

# A Primer on Mitaeme

A Common Language

# I SPELLING & PRONUNCIATION

Mitamee features twelve consonants. In this primer, the letter used to write each consonant will be included between single brackets, (...), while the pronunciation will be written in the International Phonetic Alphabet and placed between forward slashes, /.../, and a rough example in Standard American English provided.

Mitamee's vowels are written with only one letter and their spelling and pronunciation never changes. Thus, (e) is always /ɪ/, the sound at the beginning of "choose," never /ɛ/, the sound at the beginning of "car" which is always written with a (k). Mitamee's vowels are also quite simple as there are only five:

(a) /ə/	"boat"
(e) /ə/	"sofa"
(i) /ɪ/	"boot"
(u) /ʊ/	"hand"
(ə) /ʌ/	"spec"

(w) /v ~ v/	(l) /l/	(y) /j/	"wack"	"yak"
(f) /ɸ ~ f/	(s) /s/	"shin"	"fed"	"said"
(p) /p/	(t) /t/	"kin"	(g) /f/ ~ /ʃ/	"head"
(m) /m/	(n) /n/	"kin"	(k) /k/	"pin"
(h) /h/				"tin"

Techincally, the Standard American approximates here are not very accurate. English's (e), (o), and (a) are not the same as their Mitameen counterparts. Mitamee's vowels are closest to those found in Spanish, as in /i/, "píra," /e/, "pero," /ə/, "casa," /u/, "cuarto," and /o/, "caser." Similarly, the Japanese vowels are good examples: /i/, "二郎 (niko)," /e/, "三郎 (nako)," /a/, "四郎 (kuko)," and /o/, "二郎 (oko)." However, the Mitameen /u/ is rounded, unlike the Japanese /u/. Vowels are always pronounced the same way regardless of where they appear, and they never affect the pronunciation of adjacent consonants. However, there are certain rules concerning the pronunciation of diphthongs (which we'll get to soon).

Finally, there exists the sound, /u/, an allolear tap (the single "j" in Spanish words such as "perro" or "para" or "botella") which is written (i). This is a marginal phoneme in Mitamee and it is only used in proper nouns or adjectives referring to specific people or places. For example, this enables Mitamee to adopt the word, **Мария** (maria), as (maria) or **Пётр** (Piotr) as (rossija) (rossya). This sound is never found in general vocabulary.

Having covered all the phonemes, we can now talk about the ways they can combine together.

## 2 SYLLABLE STRUCTURE

Syllables are described as having having an optional beginning consonant (an onset), an optional on-glide, a vowel, an optional off-glide, and an optional ending consonant (a coda).

Onset	On-Glide	Vowel	Off-Glide	Coda
ω	μ	ν	μ	κ
{ any }	{ j w }	{ i e u o a }	{ j w }	{ n }

The on-glide may only appear when there is an onset consonant, while the off-glide can appear with or without a coda. However, no on-glide is allowed when the onset is either /j/ or /w/. In addition, /j/ cannot serve as an on-glide or off-glide in a syllable containing the vowel /i/, and the same goes for /w/ and the vowel /u/. Lastly, a word cannot contain a syllable ending in a vowel followed by a syllable beginning with another vowel.

When serving as a glide, /j/ is written as ⟨i⟩ and /w/ is written as ⟨u⟩. This helps distinguish between syllables ending in a nasal that are followed by an onset /j/ and those ending in a vowel and followed by an onset /n/ with an on-glide /j/, as in ⟨ania⟩ /a.nja/ and ⟨anya⟩ /an.ja/. Similarly, a word like ⟨aiata⟩ is pronounced /aj.a.ta/, whereas ⟨ayata⟩ is always /a.ja.ta/. However, this does lead to some potential ambiguities that require an explicit rule: when following an onset consonant, the sequences ⟨ui⟩ and ⟨iu⟩ are always on-glides followed by vowels, as in /kwi/ and /kju/, and are never vowels followed by off-glides, as in \*/kui/ or \*/kiw/. In any case, no words are distinguished based on syllable boundaries alone, but for clarity and aesthetics this spelling is preferred.

A coda /n/ is pronounced and written as ⟨m⟩ when it appears before /m p w/. Its spelling remains the same before ⟨k⟩ but it is pronounced as [ŋ] (the “ng” in “sing”). Otherwise, it is written ⟨n⟩ and pronounced /n/.

## 3 COMPOUNDS

A quick note on compound words is required, as this introduces an additional character into the spelling system: the hyphen. Compound words have each constituent word separated by a hyphen. Thus, the word for “motorcycle” which is composed of the Mitaeme words, ⟨moto⟩ and ⟨saikale⟩, is written as ⟨moto-saikale⟩. While this is prescribed, it is one of Mitaeme’s only flexible rules. In a situation where the meaning of a word is relatively unambiguous, dropping the hyphen from compound words is common. You may see both ⟨moto-saikale⟩ and ⟨motosaikale⟩. The hyphen is used to disambiguate when necessary and to form new compounds that aren’t already in common use.

Some lexicalized adjective-noun pairs—such as the plural second- and third-person pronouns, ⟨ta ni⟩ and ⟨ta ye⟩—may also appear hyphenated, ⟨ta-ni⟩ and ⟨ta-ye⟩, though this is done for clarity’s sake and ease-of-reading.

## 4 GRAMMAR

Mitaeme’s grammar is designed to be elegant, simple, and fun. We can summarize its basic structure in a few rules.

LINKS 8

If you want to read the digital version of this primer or join the online [Ultraeme community](#), check out the links below:



A standard black and white QR code located in the top right corner of the page, which links to the website.

- This page contains a collage of QR codes and icons. The top section features a large QR code with a blue circular icon containing a person symbol below it. The bottom section features a large QR code with a blue circular icon containing a globe symbol below it. The background is white.

- **kan** —verb, from Mandarin, 看 (kàn)  
“to look (at) / to see / to watch / to read”
- **saikale** —noun, from Hindustani, साइकल (sāikal)  
“bicycle / bike”
- **motosaikale / moto-saikale** —noun, from ⟨moto⟩ + ⟨saikale⟩  
“motorcycle / moped / scooter”
- **auto / auto-mopile / automopile** —noun, from Spanish, *automóvil*  
“car / automobile”
- **kali** —noun, from Hindustani, गली (gali)  
“street / lane / road / route”
- **mita** —noun, from Hindustani, मित्र (mitra)  
“friend / companion”
- **mitaeme / mita-eme** —noun, from ⟨mita⟩ “friend” + ⟨eme⟩ “language”  
“language of friends”

## 7 THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Let's close with a translation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, or in Mitaeme, *Amma Yan Cuanli Peyanname*. Hopefully, this will give you a small taste of the language in-action.

ta yan pei siyou akuce hafe seime mayata i cuanli.  
all person PV free birth have same dignity CONJ right  
*All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.*

ta ye pei tewa locika i tawiya  
all 3 PV give logic CONJ conscience  
*They are endowed with reason and conscience*

i solen niau pehanten pa mita te ceitu.  
CONJ OBLIG RECIP treat instr friend gen manner  
*and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.*

- 5. **Serial Verb Constructions** —Mitaeme makes use of serial verb constructions to convey complex events. This is done by chaining verbs together, one after the other. If a verb is followed by an object in one of these chains, it is assumed to be the subject or instrument of the subsequent verb.

- man usa naife kata papeu —1SG use knife cut paper  
*I use the knife to cut the paper.*
- ye sita leka siensia puka —3SG sit write science book  
*She sits and writes a scientific book.*

- 6. **Particle Order** —Particles may appear sentence-initially, sentence-finally, or before the verb they modify. Double negatives may be used for emphasis without canceling out. In serial verb constructions, particles must come before any verb which they specifically modify. This includes situations in which auxiliary verbs, such as ⟨pei⟩, are used in tandem with other verbs.

- man na tinke man te ca na —1SG NEG drink 1SG GEN tea NEG  
*I do not drink my tea.*
- ta yan pei siyou akuce —all person PV free birth  
*All humans are born free.*

There are no exceptions to the rules outlined here, except perhaps in the writing of personal names. Otherwise, one shouldn't loan words into Mitaeme without altering them, if necessary, to fit the pronunciation, spelling, and syllable structure rules outlined here. For this reason, there is a strong preference for words that feature sounds with close analogues in Mitaeme. By maintaining a 1-to-1, consistent spelling system and a bare-bones sound system, we avoid putting unnecessary strain on new learners, even if it does necessitate making alterations to new words added to the lexicon. On this topic, we might as well devote the last section of this primer to a few vocabulary words so that you can start using the language.

## 5 FUNCTIONAL VOCABULARY

We're going to separate our vocabulary lists into two sections: functional and substantive. In this list, we'll cover many of the function words that appear with higher frequency in Mitaemen texts.

- **man** —pronoun, “I / me” —from Persian, نم (man) —This is the singular, first-person pronoun. Since Mitaeme does not ever change the forms of its words, there is no difference between “I” and “me.”
  - man ale a ni te kasa —1SG go LOC 2SG GEN house  
*I am going to your house.*
- **ni** —pronoun, “you” —from Mandarin Chinese, 你 (nǐ) —This is the singular, second-person pronoun. It is used to refer to the listener. Mitaeme does not make any distinction between informal and formal forms of “you,” as can be found in many of the Romance and Sinitic languages, among others.
  - ni ai man ma —2SG love 1SG INT  
*Do you love me?*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| • <b>ya</b> —pronoun, „she/he” —from Hindustani, <u>ही</u> (hi)  | —first-person pronoun. It is used to talk about groups that include the speaker.   |
| • <b>ta man / ta-ma-ni</b> —pronoun, „we” —extended from (ta ni) —This is the plural, first-person pronoun. It is used to talk about groups that include the speaker.                          | —ta-man have many cars<br>—ta-ma-ni —pronoun, „you all” —calque of English, <u>Y'all</u> —This is the plural, second-person pronoun. It is used to talk about groups that include the listener, but not the speaker. |
| • <b>ta</b> —pronoun, „you all” —calque of English, <u>you all</u> —This is the plural, second-person pronoun. It is used to talk about groups that include the listener, but not the speaker. | —We have many cars.<br>—ta-ma-ni mita (mita) —aff all 1 friend(~pl)<br>—so-ta-man mita (mita) —aff all 1 friend(~pl)<br>—Yes, we are friends.  |
| • <b>tya</b> —verb, from French, <u>aller</u>  | —Did you all write in pencil?<br>—ta ni ma leka pa penzi —all 2 INT write INSTR pencil   |
| • <b>ale</b> —verb, from Russian, <u>хотеть</u> (xotet')   | —ta ye na canna usa kamputata ne —all 3 NEG know use computer EMPH.JINT<br>—They don't know how to use a computer, right?  |
| • <b>pama</b> —verb, from Hindustani, <u>पाना</u> (pana)   | —ta ye / ty-a —pronoun, „they all” —extended from (ta ni) —This is the plural, third-person pronoun. It is used to talk about groups that include neither the speaker nor the listener.                              |
| • <b>re</b> —verb, from Naija, <u>dey</u>  | —ta ye / ty-a —pronoun, „they all” —extended from (ta ni) —This is the plural, third-person pronoun. It is used to talk about groups that include neither the speaker nor the listener.                              |
| • <b>suo</b> —adjective, from Mandarin, <u>做</u> (zuo)   | —ta ye don't know how to use a computer, right?  |
| • <b>nati / suo-tei</b> —noun / adjective  | —man hafe cuanya pati —Isg have zero bowl —I have zero bowls.  |
| • <b>nati</b> —adjective, from Vietnamese, <u>này</u>  | —man hafe cuanya pati —Isg have zero bowl —I have zero bowls.  |
| • <b>nati / nati-tei</b> —noun / adjective   | —jī —noun / adjective, „one / I” —from Mandarin Chinese, —(yi)   |
| • <b>nati</b> —adjective, from Vietnamese, <u>nhảy</u>   | —two —noun / adjective, „two / 2” —from English, two   |
| • <b>tiin</b> —noun / adjective, „three / 3” —from Marathi, दो (do)  | —m —noun / adjective, „four / 4” —from Tagalog, apat   |
| • <b>tiina</b> —noun / adjective, „five / 5” —from Indonesian, lima  | —apa —noun / adjective, „six / 6” —from Arabic, أربعة (arba'a)   |
| • <b>stia</b> —noun / adjective, „seven / 7” —from Spanish, siete  | —siete —noun / adjective, „seven / 8” —from Japanese, カ (kachi)  |
| • <b>hact</b> —noun / adjective, „eight / 8” —from Hindustani, <u>हृत</u> (nau)  | —hact —noun / adjective, „nine / 9” —from Hindi/Urdu, <u>نہت</u> (nau)   |

- ***meta*** —noun, from Russian, място (méstо) “place / location”
- ***wa*** —noun, from Vietnamese, vật “thing / inanimate object / abstract idea”
- ***azione*** —noun, from Italian, azione “action / act / deed”
- ***yan*** —noun, from Cantonese, 人 (jan4) “person / individual / human being”
- ***kasa*** —noun, from Portuguese, casa “house / home”
- ***teca*** —noun, from Hindustani, देश (des) “nation / country”
- ***meli*** —noun, from Tok Pisin, meri “woman / female / female-identifying person”
- ***empi*** —noun, from English, enbi “non-binary person”
- ***laki*** —noun, from Indonesian, laki “man / male / male-identifying person”
- ***mama*** —noun, from various languages “mother / mama / mom / female-identifying parent”
- ***nana*** —noun, by analogy from ⟨mama / papa⟩ “mother / father” “non-binary parent”
- ***papa*** —noun, from various languages “father / papa / dad / male-identifying parent”
- ***kafe*** —noun, from Spanish, café “coffee / coffee beans”
- ***ca*** —noun, from Mandarin, 茶 (chá) “tea / tea bag / tea leaves”
- ***palu*** —noun, from Telugu, పలు (pālu) “milk / sap / juice”
- ***ciwa / ci-wa*** —noun, calque of Mandarin, 食物 (shíwù), “eat-thing” “food / meal / dish”
- ***tinkewa / tinke-wa*** —noun, calque of Japanese, 飲み物 (nomimono), “drink-thing” “drink / beverage”
- ***sahin*** —adjective, from Arabic, ساخن (sākin) “hot / warm / heated”
- ***sen*** —noun / adjective, “ten / 10” —from German, zehn
- ***kai*** —adjective, “many / much / a lot” —from Hindustani, कई (kāī) —This is a highly flexible word; it can be used to indicate a lot of something, as in ⟨kai tei⟩, “many days,” or frequency as in ⟨man kai ale⟩, “I often go.”
- man hatie kai kafe koi koi —1SG want many coffee please~EMPH  
*I want a lot of coffee, please.*
- ***koi*** —interjection / particle, “please / thank you / excuse me / would you,” OPTATIVE (OPT) —from Cantonese, 唔該 (m4 goi1) —Mitaeme makes use of a single word for both “please” and “thank you,” and it can also be used as a particle to indicate the optative mood or to politely ask people to do something.
- ***te*** —particle, GENITIVE (GEN) —from Mandarin, 的 (de) —You have already seen much of this particle, but to be explicit: it serves as a genitive marker, coming after a noun and indicating possession, origin, or composition.
- man hatie ni te cala ke yena yan hafe —1SG want 2SG GEN water MEDI person have  
*I want your water which that person has.*
- ***ke*** —particle, RELATIVIZER (REL) —from Spanish, que —The relativizer particle is used to introduce a relative clause which can modify a noun or serve as a complement to certain verbs. When modifying a noun, the head noun (the word being modified by the relative clause) may take the role of subject or object. It may also take the role of location, as in “the place that I went to,” or instrument, as in “the knife I cut the cake with,” via the addition of a preposition between the modified noun and the relativizer particle.
- man tampien ale a yena meta a ke ni ale —1SG also go LOC MEDI place LOC REL 2SG go  
*I have also been to that place you went to.*
- man le kome hafe yena naife pa ke ni kata keike —1SG PFV come have MEDI knife INSTR REL 2SG cut cake  
*I brought the knife with which you cut the cake.*
- ***ma*** —interjection / particle, INTERROGATIVE (INT) —from Mandarin, 吗 (ma) —The interrogative particle is added to sentences to make them into questions. It can also modify nouns such as ⟨meta⟩ “place,” ⟨yan⟩ “person,” ⟨wa⟩ “thing” in order to make ⟨ma meta⟩ “where,” ⟨ma yan⟩ “who,” and ⟨ma wa⟩ “what.”
- ma yan yena —INT person MEDI  
*Who is that?*
- ***so*** —interjection / particle, EMPHATIC / AFFIRMATIVE (EMPH / AFF) —from English, so, and Japanese, そう (sou) —The particle, ⟨so⟩, is the general agreement / emphatic particle, used to indicate that one agrees with something or to strongly assert what one is saying.
- so ta ye sisua —EMPH all 3 student  
*Yes, they are students. / They really are students.*

- **a — preposition / particle, locative (loc) / dative (dat)** — from Spanish, a — man a lae a man te kasa — lsg go loc lsg gen house  
— man a lae a kasa — lsg go loc house / lsg prv go loc house  
*I am going to my house.*
- **pei — auxiliary verb, passive voice (pv)** — from Mandarin, 借 (bēi) — The passive voice auxiliary takes a transitive verb (one that requires an object) and makes it intransitive (one that requires only a subject), elevating the old object to the position of the new subject. The old subject may be reintroduced with the preposition, (pa). Any indirect object can take the position of the old object.  
— ni le teawa cokolate a man — lsg prv give chocolate dat lsg  
*You gave me chocolate.*
- **ii — adjective / noun, „this thing“; MEDIAL (med)** — from German, jenseit  
— This is the medial demonstrative, used to talk about something that is close to or associated with the listener.  
— man na kan yena puka — lsg neg read medi book  
*I am not reading that book.*
- **jeña — adjective / noun, „that / that thing“; MEDIAL (med)** — from German, jenseit  
— This is the medial demonstrative, used to talk about something that is close to or associated with the listener.  
— akeli aito hafe yelou pemta — dist book have yellow paint  
*That car over there has yellow paint.*
- **akkh — adjective / noun, „that over there / that thing over there“; DISTAL (dist)  
— from Portuguese, aquela — This is the distal demonstrative, used to talk about something that is close to neither the speaker nor the listener.  
— man le ale a kasa — lsg nicho go loc house / lsg prv go loc house  
*I am going home. / I went home.***
- **le — auxiliary verb, TRANSFORMATIVE (TRANS) / INCHOATIVE (INCHO) / PRACTICATIVE (PRACT)** — from Mandarin, 去 (lè) — This is a quite flexible auxiliary verb, used to indicate that an action involves a transformation or change of state; used to indicate the beginning of an action; or used to talk about a complete / completed action.  
— man le ale a kasa i ye ci — lsg prv go loc house cont 3sg  
*He has become my friend. / He became my friend.*  
— ye (man te) mita le — 3sg (lsg gen) friend trans  
*I am going home. / I went home.*
- **base — particle / verb, „to do / to become / to make (something)“ / GENERAL  
— man le base ca o ti — lsg prv do purp 2sg  
*I made tea for you.***
- **ta ni palu-hase kau kau — PL-2 milk-VB cow~PL**  
— ta ni palu-hase ni tewa penzi a ye — lsg prv caus 2sg give pencil dat 3sg  
*You all are all milking the cows.*
- **man le sahin-hase ni te ca — lsg prv hot-VB 2sg gen tea  
— man le sahin-hase ni te ca — lsg prv hot-VB 2sg gen tea  
*I warmed-up your tea.***