in 19c EPK

Monophthongs		Diphthongs		
iʔ				
eʔ	oʔ			
aʔ	ɔʔ	aiʔ	aɯʔ	auʔ

We will now look at the phonological correspondence between the WPK and 19c EPK. The following tables (Tables 12 to 18) are made in terms of how the phonology of 19c EPK corresponds to the phonology of WPK. Therefore, when looking at the tables, it is convenient to look first at the 19c EPK forms. In addition, the corresponding

sounds of CEPK are also shown for reference.

The regular correspondence of the tones is listed in Table 12. The 19c EPK tones are placed in the middle column, WPK tones in the left column, and CEPK tones in the right column.

Table 12: Tones

WPK	19c EPK	CEPK
á [a55]	*à	à [a11]
â [a51]	*ā	ā [a̠33 ~ 334]
à [a11]	*á	á [a55]
à [a11]	*â	â [a51]
aʔ [aʔ51]	*àʔ	à [a11]
aʔ [aʔ51]	*áʔ	á [a55]
ə (atonic)	*ə (atonic)	ə (atonic)

The following points should be noted in relation to Table 12:

● The corresponding pitches of the WPK and CEPK tones are very different. For example, the high-level tone /á/ in WPK corresponds to the low-level tone /à/ in CEPK, that is, the pitches have an opposite relationship. The difference in tonal pitches is the main reason why the intercommunication of WPK and CEPK is difficult.
● The high-level tone */á/ and falling tone */â/ in 19c EPK correspond to the low-level tone /à/ in the WPK. Similarly, the low-checked tone */àʔ/ and high-checked tone */áʔ/ in 19c EPK both correspond to the checked tone /aʔ/ in WPK. These correspondences reflect the fact that some of the Proto-Pwo Karen tones merged in WPK (for Proto-Pwo Karen, see Kato 2009).

Tables 13 to 15 show the regular correspondence of the initial consonants. Table 13 shows how the stops and affricates in the 19c EPK regularly correspond to WPK sounds. Recall that these tables are designed to look first at the 19c EPK sounds as a starting point. The CEPK sounds are shown for reference only.

Table 13: Stops and affricates

WPK	p	θ	t	s	c	k	ʔ	ph	th	sh	kh	ɓ	ɗ
19c EPK	*p	*θ	*t	*c	*cj	*k	*ʔ	*ph	*th	*ch	*kh	*b	*d
CEPK	p	θ	t	c	c	k	ʔ	ph	th	ch	kh	b	d

The following points should be noted in relation to Table 13:

● */b-/ and */d-/ in 19c EPK and /b-/ and /d-/ in CEPK are all implosives. In other words, they are phonetically [ɓ] and [ɗ]. The reason these are not represented as /ɓ-/, /ɗ-/ is that they do not show opposition to non-implosives. Since there are /ɓ-/ vs. /b-/ and /ɗ-/ vs. /d-/ oppositions in WPK, it is necessary to transcribe the WPK implosives as /ɓ-/ and /ɗ-/.

● The reason for the absence of WPK /b-/, /ð-/, /d-/, and /g-/ in this table is that these are phonemes that emerged independently in WPK through irregular sound changes and borrowings. Examples of WPK /b-/ include the following: /bá/ 'we' (cf. 19c EPK */pɔ̀/, CEPK /pɔ̀/) and /bɔ́ɴ/ 'inside' (cf. 19c EPK */phɔ̀ɴ/, CEPK /phɔ̀ɴ/). These two examples have a minimal pair counterpart with /ɓ-/, i.e., /ɓá/ 'to worship' and /ɓɔ́ɴ/ 'be thick'. Examples of /ð-/ include the following: /ðeiʔ/ 'still' (cf. 19c EPK */dàiʔ/, CEPK /dài/). Examples of /d-/ include the following: /tɔ́dɔ̀/ 'considerably' (borrowing from Burmese /tɔ̀dɔ̀/). Examples of /g-/ include the following: /gàu/ 'side' (cf. 19c EPK */khɔ̂/, CEPK /khɔ̂/), /kángá/ 'to discuss' (cf. 19c EPK */kàɴkà/, CEPK /kàɴkà/), /màɴgánèiɴ/ 'last year' (no corresponding form in EPK), and /màɴgúnèiɴ/ 'the year before last' (no corresponding form in EPK). The number of forms with /b-/, /ð-/, /d-/, and /g-/ is very small.

● WPK /c-/ is thought to correspond to the 19c EPK consonant cluster */cj-/. This issue will be discussed in detail in Section 4.2.

Table 14 shows how the fricatives in 19c EPK regularly correspond to WPK sounds.

Table 14: Fricatives

WPK	ɕ	x		ɣ	ʁ
19c EPK	*ɕ	*x	*h	*ɣ	*ʁ
CEPK	ɕ	x	h	ɣ	ʁ

The following points should be noted in relation to Table 14:

● WPK /h-/ emerged independently in WPK through borrowing from Burmese, e.g., /hɔ́/ 'to preach' (Burmese /hɔ́/). 19c EPK */h-/ also emerged independently in EPK through irregular sound changes and borrowing. Therefore, WPK /h-/ does not regularly correspond to 19c EPK */h-/ or CEPK /h-/. This is why WPK /h-/ is not listed in the table.

● The WPK fricatives /s-/ and /sh-/ correspond to the 19c EPK affricates */c-/ and */ch-/, respectively, as shown in Table 13. Therefore, they do not appear in the table.

● WPK /ɣ-/ corresponds to 19c EPK */ɣ-/ or */ʁ-/, e.g., /ɣà/ 'evening' (cf. 19c EPK */ɣá/, CEPK /ɣá/) and /ɣà/ 'question marker' (cf. 19c EPK */ʁâ/, CEPK /ʁâ/).

● WPK /z-/ emerged independently in WPK. The origin of this sound is one of the following cases: One is the case in which /z-/ emerged through an irregular sound change, e.g., /zâ/ 'thing' (cf. 19c EPK */chə̄/, CEPK /chə̄/). The other case is borrowing from Burmese, for example, /zé/ 'market' (cf. Burmese /zé/).

Table 15 shows how the nasals, semivowels, and liquids in 19c EPK regularly correspond to WPK sounds.

Table 15: Nasals, semivowels, and liquids

WPK	m	n			w	j	l	r
19c EPK	*m	*n	*ɲ	*ŋ	*w	*j	*l	*r
CEPK	m	n	ɲ	ŋ	w	j	l	r

The following point should be noted in relation to Table 15:

● WPK also has /ɲ-/ and /ŋ-/. However, none of the forms with these sounds have a corresponding form in 19c EPK or CEPK. Therefore, these WPK phonemes were not included in this table. Examples of WPK /ɲ-/ and /ŋ-/ are /ɲoʔθà/ 'noni (Morinda

citrifolia)' and /məŋâ/ 'be good', whose origins are unknown.

Tables 16–18 show the regular correspondence of rhymes. Table 16 shows how the plain rhymes in the 19c EPK regularly correspond to WPK sounds.

Table 16: Plain rhymes

WPK	i	ɨ	ɯ	u	e	ə	o	ai, ɛ	a	au, ɔ
19c EPK	*i	*ɨ	*ɯ	*u	*e	*ə	*o	*ɛ	*a	*ɔ
CEPK	i	ɨ	ɯ	ɯ	i̠	ə	ʊ	ɛ	a	ɔ

The following points should be noted in relation to Table 16:

● 19c EPK */-ɛ/ corresponds to the two rhymes /-ai/ and /-ɛ/ in the WPK. This is because */-ai/ and */-ɛ/ in Proto-Pwo Karen (Kato 2009) merged into /-ɛ/ in EPK. As will be discussed in Section 4.5, the CS, which reflects the 19c EPK phonology, does not distinguish between /-ai/ and /-ɛ/ in WPK.

● 19c EPK */-ɔ/ corresponds to the two rhymes /-au/ and /-ɔ/ in WPK. This is because */-au/ and */-ɔ/ in Proto-Pwo Karen have merged into /-ɔ/ in EPK. As will be discussed in Section 4.5, the CS does not distinguish between /-au/ and /-ɔ/ in WPK.

Table 17 shows how the nasalized rhymes in 19c EPK regularly correspond to WPK sounds.

Table 17: Nasalized rhymes

WPK	əɴ	auɴ	aɴ	eiɴ	əɴ	ouɴ	aiɴ
19c EPK	*əɴ	*oɴ	*aɴ	*eiɴ	*əɯɴ	*ouɴ	*aiɴ
CEPK	əɴ	oɴ	aɴ	eiɴ	əɯɴ	ouɴ	aiɴ

The following points should be noted in relation to Table 17:

● 19c EPK */-əɴ/ corresponds to WPK /-əɴ/. 19c EPK */-əɯɴ/ also corresponds to the same rhyme /-əɴ/ in WPK. This is because */-əɴ/ and */-əɯɴ/ in Proto-Pwo Karen (Kato 2009) have merged into /əɴ-/ in WPK. Moreover, as noted in relation to Table 5, in the pronunciation of some WPK speakers, /-əɴ/ has lost its nasality and merged into the plain rhyme /-ə/.

● WPK has rhyme /-əɯɴ/. The only form with this rhyme so far found is /mátə́ɯɴ/ 'to threaten'. This word corresponds to 19c EPK */màtə̀ɯɴ/ (cf. CEPK /màtə̀ɯɴ/). Therefore, there is a possibility that we can list /-əɯɴ/ in addition to /-əɴ/ as a WPK rhyme corresponding to the 19c EPK rhyme */-əɯɴ/. However, since only one instance of this correspondence has been found, it is impossible to determine whether it is regular or not. For this reason, the correspondence 19c EPK */-əɯɴ/ : WPK /-əɯɴ/ is not listed in Table 17.

Table 18 shows how the stopped rhymes in 19c EPK regularly correspond to WPK sounds.

Table 18: Stopped rhymes

WPK	ɨʔ	eʔ	oʔ	aʔ	ɔʔ	eiʔ	əɯʔ	ouʔ
19c EPK	*ɨʔ	*eʔ	*oʔ	*aʔ	*ɔʔ	*aiʔ	*aɯʔ	*auʔ
CEPK	ɨ	e	o	a	ɔ	ai	aʊ	aʊ

The following point should be noted in relation to Table 18:

● The syllable-final glottal stop that was present in Proto-Pwo Karen was preserved in 19c EPK but has been lost in CEPK. This sound is preserved in the WPK. However, as mentioned earlier, the WPK final glottal stop may be an inherent feature of the checked tone in terms of phonology.

4. Christian Pwo Karen Script and Western Pwo Karen

The CS was created for 19c EPK in the 1840s; thus, it reflects the phonological system of the 19c EPK. However, in less than a decade after its creation, this writing system also began to be used to write the WPK. The Baptist missionaries found that they could use the CS as a writing system for WPK if they replaced the pronunciation of 19c EPK with that of WPK based on the regular phonological correspondences between 19c EPK and WPK discussed in Section 3. No changes were made to the writing system at that time. This was possible because the CS was a highly systematic script that reflected the pronunciation of the 19c EPK with great accuracy.

The pronunciation of WPK in those days must have been slightly different from

what it is today. Unfortunately, the details of the WPK pronunciation at that time are unknown. However, the process that the missionaries followed can be simulated using the modern pronunciation of WPK. Therefore, for the sake of convenience, this study assumes that the phonological system of WPK in the 19th century was the same as the contemporary WPK phonological system discussed in Section 2.

In the following, the sounds when reading the CS in the WPK are shown. Furthermore, the 19c EPK sounds that regularly correspond to these WPK sounds are also provided. Based on the sounds of the 19c EPK, one can understand how the missionaries replaced the EPK readings with those of the WPK.

4.1. Initial consonants

Initial consonants, that is, consonants appearing in the C1 position, are generally written with basic letters. There are 27 basic letters listed in Table 19. The WPK pronunciations and those of the 19c EPK are shown in two lines below each basic letter. The upper sounds without an asterisk are the pronunciations of the WPK. The lower asterisked sounds are the 19c EPK pronunciations that correspond regularly to the upper WPK sounds, and at the same time, these are the 19c EPK pronunciations that the letters used to represent. However, the WPK sounds with "#" do not directly correspond to the 19c EPK sounds.

Let us consider the basic letter ㅅ as an example. The consonant /s-/ immediately below ㅅ is the WPK reading. The asterisked consonant */c-/ below it is the sound of 19c EPK that regularly corresponds to WPK /s-/, and at the same time, this */c-/ sound of 19c EPK was represented by the basic letter ㅅ of the CS. To use the CS as a writing system for WPK, the missionaries replaced the lower sounds with the upper ones.

Table 19: Basic letters

က k- *k-	ခ kh- *kh-	ဂ ɣ- *ɣ-	ဃ x- *x-	င #ŋ- *ŋ-
စ s- *c-	ဆ sh- *ch-	ဇ #z- *c-	ဈ #ɲ- *ɲ-	ၐ ɕ- *ɕ-
တ t- *t-	ထ th- *th-	ဒ ɗ- *d-	န n- *n-	ပ p- *p-
ဖ ph- *ph-	ဗ ɓ- *b-	မ m- *m-	ယ j- *j-	ရ r- *r-
လ l- *l-	ဝ w- *w-	သ θ- *θ-	ဟ #h- *h-	အ ʔ- *ʔ-

ၔ ɣ- *ʁ-	ၕ p- *p-

The following are notes on the basic letters.

● The WPK sounds marked with "#" do not show a regular correspondence with the 19c EPK sounds below them. This is because, as mentioned in Section 3, /ɲ-/, /ŋ-/, /z-/, and /h-/ are sounds that emerged independently in the WPK. The "same" sounds for /ɲ-/, /ŋ-/, and /h-/ exist in 19c EPK, but */ɲ-/, */ŋ-/, and */h-/ of 19c EPK also emerged independently in EPK through sound changes and borrowings. Therefore, for the sounds marked with "#", it cannot be said that the readings were determined based on the regular sound correspondences when the CS was applied to WPK. Presumably, the pronunciations represented by ဈ, ဇ, ၐ, and ဟ were determined by following the pronunciations of the corresponding Burmese letters.

● The sound */ʁ-/ written with ၔ in 19c EPK corresponds to WPK /ɣ-/, as shown in Table 14. In accordance with this rule, ၔ is pronounced /ɣ-/.

● ၕ is used to write the WPK prefix ၕ /pə-/ denoting a human being. In terms of the reading of the corresponding prefix in 19c EPK, i.e., */pə-/ or */hə-/, it should be sufficient to write this prefix as ဝ or ဟ. For the possible reasons for making a separate character, see Kato (2021). In WPK, the noun /pà/, meaning "person", is also written

with this letter without any additional symbols, e.g., ပုလၫဂ်ၢထၣ့မၤလိၤဆၻ /pà lá ɣ̀ài thàɴ málò zɔ̂/ (person – REL – come – up – study – thing) 'people who came to study'.

● There are no particular letters for writing /b-/, /ð-/, /d-/, and /g-/. The spellings for these sounds are generally determined according to the following principle: if there is a corresponding form in 19c EPK, follow its spelling. The forms of 19c EPK are referenced using literature, including the Bible. Examples of words written with this principle are: ပၻ /bá/ 'we' (cf. 19c EPK ပၻ */pà/, CEPK /pà/), ဖၻ့ /bóɴ/ 'inside' (cf. 19c EPK ဖၻ့ */phàɴ/, CEPK /phàɴ/), ၪ်ꩬ /ðeiʔ/ 'still' (cf. 19c EPK ၪ်ꩬ */dàiʔ/, CEPK /dài/), ၡ်ၢ /gàu/ 'side' (cf. 19c EPK ၡ်ၢ */khô/, CEPK /khô/), and ကၰ့ကၰ /káɴgá/ 'to discuss' (cf. 19c EPK ကၰ့ကၰ */kàɴkà/, CEPK /kàɴkà/). Note that the reading of the rhyme in ပၻ /bá/ 'we' is irregular. The reading of this word will be discussed in Section 4.4. Examples of cases where there is no corresponding form in 19c EPK are: တီꩬတီ/tódò/ 'considerably', မၠဝၒနံ့ /màngánèiɴ/ 'last year', and မၠၰ့နံ့ /màngúnèiɴ/ 'the year before last'. Generalizations of these spellings are yet to be made.

● /z-/ is written with ꩠ, but for the noun ဆၻ /zɔ̂/ 'thing', it is written with the letter ဆ for /sh-/. This is because /zɔ̂/ is a variant of /shɔ̂/ (ဆၻ) 'thing' (cf. 19c EPK ဆၻ */chɔ̄/, CEPK /chɔ̄/ 'thing'). The form /zɔ̂/ is mainly used when /shɔ̂/ appears as the object of a verb. See /zɔ̂/ in the example above meaning 'people who came to study'.

Examples of WPK words written with each basic letter follow: ကၪ /kà/ 'be difficult', ခၪ /khà/ 'be bitter', ဂၪ /ɣà/ 'evening', ၑ်ၢ /xì/ 'be beautiful', မၢၫ်ၢ /məɣâ/ 'be good', စ္ၪ /sù/ 'hand', ဆၢ /shà/ 'to ache', ꩠꩬ /zé/ 'market', ညိၤပၪ /ɲoʔðà/ 'noni (Morinda citrifolia)', ꩡꩬ /ɕá/ 'be few', တီꩬ /tó/ 'be straight', ထꩬ /thaʔ/ 'iron', ၓၪ /dà/ 'to see', နၪ်ၢ /nâ/ 'ear', ပၪ /pà/ 'plank, board', ၧ်ၢ /phâ/ 'father', ဘၪ /bà/ 'be right', မꩬ /má/ 'to do', ယၪ /jà/ 'fish', ရၡ /raʔ/ 'hell', လၒꩬ /lá/ 'moon', ဝꩬ /wá/ 'husband', ၪၪ /θà/ 'to bear fruits', ၯ်ၢꩬ /hó/ 'to preach', အၪ /ʔà/ 'be many', ꩲၪ /ʁà/ 'question marker', and ပုမ္ၪ /pəmùi/ 'woman'.

4.2. Medial consonants

In the CS, the medial consonants /-w-/, /-l-/, /-r-/, and /-j-/ are written as shown in Table 20, using subscripts. As shown in Table 19, the upper sounds without an asterisk

are the WPK pronunciations. The lower asterisked sounds are the 19c EPK pronunciations that correspond regularly to the upper WPK sounds, and at the same time, these are the 19c EPK pronunciations that the subscripts used to represent. In order to use the CS as a writing system for WPK, the missionaries replaced the lower sounds with the upper ones; however, for medial consonants, the readings of WPK happen to be the same as those of 19c EPK.

Table 20: Medial consonants

၀	�附	ၺ	၇
-w-	-l-	-r-	-j-
*-w-	*-l-	*-r-	*-j-

Example words with medial consonants follow: ကွၢ /kwá/ 'ax', ထွဲ /thwì/ 'dog', ကျၢၢ် /kla?/ 'crow', ဖျၢ /phlâ/ 'arrow', ကြိၢ်s /kri?/ 'be suitable', ပြဲၣ် /prə̀N/ 'to compete', ပွၢ်s /pjo?/ 'to vomit', and ၢၢၢ /bjá/ 'be gentle'.

The following are notes on the subscripts.

● As already pointed out in Kato (2021), CS ၺ /-l-/ and ၇ /-j-/ are identical in shape to ၺ /-j-/ and ၇ /-l-/ in the Buddhist Pwo Karen Script (= BS), but the relationship between the letters and sounds is inverse. The usage of the CS is based on that of the Christian Sgaw Karen Script, whereas the usage of the BS is based on that of the Mon Script.

● When ၇ is combined with � as in ကၞ, it is pronounced as /c-/, not /ky-/.

There is an important remark on the second note. In Kato (2021), I stated the following: "The CEPK initial consonant /c-/ is sometimes written as ကၞ instead of using the basic letter စ. Words that are written with ကၞ are often borrowings of Mon or Burmese words that are written with ကျ in the original languages". Although this point is correct, some genuine CEPK words are also written with this spelling. CEPK examples include the following: ကၞၢၢ်s /càʊ/ 'to pull', ကၞၢ /cá/ 'to turn back', ကၞၢ်ၨ /cə́uɴ/ 'be lazy', and ကၞၢ်ၣ် /càɴ/ 'hut'. Moreover, the WPK words corresponding to these generally have /c-/, as follows: ကၞၢၢ်s /cou?/ 'to pull', ကၞၢ /cà/ 'to turn back', ကၞၢ်ၨ

/càɴ/ 'be lazy', and က� /cáɴ/ 'hut'. Normally, /c-/ in CEPK corresponds to /s-/ in WPK, e.g., CEPK စံၴ /cɔ́ɹ/ and WPK စံၴ /sàʊ/ 'be wet', but the words above constitute an exception to this correspondence.

I propose here that the Proto-Pwo Karen forms of the above mentioned words had */cj-/ as the initial consonant cluster and that this cluster was preserved in 19c EPK as */cj-/, whose pronunciation was probably [tɕj]. The 19c EPK forms of these words can be assumed to be */cjàuʔ/ 'to pull', */cjá/ 'to turn back', */cjə́ɯɴ/ 'be lazy', and */cjàɴ/ 'hut', and this */cj-/ was spelt as ကၞ. This initial consonant cluster later merged with /c-/ in CEPK. In WPK, Proto-Pwo Karen */c-/ and */cj-/ became /s-/ and /c-/, respectively.

When writing CEPK in BS, these words are also written using ကျ instead of using the more usual spelling စ for /c-/, as follows: ကျၢၵ် /càʊ/ 'to pull', ကျၢး /cá/ 'to turn back', ကျၢင်း /cə́ɯɴ/ 'be lazy', and ကျၢင် /càɴ/ 'hut'. The fact that the Mon cluster /cy-/ is written with the same spelling ကျ in the Mon script, on which the BS was based, would also support the reconstruction of */cj-/ in 19c EPK. The existence of /cy-/ in Mon has been pointed out by Mitani (1983).

4.3. Rhymes and tones

Table 21 shows the correspondences between the rhymes, tones and their spellings. As shown in Tables 19 and 20, the upper sounds without an asterisk are the WPK pronunciations. The lower asterisked sounds are the 19c EPK pronunciations that correspond regularly to the upper WPK sounds, and at the same time, these are the 19c EPK pronunciations that the CS spellings used to represent. The horizontal columns are arranged according to the tone symbols, and the vertical columns are arranged according to the vowel symbols (plus the nasalization symbol). No instances have been found for some combinations of rhyme and tone. In Kato's (2021) table showing the correspondence between the CEPK rhymes/tones and CS spellings, I have left such cases blank or marked them with a note, but in this table, to avoid complications, theoretical pronunciations are given even when no instances have been found. Blank cells indicate that the combination does not exist phonologically. To use the CS as a writing system for WPK, the missionaries replaced the lower sounds with

the upper ones. Presumably, dealing with rhymes and tones was the most complicated and difficult part of pronunciation replacement.

Table 21: Rhymes and tones

	○ꜱ	no mark	○ɟ	○ꜛ	○ꜱ	○ʟ
○̊	○̊ꜱ -í *-ì	○̊ -î *-ī	○̊ɟ -ì *-í	○̊ꜛ -ì *-î	○̊ꜱ -ei? *-ài?	○̊ʟ -ei? *-ái?
○̥	○̥ꜱ -é *-è	○̥ -ê *-ē	○̥ɟ -è *-é	○̥ꜛ -è *-ê	○̥ꜱ -e? *-è?	○̥ʟ -e? *-é?
○̀	○̀ꜱ -ái, -ɛ́ *-ɛ̀	○̀ -âi, -ɛ̂ *-ɛ̄	○̀ɟ -ài, -ɛ̀ *-ɛ́	○̀ꜛ -ài, -ɛ̀ *-ɛ̂		
○ɟ̥	○ɟ̥ꜱ -ɨ́ *-ɨ̀	○ɟ̥ -ɨ̂ *-ɨ̄	○ɟ̥ɟ -ɨ̀ *-ɨ́	○ɟ̥ꜛ -ɨ̀ *-ɨ̂	○ɟ̥ꜱ -ɨ? *-ɨ̀?	○ɟ̥ʟ -ɨ? *-ɨ́?
○ᑫ	○ᑫꜱ -ə́ *-ə̀	○ᑫ -ə̂ *-ə̄	○ᑫɟ -ə̀ *-ə́	○ᑫꜛ -ə̀ *-ə̂		
○ʃ	○ꜱ -á *-à	○ʃ -â *-ā	○ɟ -à *-á	○ꜛ -à *-â	○ꜱ -a? *-à?	○ʟ -a? *-á?
○ʟ	○ꜱ -ɯ́ *-ɯ̀	○ -ɯ̂ *-ɯ̄	○ɟ -ɯ̀ *-ɯ́	○ꜛ -ɯ̀ *-ɯ̂	○ꜱ -əɯ? *-àɯ?	○ʟ -əɯ? *-áɯ?
○ɪʟ	○ꜱ -ú *-ù	○ -û *-ū	○ɟ -ù *-ú	○ꜛ -ù *-û	○ꜱ -ou? *-àu?	○ʟ -ou? *-áu?
○̥	○̥ꜱ -ó *-ò	○̥ -ô *-ō	○̥ɟ -ò *-ó	○̥ꜛ -ò *-ô	○̥ꜱ -o? *-ò?	○̥ʟ -o? *-ó?
ɵ̊	ɵ̊ꜱ -áu, -ɔ́ *-ɔ̀	ɵ̊ -âu, -ɔ̂ *-ɔ̄	ɵ̊ɟ -àu, -ɔ̀ *-ɔ́	ɵ̊ꜛ -àu, -ɔ̀ *-ɔ̂	ɵ̊ꜱ -ɔ? *-ɔ̀?	ɵ̊ʟ -ɔ? *-ɔ́?
○ɗ̥	○ɗ̥ꜱ -ə́ɴ *-ə̀ɴ	○ɗ̥ -ə̂ɴ *-ə̄ɴ	○ɗɟ -ə̀ɴ *-ə́ɴ	○ɗꜛ -ə̀ɴ *-ə̂ɴ		
○̥	○ꜱ -áɴ *-àɴ	○̥ -âɴ *-āɴ	○ɟ -àɴ *-áɴ	○ꜛ -àɴ *-âɴ		

⊖°ঃ	⊖°ঃ -áuɴ *-òɴ	⊖°ঃ -âuɴ *-ōɴ	⊖°J -àuɴ *-óɴ	⊖°ꞁ -àuɴ *-ôɴ		
°°ঃ	°°ঃ -éıɴ *-èıɴ	°°ঃ -êıɴ *-ēıɴ	°°J -èıɴ *-éıɴ	°°ꞁ -èıɴ *-êıɴ		
°°ঃ ι	°°ঃ ι -ə́ɴ *-ə̄ɯɴ	°°ঃ ι -ə̂ɴ *-ə̄ɯɴ	°°J ι -ə̀ɴ *-ə́ɯɴ	°°ꞁ ι -ə̀ɴ *-ə̂ɯɴ		
̀°ঃ	̀°ঃ -áıɴ *-àıɴ	̀°ঃ -âıɴ *-āıɴ	̀°J -àıɴ *-áıɴ	̀°ꞁ -àıɴ *-âıɴ		
°°ঃ	°°ঃ -óuɴ *-òuɴ	°°ঃ -ôuɴ *-ōuɴ	°°J -òuɴ *-óuɴ	°°ꞁ -òuɴ *-ôuɴ		
°°ঃ	(°°ঃ) -íɴ	(°°ঃ) -îɴ	(°°J) -ìɴ	(°°ꞁ) -ìɴ		
ø	○ -ə *-ə					

The following are notes on writing rhymes and tones.

● ○̀ represents both /-ai/ and /-ɛ/. The CS does not distinguish between the two vowels.

● ○° represents both /-au/ and /-ɔ/. The CS does not distinguish between the two vowels.

● The symbol for the vowel /-a/ is ○ı. This symbol is written only when the tones are unmarked.

● The symbol representing nasalization of rhymes is ○ঃ. When a tone mark is attached to a basic letter, ○° is written underneath the tone mark.

● Both ○J and ○ꞁ represent the low-level tone. The symbol to use is determined according to the 19c EPK distinction.

● Both ○ꜱ and ○ι represent the checked tone. The symbol to use is determined according to the 19c EPK distinction.

● The word /mátə́ɯɴ/ 'to threaten', which is the only form found with the rhyme /-ə́ɯɴ/, as mentioned in relation to Table 17, is written as ဗဒတ့ုိ. This spelling follows the 19c EPK form */màtə̀ɯɴ/.

● The parenthesized spellings representing the rhyme /-i̱ɴ/ in Table 21 are only used to represent Burmese loanwords or those from other languages that have entered via Burmese. Since these are considered new, the pronunciations of the 19c EPK are not listed.

● A basic letter with no marking, i.e., ○, represents an atonic syllable.

Below are examples of how to write WPK rhymes and tones.

○̇   လံး /lí/ 'air', န̇ /nî/ 'to smile', ဖ̇ /phì/ 'pus', ထ̇ /thì/ 'water', ဆံs /shei?/ 'be small', လ̇ /lei?/ 'letter, alphabet'

○̣   လ္ဒ /lé/ 'to go', န္ /nê/ 'to get', ဖ္ /phè/ 'to give', ဖ္ /phè/ 'paddy husk', ၃s /de?/ 'every', ဆ္s /she?/ 'to stab', ထ္ /the?/ 'be cut'

○̀   နဲ /nái/ 'to believe', ဖ̀s /phέ/ 'playing card', ယဲ /jâi/ 'five', မ̀ /mwê/ 'to be', အဲ /ʔài/ 'to love', ကဲ /kwὲ/ 'to release', မ̀ /mài/ 'widow', ထ̀ /thὲ/ 'plough'

○̂   ဆ̂s /shí/ 'race, ethnic group', က̂ /kî/ 'surely', ဖ̂ /phì/ 'short, low', ကျ္စ̂s /kle?si? ~ kli?si?/ 'to endeavor', ခ̂ /khi?/ 'habit, nature'

○̌   ဆ̌ /shâ/ 'thing', လ̌ /lá/ 'LOC' (The locative particle /lá/ is spelled with no tonal mark although it has the high-level tone.)

○̋   မs /má/ 'to do', ခ̋ /khâ/ 'be broken (as a stick)', ခ̌ /khà/ 'be bitter', မ̋ /mà/ 'wife', ဆ̋s /sha?/ 'to sew', မ̌ /ma?/ 'son-in-law'

○̣   ၃s /dɯ́/ 'pear', ယ္ /jɯ̂/ 'to swallow', ဘ္ /6ɯ̀/ 'paddy', ဖ္ /phɯ̀/ 'to jump', ၃s /dəɯ?/ 'to fight', န္ /nəɯ?/ 'to enter'

○̣   ယ္s /jú/ 'to fly', ယ္ /jû/ 'rat', ခ္ /khù/ 'to smoke', ဖ္ /phù/ 'grandfather', ၃s /dou?/ 'room', လ္ /lou?/ 'be used up'

○ (circle with dot)   ဘ̂s /6ó/ 'blister', မ̂ /mô/ 'mother', ခ̌ /khò/ 'head', ဖ̋ /phò/ 'to swell', က̌s /ko?/ 'to call', ယ̌ /jo?/ 'be deep'

○ (circle)   လ̋s /láu/ 'to tell', တ̂s /tɔ́/ 'be straight', ထ̂ /thâu/ 'can contain', ဖ̂ /phâ/ 'to read', အ̌s /ʔàu/ 'to be, exist', န̌ /nɔ̀/ 'that', ထ̋ /thàu/ 'be long, high', န̌ /nɔ̀/ 'to wrestle', ဒ̌s /dɔ?/ 'again'

○̌s   ဖ̂s /phán/ 'inside', အလယ̌s /ʔələjân/ 'weight', ရ̌s≈s /rân̥sân/ 'weight', ၁ရ̣ /θán/ 'three'

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○ː ဖၞႃ /phán/ 'spear', လႃ /lân/ 'place', အၞ /ʔàɴ/ 'to eat', ဆႃ /shàɴ/ 'hen'

ိ ထိၞ /tháuɴ/ 'bridge', ဆိ /shâuɴ/ 'to pick up (a person)', ဖိၞ /phàuɴ/ 'to catch', ထိၞ /thàuɴ/ 'gold'

ိ ဒဲႃ /dĕiɴ/ 'to play (an instrument)', ထဲ /thêiɴ/ 'be intimate', နဲၞ /nèiɴ/ 'year', မဲၞ /mèiɴ/ 'be ripe'

ုု ယုႃ /jáɴ/ 'to roar (as a dog)', ခုႃ /khâɴ/ 'to threaten', အုၞ /ʔàɴ/ 'be cloudy', အုထုၞ /ʔàɴthèɴ/ 'to pick up'

ဲː ယဲႃ /jáiɴ/ 'be far', ခဲ /khâiɴ/ 'to tie around', အဲၞ /ʔàiɴ/ 'to bite', လဲၞ /làiɴ/ 'rocky mountain'

ိ နိႃ /nóuɴ/ 'horn', ဖိ /phôuɴ/ 'to get a hole', ထိၞ /thòuɴ/ 'bag', ၯဖိၞ /ɣouʔphòuɴ/ 'belly'

ုု အဲဒးဆၞႃ /ʔɛ́dîshín/ 'Thomas Edison'

ø ယ /jə/ (preposed form) 'I, me', ကဘၞ /kəɓáɴ/ 'ship', တလႃ /təlà/ 'box'

4.4. Exceptional readings

In WPK written in CS, exceptional spellings can be found in many words. Most of these cases are caused by reading a spelling that reflects the 19c EPK form with the WPK pronunciation, when the sounds of the 19c EPK and WPK forms do not correspond regularly. In the following, some basic words with exceptional readings are discussed.

The pronouns /já/ '1SG' and /ná/ '2SG' are spelled ယꩡꩤ and နꩡꩤ, respectively. The regular readings of these spellings in WPK are /jə́/ and /nə́/, but these readings are incorrect. They are spelled this way because the corresponding 19c EPK forms are */jə̀/ and */nə̀/ (cf. CEPK /jə̀/ and /nə̀/). Similarly, the pronoun /bá/ '1PL' is spelled ဗꩡꩤ. The regular reading of this spelling in WPK is /pə́/, but this reading is incorrect. This is because the corresponding 19c EPK form is */pə̀/ (cf. CEPK /pə̀/). The reading of this pronoun is irregular both in the initial and the rhyme.

The preposition /ɓó/ 'as, like' is spelled ဘဲႃ. The regular reading of this spelling in WPK is /ɓài/ or /ɓɛ̀/, but neither of these readings is correct. This is because the corresponding 19c EPK form is */bɛ̂/ (cf. CEPK /bɛ̂/). In addition, the first syllables of the forms ဘဲႃယိ /bəjə́/ 'like this' and ဘဲႃနိ /bənô/ 'like that' are read as /bə/ (these

forms may also be read as /ɓójɔ́/ and /ɓónɔ̂/). They are spelled this way because the corresponding 19c EPK forms are */bêjɔ̀/ (cf. CEPK /bêjɔ̀/) and */bênɔ́/ (cf. CEPK /bênɔ́/). Note that the first consonant in /bəjɔ̀/ and /bənɔ̂/ is /b-/, not /ɓ-/. Note also that the second syllable of /bənɔ̂/ has the falling tone, not the low-level tone. This is consistent with the fact that the second syllable of the WPK demonstrative အနိုဟ်ု /ʔənɔ̂/ 'that one' has the falling tone instead of the low-level tone, which is expected from the 19c EPK form */ʔənɔ́/ (cf. CEPK /ʔənɔ́/).

The verb /pwí/ 'be tired' is spelled ဝ့ဲ်s. The regular reading of this spelling in WPK is /pwei̯ʔ/, but this reading is incorrect. This spelling follows the corresponding 19c EPK form */pwàiʔ/ (cf. CEPK /pwài/).

The noun /jèiɴ/ 'house' is spelled ဟ့ိၟ. The regular reading of this spelling in WPK is /ɣèiɴ/, but this reading is incorrect. This spelling follows the corresponding 19c EPK form */ɣéiɴ/ (cf. CEPK /ɣéiɴ/).

The verb /ʔàiɴ/ 'be narrow' is spelled အ့ိၟ. The regular reading of this spelling in WPK is /ʔèiɴ/, but this reading is incorrect. This is because the corresponding 19c EPK form is */ʔéiɴ/ (cf. CEPK /ʔéiɴ/).

The particle /dɛ̌/ 'and' is spelled ဒဲ, whose regular reading in WPK is /dãi/ or /dɛ̂/. The corresponding 19c EPK form is */dē/ (CEPK /dē/), as it is spelled. This particle /dɛ̌/ is considered to be a loanword borrowed from EPK into WPK through written language because it is seldom heard in WPK daily conversation. It is unknown why it is not pronounced as it is spelled, given that it was borrowed through written language. Note that the particle /lɔ́/ 'and' is used in daily conversation.

The noun /caiʔ/ 'Buddha; God' is unique in terms of phonology, because a glottal stop does not appear after a diphthong /-ai/. I regard this as an exception to the phonological rule. In practice, it is often pronounced with the pronunciation /câi/, which fits the phonological rule. The reason for this exception is that this word is a borrowing of Mon /cyac/ 'Buddha'. To represent this exceptional pronunciation, WPK spells it as ကဲ့s or ကဲ့ι. Usually, the vowel symbol ◌ဲ is not combined with the tonal symbol ◌s or ◌ι. In this regard, the word is also an exception to spelling. The 19c EPK form with the same meaning is */cjàiʔ/ (cf. CEPK /cài/), and the spelling in EPK based on this pronunciation is ကဲ့s.

4.5. Difficulties in writing Western Pwo Karen in CS

CS reflects the phonological system of the 19c EPK. Therefore, there are several aspects of CS that do not fit the WPK phonological system. In this section, we discuss two major difficulties.

The first difficulty is the notation of tones. There are two notations for the low-level tone: ○ⵏ and ○ⵓ. There are also two notations for the checked tone: ○ⵚ and ○ⵂ. These notations are used to distinguish between the tones of 19c EPK, and it is sufficient to have one notation for each to correctly represent the low-level tone and the checked tone of the WPK. These notations can be used correctly if one knows the pronunciation of CEPK, but many WPK speakers do not know the pronunciation of CEPK. As a result, WPK speakers often make mistakes when writing tones.

The second difficulty refers to the notation of the vowels. WPK has a distinction between /-au/ and /-ɔ/. For example, /jáu/ 'be of strong sunlight' and /jɔ́/ 'this' are pronounced differently. However, in CS, these two words are written as ယွ�ဲ using the same spelling. Furthermore, WPK has a distinction between /-ai/ and /-ɛ/. For example, the second syllable of ꩸ꩇꩳⵏ /dəwʔnài/ 'to show' and the the sentence-final particle ꩳⵏ /nɛ̀/, used to ask for the listener's agreement, have different vowels, but they are spelled the same in CS. This difficulty with vowel notation does not seem to be as large as the difficulty with tone notation for WPK speakers. This is probably because it is easier to have fewer distinctions when writing, and when reading, native speakers can judge the correct way to read from the context.

5. Sample text

This section presents the WPK text written in CS. Here, I will quote a story presented by RVA Pwo Karen, a Western Pwo Karen channel on YouTube, in one of their videos. The URLs of the channel and video are as follows (checked on October 27, 2021).

The name of the channel: RVA Pwo Karen

  https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCoB8vBfCmPEAnpdm0UaMzNw

The title of the video (in Burmese): ကရင်ရှိုးရာပုံပြင် ကဏ္ဍ (၁၂)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0pHIzupwpCw

The story is given in CS in Section 5.1. Some of the wording of the story has changed. Section 5.2 provides the transcription and translation of the story.

5.1. The original text in CS

"ဘ္ဒြ္လိၤနဖဲၤ အ့ၤဂ့ၤဘၤ, အ့ၤလမ္ဒြဲ ကကဲၤဆၤကၤ"

(1) လၤဖ္ဒုၚဖ္ဒုၚအီၚ ပုမုၤလဂၤအဖိၤခွါအီၚဝ့ၤကဂၤဂ့ၚ အဝၚဘၤဒၤခွဲၚတၤ လၤဆၤကၤဆၤဂဲၤအဖၤၚဘၤၚအီၚထၤးမုၤမဲၤလၤ အဝၚအလၤးခဲၤလီၤ.

(2) လါန့ၤ ပုမုၤယီၤ လၤအဖိၤခွါ ကမိၤမၤနီၚ ကျ္ၚစၤၚမၤဘၤအၤၚဝ့ၤ လီၚဘၤအ့ၤဝ့ၤအၤၚ ကိၤကူၤဒ့ၤလီၤ.

(3) မ္ဒြဲဆၤဘၤၚနီၚ ဖိၤခွါလဂၤယီၤ စၤထၤၚလၤ အဖိၤၚဆၤဒံ ထီးပီၚထၤၚအခၤ အမိၤလီၚဘၤ အၤဝ့ၤအၤၚ ကိၤကူၤဘၤၚ.

(4) ဖိၤခွါနီၚ ယုၤယါထၤး အဲၤလၤဒ္ဒြၤန့ အၤၚလီၤ.

(5) မ္ဒြဲယိၤထဲၚအမိၤအၤၚ လၤၚလၤၚဘၤၚလီၤ.

(6) ကနံၚနီၚတၤ ဖိၤၚခွါယီၚ ဒၤပုမုၤန့ၤၚပ္ဒြၤလၤ လဂၤနီၚ ဘၤအၤၚပုမုၤနီၚဘ္ဒြ္ ပုမုၤပ္ဒြၤလၤယီၚ အဆၤအဲၤကၤၚအၤၚၚနီၚ တခၤဒၤ ကၤဘၤမၤနၤၚမံၚ ကမၤဝ့ၤ ထီၚအလူၤ အၤၚကံၚ အၤၚယၤၚဝ့ၤ ဘၤၚဆၤကၤအဲၤၚဆၤၚ့ထဲၚ့ အၤဒ်ၤလီၤ.

(7) အနီၚဘ္ဒြ် ပုမုၤနီၚ စၤၚဆၤၚ့ထဲၚ့အၤဝ့ၤ အၤၚမ္ဒြဲ နၤမိၤမၤၚယဆၤၚအဲၤၚနီၚ ဂဲၤန့ၤအၤၚယၤၚ နၤမိၤအၤ့ၤၚအၤၚ ယၤကဒ့ၤအၤ့ ယၤထ္ဒြုၚ့အၤၚၚနီၚၚလီၤ.

(8) အနီၚၚကၤ့ၤ ဖိၤၚခွါယီၚ ဆ္ဒြ္ၚမ္ဒြ္ၚအၤ့ၤၚပၤ လၤၚဆၤၚနၤၚမံၚ့လၤအၤၚ့ဂ့ၚ ထဲၚ့မၤဘၤၤ အမိၤမိ ပ္ဒြ္ၚထၤၚ့ဝ့ၤ အၤ့ၤ့အၤၚကဂ့ၚ ဂဲၤၚဘဲၚ့န္ဒြ္ၚဝၤ့လၤ အဖိၤၚၚမု့ၤအၤၚအီၚ လၤၚဆၤၚဒၤ့ပ္ဒြ္ၚဖ္ဒြုၚ့ဖ္ဒြုၚ့လူၚ့ အၤဘိၤၚ့ၤၚဘၤၚၚနီၚ အၤ့ၤ့အၤ့ၤၚခၤ့ၤ့ၚ့ဘၤၚၚထၤၚ့ၤ့ၚ့ လၤ့ထၤ့ၚၚဖၤဝ့ၤၚၚဒၤ့ၤပၤၚလီၤ.

(9) ထၤၚ့ၚဖုၚ့ဝဲၤမုၤ့ၚ့ခွၤၚ့ဂံၚ့ၚဇွ္ၚ.

(10) အထီၚ့ၚအခၤနီၚ အမိၤအၤၚလူၚ ဂၤၚ့ၤ့ၚဂီၚ့ၚၤၤထၤၚ့ၚၤလၤၚအၤၚစူ့ၚ့ၚယၤ့ၚၚဒ့ၚ့အၤၚဖၤ့ၚၤခၤ့ၚ လၤၚမိၤၚအၤ့ၤ့ၚအၤၚ အၤၚလီၚၚနီၚ "ဖိၤၚခွါၤၚ့ဒၤ့ဘ္ဒြ္ၚ့ဇွ္ၚ, မၤၚနၤဘၤ့ၚ့ထၤၚ့ၚဒၤၚဘၤ့ၚ့နဲၚ့ ဆၤၚ့ခၤ့ၚထၤၚ့ၚဒၤ့ၚ့ၤ့ၚ" နီၚၚလီၤ.

(11) ပုရွၤၚၤဖိၤၚ့ၚယီၚ့ၚၚနီၚ မ္ဒြ္ၚ့ၤ့ဒၤ့ၚထီၚ့ၚ့ယီၚ့ၚၚၤလီၚ့ၚ့ခဲၤ့ၚ.

(12) လၤၚရွၤၚၤၤဖၤ့ၤ့ၚ မိၤၚလဂ့ၚ့ၚၚယီၚ့ၚ အၤ့ၤ့ၚၤ့ၚၤ့ဘၤ့ၚ့ၤ့လၤ့ၚ့ၚ့ၤ့ခၤ့ၤ့ၚ့ နၤ့ၚ့ အၤၚ့ၤ့ဆၤ့ၚၤ့ၚအဲၤ့ၚၤ့ၚ့ၚၤၚၚၤ့နီၚ့ၤ ခ္ဒြ္ၚ့ၚ့ၤ့ၚ့ၚ့ဒံၚ့ၚဆၤ့ၤ့ၚၚ့လၤၚ့ၚ့ၚ အၤ့ၤ့ဖိၤၚၚအၤ့ၚၤၚကၤ့ၤ့ၚ့ဒံၚ့ၚၚ့ၚလီၤ.

(13) လၤၚရွၤၚၤၤဖၤ့ၤ့ၚၚ့ယီၚ့ၚၚ့မိၤၚ့ၤ့လီၚ့ၚ့မ္ဒြ္ၚ့ၤ့ၚ့အၤ့ၤ့ၚ့ၚၤ.

(14) ခးသဲၢ့ထၢၟ့ဘံၟ့ယၢမိလဖၟ အဆ္ၟအဲၟ့ဟ္ၟဒဲၟ့ဂ္ၟ၁ၟ လ႑ဖိၟ့ဝံၟ့အဖ္ၟ့ခဲ႑ ၀္ၟ့၀္ၟ့လဲၟ့နဲ
ၗ္ၟ့ယၢၣ်ၢ့ၢ့ၢ့၂ၟ့ၢ့၂ၟ့.

(15) လၢ်နၟ့ ယမိဖ္ၟ့ကိၟ့ဖ္ၟ့ထဲ၂ၟ့ဘ႑ မိလဖ႑ အၟ့န္ၟ့ဝံၟ့အဲၟ့ နံၟ့အဖိၟတၢ့ရ္ၟ့နီၟ့
ထၢၟ့လီ၂ၟ့ဘ႑ အ၀္ၟ့၁ၟ့အ၁၁ ကိၢ်မံၟ့ ဘၢ့ရ္ၟ့ဖ္ၟ့၂ၟ့ယီၟ့မိလ၀္ၟ့နံၟ့လီၢ.

5.2. Transcription and translation

"θàuɴlò nə   phò   ʔèɣéɓà, ʔè   lə   mwê, kə   kài   shəkà"
 teach 2SG child well   if   NEG COP   IRR   become difficulty
'Educate your children well. Otherwise, difficulties will arise.'

(1) lɔ́   phlóuɴphlóuɴ ʔó   pəmùɪ   lə   ɣá   ʔə   phòkhwà
     LOC   long.ago   that   woman   one   NCh   3SG   son

     ʔàu   wè   kə   ɣá   ɣáuɴ,
     be   EMP   one   NCh   and

     ʔə   wá   θìdà   khwei?   ta?,   lɔ́   shəkàshəɣái ʔəphóɴ
     3SG   husband die.ahead thoroughly and   LOC   difficulty   inside

     ɓà   ʔàuthâɴ   mùmài   lɔ́   ʔə   wá   ʔəlâɴkhàiɴ   lɔ̀.
     must   remain   widow   LOC   3SG   husband behind   AST
     'A long time ago, a woman had a son. Her husband died, leaving her behind,
     and she was living as a widow in a difficult situation.'

(2) lânàɴ   pəmùɪ   jɔ́   lɔ́   ʔə   phòkhwà   kə   mô   má   nɔ̀
     but   woman   this   LOC   3SG   son   IRR   want.to take TOP

     kliʔsiʔ[1]   má   ʔè   wè,   láuɴ   ɓà   ʔè   wè   ʔə   θa?
     endeavor   do   APb   EMP   follow BA   APb   EMP   3SG   mind

     ko?   cà   ɗè?   lɔ̀.
     every   time   every AST
     'However, this woman did her best to do what her son wanted and always
     indulged him.'

(3) mwê   shə   ɓónɔ̂,   phòkhwà   lə   ɣá   jɔ́
     COP   thing like.that son   one   NCh   this

     sa?   thàɴ   lɔ́   ʔə   phòθà   shei?
     begin   up   LOC   3SG   youngster small

     thâuɴ   xó   thàɴ   ʔəkhà,   ʔə   mô   láuɴ   ɓà
     until   big   up   time   3SG   mother follow BA

ʔəwèʔə   θaʔ   koʔ   cà   ɓoʔ.
3SG   mind   every   time   BO

'In this way, from the time this son was a small child until he grew up, his mother always indulged him.'

(4) phòkhwà   nɔ̀   jùjâthân   ʔài   lán   dânê   ʔə   θaʔ   lɔ̀.
    son   TOP   accustomed love   down   only   3SG   MID   AST

'The son became accustomed to loving only himself.'

(5) mwê   jô   tháiɴ   ʔə   mômô   ʔəɣân
    COP   look   back   3SG   mother   sake

    lə   θè   lán   ɓà   lɔ̀.
    NEG   can   anymore NEG   AST

'He could no longer take care of his mother.'

(6) kə   ní   nɔ̀taʔ   phòθàkhwà   jɔ́
    one   day   TOP   son   this

    dã   pəmùⁿáɴ   xìlá   lə   ɣá   nɔ̀,
    see   girl   beautiful   one   NCh   after

    ɓà   ʔə   θaʔ   pəmùⁱ   nɔ̀   ɓoʔ,
    hit   3SG   MID   female   because   BO

    pəmùⁱ   xìlá   jɔ́   ʔə   shəʔài   kə   nê   ʔəɣân   nɔ̀,
    female   beautiful   this   3SG   love(n.)   IRR   get   sake   TOP

    təkhádã   kə   ɓà   má   nán²   méiɴ,   kə   má   wè   thâuɴʔəlouʔ,
    whatever   IRR must do   any   kind   IRR   do   EMP   all

    ʔàɴkéiɴ   ʔàɴjà   wè
    request   ask.for   EMP

    ɓó   shə   kə   ʔàishɔ̀ɴ   tháiɴ   ʔəθoʔ   lɔ̀.
    so.that   IMPS   IRR   love   back   sake   AST

'One day, this son met a beautiful girl and liked her so much that he did everything possible to win her love, and asked her to love him back.'

(7) ʔənɔ̂   ɓoʔ,   pəmùⁱ   nɔ̀   seiʔshɔ̀ɴ   tháiɴ   ʔəwè,
    that   BO   female   TOP   reply   back   3SG

    "ʔè   mwê   nə   mô   má   jə   shəʔài   nɔ̀,
     if   COP   2SG   want.to   take   1SG   love(n.)   TOP

    ɣài   nê   ʔè   já   nə   mô   ʔəθɔ̀ɴʔəθaʔ,
    come   get   APb   1SG   2SG   mother   guts

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jə kə dɤɯʔ ʔàɴ jə thwì ʔəɣân" nɔ̀ lɔ̀.
1SG IRR let eat 1SG dog sake that AST

'Then the girl replied, "If you want to earn my love, bring me your mother's entrails to feed my dog." '

(8) ʔənɔ̂ kə cà phòθàkhwà jɔ́
that one time boy this

sháuɴmàuɴ³ ʔàɴxaʔ lɔ́ shə náɴ méiɴ lə ʔeʔ ɣáuɴ,
think search LOC thing any kind anymore NEG and

tháiɴ má θì ʔə mômô, xweʔ thàɴ wè ʔəθə̀ɴʔəθaʔ ɣáuɴ,
return make die 3SG mother cut up EMP guts and

ɣài sàiɴ nê wè lɔ́ ʔə phòθàmùɪ ʔə ʔàu
come run get EMP LOC 3SG girl 3SG place

lɔ́ shəθaʔxwì phlàiphlàileʔ ʔəɓóuɴɓaʔ nɔ̀,
LOC pleasure very.fast interval TOP

ʔəwèʔə khàɴ ɓàthə́ɴ láɴthíphâ wèdã lɔ̀.
3SG leg stumble fall EMP AST

'Then the boy, no longer thinking about anything else, went home, killed his mother, cut out her entrails, and ran at full speed toward the girl with them in joy. At that moment, he tripped and fell.'

(9) thə̀ɴphûwâimùɪkhwà θì ɣə́⁴.
sister.and.brother PL hey

'Oh, my brethren and sisters!'

(10) ʔəthɔ̂ʔəkhà nɔ̀ ʔə mô ʔə lû ɣə̀ɴ θàu thàɴ
time that 3SG mother 3SG voice hear loud up

lɔ́ ʔə sùjàɴθaʔ ʔəpháɴkhò⁵ lɔ́ mô ʔəθə̀ɴʔəθaʔ ʔəláuɴ nɔ̀
LOC 3SG palm upside LOC mother guts on TOP

"phòkhwà θaʔɓáuɴ ɣə́,
son young hey

mə nə ɓàtheiʔɓànàiɴ shàkhoʔtheiʔ ɣà" nɔ̀ lɔ̀.
COP 2SG collide to.severely.ache Q that AST

'It was then that his mother's voice came loudly from her entrails on his palm. "My young son, did it hurt when you fell?" '

(11) pəɕáphò jɔ́ nɔ̀ mwê dã thâuɴjɔ́ lɔ̀ nὲ.
humans this TOP COP just like.this AST isn't.it

'This is what being human is all about, isn't it?'

(12) ló   ɕâ   bóɴ   mô   lə   ɣá   jó   ʔè   θì   lânàn,
     LOC   folktale inside mother   one   NCh   this if   die   though

     ʔə   shəʔài   nò   khláiɴ   ɗeiʔ   zô
     3SG   love(n.) TOP   speak   still thing

     ló   ʔə   phò   ʔəɣân   ɗeiʔ   lò.
     LOC   3SG   child sake   still AST
     'In the folktale, the mother died, but her love was so strong that she even spoke
     out for her child.'

(13) ló   ɕâ   bóɴ   jó   mô   lò   mwê   ʔeʔ.
     LOC   folktale inside this   mother   only   COM   NEG
     'It is not just the mother in the folktale.'

(14) khânθàiɴ   thəɴɓèiɴjà   mô   ləphà   ʔə   shəʔài   xóɗò   wèdà
     world   all.over   mother   PL   3PL   love(n.) big   EMP

     ló   phò   θì   ʔəphánkhò   xwépəθè   lài   nò
     LOC   child PL   upside   how.much   Q   TOP

     pə   θèjà   koʔ   ɣá   nɛ̀.
     1PL   know   every   NCh   isn't.it
     'We all know how much mothers all over the world love their children, don't
     we?'

(15) lânàn   jə   mô   phèkòuɴphètháiɴ   ɓà   mô   ləphà,
     however 1SG   want.to advise   BA   mother   PL

     ʔè   nəθì   ʔài   nəθìʔə   phò   təɕâ   nò,
     if   2PL   love   2PL   child   really   TOP

     thəɴ   láuɴ   ɓà   ʔəwèθìʔə   θaʔ   koʔ   méiɴ
     even   follow   BA   3PL   mind   every   kind

     ɓó   ɕâ   bóɴ   jó   mô   ləɣé   nò   lò.
     as   folktale inside this   mother   don't   that AST
     'However, I would like to give some advice to mothers. If you really love your
     children, you should not spoil them like the mother in this folktale.'

Note 1: /kliʔsiʔ/ 'to endeavor' is also pronounced /kleʔsiʔ/ as spelled. The spelling follows
19c EPK */klèʔcì/ (cf. CEPK /klècì ~ klìcì/).

Note 2: The literal pronunciation of /nán/ 'any' is /nâɴ/, and although it is sometimes
pronounced this way, it is usually pronounced /nán/. The spelling follows 19c EPK */nāɴ/ (cf.
CEPK /nāɴ/).

Note 3: The first syllable of /sháuɴmàuɴ/ 'to think' is not pronounced with the low-level tone

as spelled, but with the high-level tone. The spelling follows 19c EPK */chônmóɴ/ (cf. CEPK /chônmóɴ/).

Note 4: The sentence-final particle /ɣɔ́/ 'hey' is spelled according to the 19c EPK pronunciation */ʁē/ (cf. CEPK /ʁē ~ ʁé/). The pronunciation as spelled is /ɣê/, but this pronunciation is incorrect.

Note 5: The second syllable of /ʔəpháɴkhò/ is not pronounced with the low-level tone as spelled, but with the high-level tone. The spelling follows 19c EPK */ʔəphâɴkhó/ (cf. CEPK /ʔəphâɴkhó/).

6. Concluding remarks

We have seen how WPK is written in CS. Interestingly, CS was first created as a writing system for EPK and later became the writing system for WPK. We have also seen how Baptist missionaries changed the readings of CS to use it as a writing system for WPK.

When they started using CS as the writing system for WPK, the Baptist missionaries did not modify the spelling. They read CS with WPK pronunciation by using the regular phonological correspondences between WPK and EPK. The highly systematic nature of CS has made this happen. CS reflects the sounds of the 19c EPK in a nearly one-to-one manner. If it were not for this high degree of systematicity, it would have been impossible to use it as a WPK writing system.

I call this writing system the Christian Pwo Karen Script, because the creator of this writing system was a Christian missionary. However, this term is not exactly appropriate in the context of the current use of this script, because CS is now beginning to be popular among Buddhist Pwo Karens, and even Buddhist monks are beginning to use it. As a case where a writing system created by Christian missionaries is being used by other religious believers, we are reminded of Quốc Ngữ of Vietnamese. Even if the initial purpose of creating a writing system is to propagate a particular religion, if it is accepted by a large number of people, it can achieve the status of an orthography for that language. I would like to conclude this article, emphasizing that CS has already reached a stage where it can be called an orthography of Western Pwo Karen.

Abbreviations

APb = applicative marker denoting benefaction; AST = particle indicating assertion;

BA = verb particle /ɓà/ indicating opportunity or inadvertence; BO = particle /ɓoʔ/ or /ɓó/ having a function of softening the speaker's tone; BS = Buddhist Pwo Karen Script; CEPK = contemporary Eastern Pwo Karen; COP = copular verb; CS = Christian Pwo Karen Script; EMP = emphasis; EPK = Eastern Pwo Karen; IMPS = impersonal subject; IRR = irrealis; LOC = particle indicating location, goal, and source; MID = middle marker; n. = noun; NCh = numeral classifier for a human; NEG = negativity; PL = plural; Q = question; REL = relative marker; SG = singular; TOP = topic; 1 = first person; 2 = second person; 3 = third person; 19c EPK = 19th-century Eastern Pwo Karen.

Acknowledgments

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Errata for Kato (2021) "Pwo Karen writing systems"

1. p. 29, the first line below Table 8:

    Incorrect: There are 7 open rhymes, as shown in Table 9.

    Correct: There are 7 nasalized rhymes, as shown in Table 9.

2. p. 44, Table 22, the line of ○ႂ (the fifth line from the top):

    Incorrect: -ɯ̄   →   Correct: -ɯ̄ (*-ɯ̄)

    Incorrect: -ɯ̂   →   Correct: -ɯ̂ (*-ɯ̂)

3. p. 45. Insert the text below as the first note below Table 22:

● When ◌̥ is combined with the basic letter ၀ or the subscript ◌ၟ, it is read /-e/ instead of /-i̠/, e.g., အ၀ၟၢ /ʔəwê/. This is because the change from 19c EPK */-e/ to CEPK /-i̠/ did not occur after the initial consonant /w-/ or the medial consonant /-w-/, and */-e/ was retained as /-e/ in these environments.