

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, /.../. 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) /a/, (e) /e/, (i) /i/, (o) /o/, (u) /u/. Mitamee's vowels are closest to those found in Spanish, as in /i/, "piña," /e/, "pero," /a/, "casa," /u/, "cuoso," and /o/, "coser." Similarly, the Japanese vowels are good examples: /i/, "二胡 (niko)," /e/, "猫 (nako)," /a/, "中 (nata)," and /o/, "乙 (oko)." However, the Mitamee /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, /d/, in a vowel tap (the single "j" in Spanish words such as "pero" or "para" or "bottle") which is written (t). 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 **Полина** (Polissya) as (polisia). This sound is never found in general vocabulary.

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

In some American and Canadian dialects of English, the single "r" in Spanish words such as "pero" or "para" or "bottle" is written (r). 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 **Полина** (Polissya) as (polisia). This sound is never found in general vocabulary.

(a) /a/	"boat"	"spec"	"hand"
(e) /e/	"boot"	"leak"	
(i) /i/	"cup"	"cup"	

All consonants and vowels are written with only one letter and their spelling and pronunciation never changes. Thus, (c) is always /ʃ/, the sound at the beginning of "choose," never /k/, 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:

(w) /w ~ v/	(l) /l/	(y) /j/	"wack"	"yak"
(f) /f ~ v/	(s) /s/	"shin" ~ "sheen"	"fed"	"said"
(p) /p/	(t) /t/	(k) /k/	"pin"	"tin"
(m) /m/	(n) /n/		"mail"	"hail"

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, /.../. 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) /a/	"spec"	"boat"	"hand"
(e) /e/	"boot"	"leak"	
(i) /i/	"cup"	"cup"	

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 Malariae community, check out the links below:



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

- The image is a collage of various elements arranged in a grid-like pattern. It includes several QR codes of different sizes scattered across the page. Interspersed among the QR codes are small icons: a blue circular icon with a white person symbol, a blue circular icon with a white coffee cup symbol, and a globe icon. The background is a light beige color.

- **leka** —verb, from Bengali, লেখা (lekha)
“to write / to compose”
- **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 (galī)
“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 ⟨pe⟩, 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 Mitaeme texts.

- **man** —pronoun, “I / me” —from Persian, من (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?

- **she**—pronoun, “they/she/he”—from Hindustani—This is the singular, third-person pronoun. It is used to refer to a single person other than the speaker or listener. Mitame does not distinguish between gendered third-person pronouns such as “he,” or “she;” instead using a single pronoun for both, similar to languages like (spoken) Finnish.
- **ye**—pronoun, “they/she/he”—from Arabic, يَأْلُو (sakīn)
- **ye solen peintia ti mesa ke man pai**—3sg oblique paint prox table REL I sg buy
 - They should paint this table I bought
- **man-mana / mammanna**—pronoun, “we (exclusive)” —There are two forms of “we” in Mitiame; the first, (man-man), is exclusive, meaning it does not include the listener. For example, if you were talking to someone about how you and your friends went somewhere, you would use (man-man), but if the person you were speaking to was also there, then you would use the inclusive form, (man-ni).
- **man-ni / manni**—pronoun, “we (inclusive)” —This version of “we” is inclusive, meaning it includes the listener.
 - man-man have kai auto — I~pl have many car
 - We have many cars.
 - so man-ni mīta (mīta) —AF+2PL friend(=PL)
 - Yes, we are friends.
- **ta ni ma leka pa penisi**—all 2 INT write INSTR pencil
 - ta ye na cama usa kamplita ne —all 3 NEG know use computer EMPH.JNT
 - They don't know how to use a computer right?
- **ta ye / ta-yé**—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.
 - ta ye na cama usa kamplita ne —all 3 NEG know use computer EMPH.JNT
 - la ye neg cuanya part —I sg have zero bowl —I have zero bowls.
- **cūnya**—noun / adjective, “zero / 0”—from Sanskrit, कृत्या (śūnya)—Numbers in Mitiame all act like both nouns and adjectives. Therefore, one can use (cūnya) to both modify another noun or to refer to “zero” of something.
 - jī —noun / adjective, “one / 1”—from Mandarin Chinese, 一(yī)
 - **tu**—noun / adjective, “two / 2”—from English, two
 - man hafe cuanya part —I sg have zero bowl —I have zero bowls.
- **tiñ**—noun / adjective, “three / 3”—from Marathi, तीन (tīn)
 - man hafe cuanya part —I sg have zero bowl —I have zero bowls.
- **apā**—noun / adjective, “four / 4”—from Tagalog, apat
 - man hafe cuanya part —I sg have zero bowl —I have zero bowls.
- **tiñ**—noun / adjective, “five / 5”—from Indonesian, lima
 - man hafe cuanya part —I sg have zero bowl —I have zero bowls.
- **lima**—noun / adjective, “six / 6”—from Arabic, لِمَّا (sīlā)
 - man hafe cuanya part —I sg have zero bowl —I have zero bowls.

- ***men*** —noun, from Cantonese, 名 (meng4-2)
“name / given name / term”
- ***meta*** —noun, from Russian, место (mesto)
“place / location”
- ***wa*** —noun, from Vietnamese, vât
“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)
- ***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”
- ***siete*** —noun / adjective, “seven / 7” —from Spanish, siete
- ***haci*** —noun / adjective, “eight / 8” —from Japanese, 八 (hachi)
- ***no*** —noun / adjective, “nine / 9” —from Hindustani, नौ (nau)
- ***sen*** —noun / adjective, “ten / 10” —from German, zehn
- ***kai*** —adjective, “many / much / a lot” —from Hindustani, कई (kai) —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.

- **na —intention / particle, NEGATIVE (NEG)** —This is the general negative, used to indicate disagreement or that something is not true.
- **na ta ye sisua —EMPH all 3 student**
— na ta ye sisua —NEG all 3 student
They are not students.
- **pet —auxiliary verb, PASSIVE VOICE (PV) —from Mandarin, 買 (bei)** —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.
- **solen —auxiliary verb, ORIGIN (ORIG) —from German, sollen** —This auxiliary marks obligation, what one ought or should do.
Was the medicine given to you by her?
- **pete —auxiliary verb, TRANSFORMATIVE (TRANS) / INCORRECTIVE (INCHO) / PREFERITIVE (PVI) —from Mandarin, 做 (zuo)** —This is the medial demonstrative, used to talk about something that is close to the speaker or listener.
You should go to my house.
- **le —auxiliary verb, TRANSFORMATIVE (TRANS) / INCORRECTIVE (INCHO) / PREFERITIVE (PVI) —from Mandarin, 做 (zuo)** —This is the medial demonstrative, used to talk about something that is close to the speaker or listener.
I am going home. / I went home.
- **ye (man te) mita le —3SG (1SG GEN) friend friend**
He has become my friend. / He became my friend.
- **base —particle / verb, "to do / to become / to make (something)" / GENERAL (GEN)** —This is VERBALIZER (VB) / CAUSATIVE AUXILIARY (CAUS) —from Spanish, hacer —The coordinating conjunction, CONJUNCTION (CONJ) —from Russian, и (i) —The coordinating conjunction, CONJUNCTION (CONJ) —from English, and (and).
I went home and he ate.
- **man le ale a kasa i ye ci —1SG PVV go LOC house CONT 3SG eat**
That car over there has yellow paint.
- **akeli auto hale yelou pemta —DIST book have yellow paint**
Somebody's car is close to neither the speaker nor the listener.
- **akell —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 far away.
- **man le ale a kasa —1SG INCCHO go LOC house / 1SG PVV go LOC house**
I am not reading that book. / I have not read that book.
- **man na kan yena puka —1SG NEG read MED1 book**
—This is the medial demonstrative, used to talk about something that is close to the speaker or listener.
- **jeena —adjective / noun, "this / that thing," MEDIAL (MED1)** —from German, gener
- **ti mesa man te —PROX table 1SG GEN**
This is my table.
- **ti man te mesa —PROX 1SG GEN table**
It is my table.
- **ti mesa man te —PROX table 1SG GEN**
This table is mine.
- **ii —adjective / noun, "this thing," PROXIMAL (PROX)** —from English, this —
—This is the proximal demonstrative, used to talk about something that is close to the speaker or listener.
- **man na kan yena puka —1SG NEG read MED1 book**
—This is the medial demonstrative, used to talk about something that is close to the speaker or listener.
- **man le ale a kasa —1SG go LOC 1SG GEN house**
I am going to my house.
- **man le ale a man te kasa —1SG go LOC 1SG GEN house**
It is used to mark the indirect objects of transitive sentences.
- **a —preposition / particle, LOCATIVE (LOC) / DATIVE (DAT)** —from Spanish, a —
This is a widely-used particle as it serves as the language's primary preposition, indicating location and direction, similar to English's "at / on / to," but in addition to indicate disagreement or that something is not true.
- **mina le sahin-base te ca —1SG PVV hot-VB hot-VB 2SG GEN tea**
Yes, they are students. / They really are students.
- **so ta ye sisua —EMPH all 3 student**
They are not students.
- **base —particle, NEGATIVE (NEG)** —This is the general negative, used which the object of a preceding verb becomes the subject of the subsequent verb, of "making" something have that attribute. When used in a pivot construction, in itself associated with a noun or, when combined with adjectives, the sense of "word-base", turning them into verbs with the general sense of "doing" some type. Furthermore, it is used in compounds with nouns and adjectives (in the structure, name / carrying out of an action, the creation of something, or a transformation. among the most flexible verbs in the language, used to talk about the performer VERBALIZER (VB) / CAUSATIVE AUXILIARY (CAUS) —from Spanish, hacer —This is VERBALIZER (VB) / CAUSATIVE AUXILIARY (CAUS) —from English, do / to become / to make (something) / GENERAL (GEN)
- **man le base ca o hi —1SG PVV do PURP 2SG**
I made tea for you.
- **ta ni palu-base kau kau —PL-2 MLLK-VB COW~PL**
You all are all milking the cows.
- **man le base ni tewa penasi a ye —1SG PVV CAUS 2SG give pencil 3SG**
I made you give the pencil to her.