Alphabet and pronunciation

The basic alphabet of Nao is:

5 vowels: a i u e o

14 consonants: p t k b d g s c h f l m n j

Also, 4 more letters are used in foreign words only: y z v r

The good news is: you'll easily guess how most of them are pronounced.
Let's take a look at the ones that require the most attention:

Letter	Pronunciation
c	like English **sh**
y	like **a** in **a**bout
r	a trill (like in Spanish) is preferred but other varieties are acceptable too
l	a light l (like in Spanish) is strongly preferred

The rest of the consonants can be pronounced like in English.
The five vowels have standard international pronunciation (like in Spanish)

One letter corresponds to one sound. Each word is pronounced exactly the way it is written, letter by letter.

The vowels **i** and **u** in combination with other vowels don't make a syllable. They don't get stressed and are pronounced shortly. For example:

> **joi** sounds like English **joy**
> **kau** sounds like English **cow**
> **niu** sounds like English **new**

In elementary words, the stress is on the first **syllable**. For example:

> kio (= sibling)   'kalifornia (= California)
> faia (=be on fire)   'puerto-riko (= Puerto Rico)

In compound words, the stress is semantic but usually happens to fall on the last elementary **word**:

> madisakohom (= school)   soinienai (= summer)
> ladifoi (= acceleration)

Phrases

Here are some example phrases and sentences that can give you the general picture of what the language is like and how it works.

joimit	*Hello!*
me nom 'jon	*My name is John.*
te nom ke	*What is your name?*
te najan ke	*How is your mood?*
li	*Good.*
lu	*Bad.*
joikohunfali	*Thank you.*
nalufalu	*I'm sorry.*
no tal	*It's nothing (as a reply to an apology or a thank-you)*
dei	*True (normally translates as "yes")*
deu	*False (normally translates as "no")*
me hom	*I understand.*
ta dog me	*That's my dog.*
ta ke	*What is that?*
ca ta miau te	*Is that your cat?*
ca dom 'jon cun	*Is John's house tall?*
'piter sit	*Peter is sitting.*
te no sit	*You are not sitting.*
me fi miau	*I like cats.*
te fi ke	*What do you like?*
ca miau fi son	*Do cats like to sleep?*
ca 'jon fu dog	*Does John dislike dogs?*
'jeni go son	*Jenny goes to sleep.*
'piter moi sit	*Peter wants to sit.*
nui 'tom moi sit	*Tom, too, wants to sit.*
me ku go 'madrid	*I will go to Madrid.*
me ki go 'istanbul	*I went to Istanbul.*
he go	*Go!*
he no bai ta	*Don't buy that!*
muta jo fos 'banan	*He has four bananas*
'alis pa 'london	*Alice is in London*

Making simple sentences

The good news is that the word order in Nao is quite similar to English.

>me gin ris
>*I eat rice.*

So as you can see, it's simply Subject + Verb + Object. By default, the verb has no tense so the sentence above could mean *I ate rice* or *I am eating rice* or *I will eat rice*, etc. You just guess the tense from context. Now take a look at these sentences:

>dog kan me   'sara sem 'piter
>*A dog is looking at me.*   *Sara is married to Peter.*

In English, prepositions are often used in conjunction with verbs, whereas in Nao, prepositions are often built into the verb.
Also, Nao doesn't use anything like the articles *a/the* and the noun by default could be singular or plural, so for example, **dog** could mean *a/the dog(s).*

To make negation, just put **no** in front of the verb

>'jon no gin ris
>*John doesn't eat rice.*

To turn the sentence into a question, put **ca** in the beginning.

>ca te joi
>*Are you happy?*

Note that:
1. Nao doesn't use capital letters, to minimize the number of different characters.
2. The sentences are separated with a dash (−) or hyphen (-) because without the capital letters, the dot is too small to separate sentences, which makes reading more difficult. When writing a text, starting the first sentence with a dash and ending the last sentence with a dash is optional.
3. Nao doesn't use sentence finals like the question mark, exclamation mark, period or ellipsis. Using them is considered informal.

>− joimit − te nom ke −
>*Hello. What is your name?*

The question mark is unnecessary because every question sentence contains **ca** and/or **ke**. The other sentence finals are not used because their usage differs dramatically from language to language.

Building the opposite

One of the most powerful features of Nao is forming the opposite meanings. To change the meaning to the opposite, alternate **i / u.** For example:

nai = *warm/hot*	mi = *female*	kin = *previous*
nau = *cold*	mu = *male*	kun = *next*

Note that to construct a word with the opposite meaning, the vowel that is altered must be the last vowel in the elementary word in question. This means that **dia** and **dua** are not opposites. In fact, they can never be opposites, because neither of the words' final vowels are **i / u**.

Also note that even if a word has **i / u** as the last vowel, it doesn't mean that it has an opposite for sure. Many words just don't have an opposite because it would make no sense. For example: **rus** (*Russian*) and **ris** (*rice*) are of course not opposites and it is obvious from their meaning that they cannot possibly have any opposite.

As a natural result, this trick automatically works for compound words as well:

hagalai = *white*	diakin = *yesterday*	nejantalli = *reward*	soinienai = *summer*
hagalau = *black*	diakun = *tomorrow*	nejantallu = *punish*	soinienau = *winter*

Opposite vs negation

Some beginners mix up the opposite with a simple negation. In reality, most of the cases those are two different things. Let's take a look at three possible situations:

Original word	Opposite	Negation
mik = right side	muk = left side	nomik = not right side
bai = buy	bau = sell	nobai = not buy
pau = parent	pai = child	nopau = not parent
li = good	lu = bad	noli = not good
bul = strong	bil = weak	nobul = not strong
dei = true	deu = false	nodei = not true
mai = be allowed	mau = be forbidden	nomai = be not allowed

blue – the opposite and the negation are completely different
yellow – the opposite and the negation are similar but not the same
green – the opposite and the negation are exactly the same

You can find specific rules about building the opposite in the Full Set of Rules II.8

Questions with ke

The word **ke** simply means *what*. Let's see how we can use it in a sentence:

> te gin ke?
> *What are you eating?* (literally: *you eat what*)

You can see that **ke** is at the end of the sentence. It's because we must keep the word order Subject + Verb + Object. You can think like this: **ke** should be placed in the same place as the answer word.

> 'jon gin ke   *What is John eating?*
> 'jon gin pot   *John is eating potatoes.*

You can see that **ke** (the question word) and **pot** (the answer word) are at the same position. More examples:

> mita go ta pua bai ke   *She is going there in order to buy what?*
> mita go ta pua bai pot   *She is going there in order to buy potatoes.*

> ke nenabun muta   *What scared him?*
> dencul nenabun muta   *Lightning scared him.*

Even if the sentence already has **ke**, you can additionally put the question particle **ca** in the beginning, it is optional.

> te gin ke = ca te gin ke (*What are you eating?*)

It can also be used in connection with nouns, meaning what/which. For example:

> pot ke = *which potatoes*
> dio ke = *what story*

All questions words are derived from **ke**. Most commons ones are:

> dake = *what person = who*
> leke = *what time = when*
> hoike = *because of what = why*
> pake = *be located in/at what = where*
> geke = *of what quantity = how much/many*

Compound words

In Nao, all words consist of one or more **elementary** words. Each syllable is a standalone element. The structure of an element is: consonant + vowel(s) + optionally a consonant.

    sudaban = su + da + ban
    henodutua = he + no + du + tua
    pottomfes = pot + tom + fes

If you know the meanings of the elements, you can always figure out the meaning of the compound.

    bukan = bu + kan (*bodypart* + *see/look*) = *eye*
    dagocua = da + go + cua (*person* + *go* + *space*) = *astronaut*

So in Nao, you can make these words by yourself but you have to strictly follow the grammar rules. Step by step we will learn how to make compound words by ourselves. Or you can just look them up in the dictionary.

Apostrophe

Elementary words that don't have a standard structure must be marked with an apostrophe:

    'inet (internet)   'kanin (rabbit)   'banan (banana)

Also all proper names (the names of people, cities, etc) irregardless of the structure are written with an apostrophe:

    'tom (Tom)   'maiami (Miami)   'basketbol (basketball)

Clauses

What is a clause? It's basically a sentence inside another sentence. In English, we often put the word *that* in front of the clause. In Nao, we use **pe**:

'jon sa **pe** 'alis no tio diasen
John knows that Alice doesn't work today.

'alis jou **pe** 'jon no gin
Alice is sad that John doesn't eat.

me kan **pe** 'alis tio
I see/watch Alice working.

ca te moi **pe** me go
Do you want me to go?

Similarly with the English marker *that*, in Nao **pe** is optional when it is easy to guess.

It is also possible to make a question clause using **ca**, equivalent to *whether / if* in English:

'jon sa **ca** 'alis tio diasen
John knows whether Alice works today.

Note that if the question clause has **ke**, then **ca** is optional.

me no hom [**ca**] te moi ke
I don't understand what you want.

da = *person*

joi = *happy*
dajoi = *happy person*

kan = *see/look*
dakan = *viewer*

tio = *work*
datio = *worker*

nesai = *cure*
danesai = *doctor*

kie = *use*
dakie = *user*

rus = *Russian*
darus = *Russian person*

mi = *female*, mu = *male*

Originally in Nao, all nouns are genderless. To specify the gender, you can put **mi/mu** at the beginning of any noun. For example:

pau = *parent*
mipau = *mother*
mupau = *father*

paikio = *nephew/niece*
mipaikio = *niece*
mupaikio = *nephew*

daposdio = *actor/actress*
midaposdio = *actress*
mudaposdio = *actor*

mua = *cattle*
mimua = *cow*
mumua = *bull*

bu = *bodypart*

go = *go*
bugo = *leg*

kan = *see/look*
bukan = *eye*

puchan = *push blood*
bupuchan = *heart*

mil = *milk*
bumil = *breasts*

ka = *tool*

go = *go*
kago = *vehicle*

fai = *have fun*
kafai = *toy*

ban = *fight*
kaban = *weapon*

nedufaia = *put out fire*
kanedufaia = *fire extinguisher*

ma

This word means a place where person/people can come, stay there. It's always a place with a certain characteristics or function.

gin (eat/drink)   → magin (restaurant/café/diner)
nesai (make healthy) → manesai (hospital)
bai (buy) → mabai (shop/store)

la

This little word doesn't really mean anything, it simply turns a verb or adjective into a noun. It could roughly be translated as *the (f)act of*. For example:

kie = *use*	dimeu = *die*	sum = *different*	joi = *happy*
lakie = *usage*	ladimeu = *death*	lasum = *difference*	lajoi = *happiness*

to

It refers to the object of the verb. It's the same as lodo. For example:

gin = *eat/drink*	fam = *think*	lui = *hear/listen*	pa = *be located in/at...*
togin = *food*	tofam = *thought*	tolui = *sound*	topa = *location/place*

di = *start*, du = *stop*

dikan = *start looking*   digo = *start going = set off / depart*
dukan = *stop looking*   dugo = *stop going (as in The train **stops**)*

dinai = *start to be warm = become warm*   disem = *begin to be married = get married*
dunai = *stop being warm*   dusem = *stop being married = get divorced*

You can spell them separately, so for example dikan = di kan

pa = *be located in/at...*

Originally it is a verb, so we can say:

me **pa** 'boston = *I am in Boston*

But we can also use it as an adverb:

me tio **pa** 'boston = *I work in Boston*

So the word **pa** will usually translate to English as *in/at.*

To talk about the location with more precision, the following words might be useful:

ni = *inside*	cu = *top*	lik = *front*	mik = *right*
nu = *outside*	ci = *bottom*	luk = *back*	muk = *left*

All of the above words are nouns, so they are often used along with **pa**.

tonlus pa 'mesa	*The pen is located … the table (just guess the preposition)*
tonlus pa cu 'mesa	*The pen is on the table.*
tonlus pa ci 'mesa	*The pen is under the table.*
tonlus pa ni 'mesa	*The pen is in the table (maybe in the drawer)*

tu = *to,* ti = *from*

We can use that pair to talk about directions. For example:

gofoi tu mabai	*Run to the shop.*
gofoi tu ni mabai	*Run into the shop.*
gofoi tu nu mabai.	*Run out of the shop.*
gofoi tu luk mabai.	*Run [to] behind the shop.*
pulua ti dom.	*Shout from the house.*
pulua ti luk dom.	*Shout from behind the house.*

le = *time*

Originally it is a noun meaning *time (of)*:

> lelai = *time of light = daytime*
> lebiopil = *time of being a child = childhood*

But in a sentence it is more often used as an adverb meaning at the time (of). Possible English translations are *during / while / when*:

> henoba **le**gin = *Do not talk while eating.*
> me joi **le** te joi = *I am happy when you are happy.*

ne = *cause*

This is in fact the most common elementary word in the language.

meu = *be dead*	bei = *exist*
nemeu = *(cause to be dead) = kill*	nebei = (*cause to exist) = create*
faia = *be on fire*	gin = *eat*
nefaia = *(cause to be on fire) = set on fire*	negin = *(cause to eat) = feed*

Compare:

kai = *be open*	mabai kai = *The store is open*
dikai = *begin to be open*	mabai dikai = *The store opens*
nekai = *cause to be open*	me nekai mabai = *I open the store*

All three words are normally translated to English as *open* but in Nao you have to differentiate between them. Another example:

disum = *become different*	gos disum = *The country changes*
nesum = *cause to be different*	me nesum gos = *I change the country*

he

It is originally a verb meaning *ask/suggest/order*:

mikio he me go mabai   [My] *sister asked me to go to the store.*

But what makes this verb special is that if you omit the subject and the object, then it works as the imperative:

hego = *go!*
henobai ta = *don't buy that!*

Note that **he** is obligatory to use, because if you don't use it, the sentence will be affirmative:

nobai ta !   *[Someone from context] doesn't buy that!*

Use he + jume to say let's:

hejume di   Let's begin.

san

When applied to nouns, this word translates as *type* or *style*:

han = *blood*   tomus = *music*
sanhan = *blood type*   santomus = *style of music*

When applied to verbs, it means *way* or *style*:

doso = *seem*   kuk = *cook*   hualit = *draw letters*
sandoso = *appearance*   sankuk = *cooking style*   sanhualit = *handwriting*

Using that word, we can also make some the following:

sanke = *what kind/type/style of*
santa = *that kind of, such, like that*

posanke = *in what way*
posanta = *that way, like that*

Quantity and degree

To show quantity/amount for nouns and different degrees for adjectives and verbs, we can use the special word **ge** with any word describing the amount/quantity/degree:

ge-word	With verbs	With adjectives	With nouns
gepun	son gepun *sleep a lot*	jun gepun *very far*	da gepun *many people*
genajus	son genajus *sleep so much*	jun genajus *so far*	(usually not used)
genel	son genel *sleep a bit*	jun genel *a bit far*	da genel *some number of people*
geke	son geke *how much … sleep*	jun geke *how far*	da geke *how many people*

ge can also with used with clauses with the meaning so much that…

  luahal **ge** buniktogin bom   laugh so much that one's stomach explodes

To create the comparative and superlative forms, use **pus** (more) and **gapus** (the most):

  pus dofikan = *more beautiful*   gapus dofikan = *the most beautiful*
  pus tun = *more stressed*   pus tun = *the most stressed*
  pus li = *better*   gapus li = *the best*

Analogically, you can guess how to use **pis** (less) and **gapis** (the least).

Use the preposition **ti** (than) to compare with something:

  'sara pus joi ti 'alis   *Sara is happier than Alice.*
  heia me pis lau ti heia te   *My room is less dark than your room.*

You can also use **ga** (completely):

  li = *good*   hom = *understand*
  gali = *completely good = perfect*   gahom = *completely understand*

Moreover, we have the prefixes **tul** (too much), **til** (not enough) and **notil** (enough):

  tul jin = *too close*   tul son = *sleep too much*
  til jin = *not close enough*   til son = *sleep not enough*
  notil jin = *close enough*   notil son = *sleep enough*

kie

It is originally a verb meaning *use*:

muta fu **kie** kabaden   *He doesn't like to use the phone.*

But it can also be used as an adverb. Common possible English translations in that case would be by, with.

go **kie** biefaus   *go by airplane*
sek **kie** tonsek   *cut with a knife*
ba **kie** len'iapon   *talk/say in Japanese*

It can also be used with verbs:

me nenabun muta **kie** pulua   *I scared him by shouting.*

Another useful combination is **kieke** = (*using what*) = *by what means*

kieke te dijo mon   *How (by what means) did you get the money?*

fo

This word is usually translated as *think (have an opinion)*:

X **fo** Y   *X thinks that Y (Y is always a clause)*
me fo te sel   *I think that you will succeed.*
te fo ke   *What do you think? What is your opinion?*

A common **mistake** is to use **fo** as *believe someone*:

me fo muta   *I think that he….*

The sentence above is incomplete and vague, because the verb is missing.
But then how can we say *I believe him*? There are a few ways:

me fo muta balodei   *I think he says something true*
me fo muta bakofo   *I think he speaks honestly*
me fo muta nofalu   *I think he doesn't do anything bad*

Verb tenses

As mentioned previously, all tenses are optional. The three basic tenses are:

sen = *Present*   me sengo   *I go*
ki = *Past*   me kigo   *I went*
ku = *Future*   me kugo   *I will go*

Apart from that, there are also aspects that can help you describe the tense more precisely.

ni and **nu**

ni is the continuous aspect, we stress that the action is happening at a certain point in time.
nu is the instantaneous aspect, we stress that the action takes a short time and finishes fast

me nikan mita   *I am looking at her.* (continuously, at a specific moment)
me nukan mita   *I took a look at her.* (the action finished fast)

gaus and **gais**

gaus is the regular aspect, it means the action happens on a regular basis
gais is the non-regular aspect, it means the action happened once or twice, no regularity

me ki gausgin pot   *I used to eat potatoes.* (regularly in the past)
me ki gaisgin pot   *I ate potatoes once or twice.* (no regularity)

niki and **niku**

niki is the perfect aspect, it means the action happened before a certain point in time and we see the result of that action.
niku is the prospective aspect, it means the action is going to happen judged from the current circumstances.

me niki gin   *I have eaten.* (and the result is seen now - I am full)
niku dofa liocul   *It's going to rain* (it is evident, the clouds are dark)

Then we can combine: time + aspect. For example:

kunigin = *will be eating*
kinikigin = *had eaten*

bui

The word **bui** roughly translates as *would*, it is usually used in sentences with if:

> sei me buijo mon gepun, me buibai dom.
> *If I had a lot of money, I would buy a house.*

It is used to show that the speaker doesn't seriously consider the situation as a possibility. Note that **bui** is optional, and you don't need to repeat it in both clauses.

You can use it in combination with any tense.

> sei me jo latio, me no buisennisit topasen
> *If I had a job, I wouldn't be sitting here now.*

pei = *be prone to*

nabun = *be scared*   sa = *know*   na = *feel*
dapeinabun = *coward*   peisa = *knowledgeable*   peina = *sensitive*

has = *undo*

A very useful word meaning *undo*. Let's see the examples to understand:

lus = *write*   gin = *eat*   nepal = *damage/break*
haslus = *erase*   hasgin = *vomit*   hasnepal = *repair*

Prefixes

Prefixes are little modifiers that are put before the word.

pu

li = *good*   fo = *believe*   dohal = *funny*   fen = *be angry*

puli = *great*   pufo = *be sure*   pudohal = *hilarious*   pufen = *be in a rage*

pi

mi = *female*   sek = *cut*   son = sleep   fo = believe

pimi = *girl*   pisek = *scratch*   pison = take a nap   pifo = suppose

hu

This prefix can make any word sound poetic, of high style.

li = *good*   moi = *want*   fam = *think*

huli = *wonderful*   humoi = *desire*   hufam = *contemplate*

fe

Using this powerful prefix, you can turn any word into a swear word.

lu = *bad*   ba = *say/talk*   hoike = *why*

felu = *sh*t*   feba =   fehoike = *why the f*ck*

je

This prefix makes any word sound informal, something used with friends and family.

dei = *yes*   mu = *male*   tin = *be relaxed*   puli = *great*

jedei = *yeah*   jemu = *fellow*   jetin = *chill*   jepuli = *awesome*

Prefix-like words

There are a few words that behave like prefixes – they are put right before the word they describe. Let's try to understand how they work on the example of **sol** = *only*.

sol me gin pot	*Only I eat potatoes* (I'm the only one who eats them)
me **sol gin** pot	*I only eat potatoes* (I'm not doing anything else)
me gin **sol pot**	*I eat only potatoes* (I'm not eating anything else)

As you can see, the position of **sol** changes the meaning of the sentence.

Now let's consider the word **nui** = *also/too*.

nui muta go 'tokio	*He will go to Tokyo, too* (among other people)
muta **nui go** 'tokio	*He will also go to Tokyo* (among doing other things)
muta go **nui 'tokio**	*He will go to Tokyo, too* (among other places)

Here are other words that work exactly the same way:

The word **bis** is used to put emphasis/stress, similar to writing a word in bold or caps.

bis 'jon fia 'sara	*it's **John** who is in love with Sara (not Mike)*
'jon **bis fia** 'sara	*John is **in love** with Sara (not hate)*
'jon fia **bis 'sara**	*John is in love with **Sara** (not Alice)*

Finally, take a look at **dac** = *even:*

dac muta kan miau	*Even **he** saw the cat. (among other people)*
muta **dac kan** miau	*He even saw the cat. (not just heard about)*
muta kan **dac miau**	*He saw even the **cat** (among other pets)*

So as a conclusion, you always have to be careful where you put prefix-like words.

Transliteration

When writing foreign words (e.g. proper nouns), you must change (adapt) their spelling to Nao according to the [official transliteration rules](#).

Why do we need to do that?

Imagine someone sends you a message in Nao:

> ✕ joimit – me nom Krzysztof Wojciechowski

If you don't know the original language (in this case – Polish), you would definitely be confused by that name; you would have no idea how to pronounce that. That would break one of the basic rules of Nao: *everything is pronounced exactly the way it is written*. That's why it is absolutely **unacceptable** to write foreign words in their original spelling. Instead, that guy should transliterate his name according to [the official transliteration rules for Polish](#) and rewrite his message like this:

> ✓ joimit – me nom 'kcyctof 'voitcehovski

Now you know exactly how to pronounce that – letter by letter, just like any other Nao word.

This also concerns English words − if you live in Ohio, you **cannot** write:

> ✕ me pas 'ohio

Because that would be pronounced OH-HEE-OH. That's why you should refer to the [official transltieration rules for English](#) and rewrite your sentence:

> ✓ me pas 'ohaio

The same concerns languages that use non-Latin scripts – you must use the official transliteration rules. For example, imagine you want to write *Warsaw* – but you must immediately realize that in Nao it's definitely not spelled like that because Nao doesn't even have the letter **w**. The original spelling Warszawa transliterates to **'varcava**.

Also note that the official transliteration **doesn't** try to perfectly show the pronunciation of words – after all, the pronunciation might differ from dialect to dialect. Instead, transliteration is a **compromise** between the average pronunciation and the spelling. Thanks to the official transliteration rules, there is always exactly one way to write any foreign word and one way to pronounce it using familiar native sounds.

Numbers

There are ten basic digits you need to remember:

0	nol	5	pet
1	ji	6	lok
2	dua	7	set
3	tui	8	hap
4	fos	9	nef

Then, in order to say any number, you can simply read out its digits (and dot):

10	jinol
398	tuinefhap
2017	duanoljiset
3.14	tuidotjifos

To express really big numbers, we can use **pu** + number of zeroes:

1,000	putui	8,000	hap putui
1,000,000	pulok	12,000,000	jidua pulok

To express really small numbers, we can use **pi** + number of zeroes:

0.001	pitui	0.004	fos pitui
0.000001	pilok	0.000094	neffos pilok

To express quantity, numbers are put in front of the noun:

pet dog = *five dogs*
hap putui mon'ame = *eight thousand US dollars*

Ordinal numbers are created by using **hai** *(= to be in order)*:

haiji = first   haifosdua = 42-nd

Numbers are very useful in Nao. They are used to express different words of time:

nal = day of the week	sinie = month	jam = hour
nalji = *Monday*	sinieji = *January*	jamlok = *six o'clock*
naldua = *Tuesday*	siniedua = *February*	nie = *year*
nalset = *Sunday*	siniejidua = *December*	niejinefnefpet = *1995*

Colors

The color system in Nao is very powerful – it allows you to express any possible color. Look at the color wheel below and you can notice the six basic colors (like the seven colors of the rainbow but orange being an intermediate color).
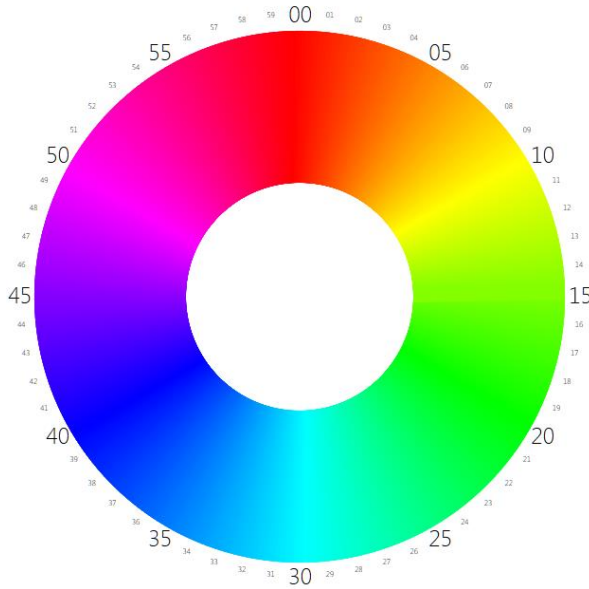
ha0 (hanol) = *red*
ha10 (hajinol) = *yellow*
ha20 (haduanol) = *green*

For shortness, drop final zeroes:

ha10 = ha1

Then we can get intermediate colors:

ha05 = *orange*
ha08 = *gold*

Then we can apply the words **lai** (*light*) or **lau** (*dark*) to create more colors:

      hanolpetlau = *brown*
      hapetlai = *pink*

Then we can also use the word **bil** (weak) to lower the saturation (mix with grey):

      hanolbil = *greyish red*

There are three special colors:

      hagalai = *white (completely light color)*
      hagalau = *black (completely dark color)*
      hagabil = *grey (completely weak color)*

Passive voice

Simiarly with English, passive voice in Nao is used to say an action is done to someone/something. To put any verb into the passive voice form, just add **do** in the beginning.

miau gin maus	*The cat eats the mouse.*
maus dogin doc miau	*The mouse is eaten by the cat.*

You can notice that we use the special preposition **doc** (translated as **by**) to specify the agent.

However in Nao, the passive voice has a much broader usage than in English. First, take a look:

muta fi kan lafaia	*He likes to look at the fire.*

There we are talking about a specific person and his preferences. But what if a lot of people enjoy looking at the fire? Then we can consider that as an attribute of fire, specifically its beauty:

lafaia do fi kan	*Fire is beautiful.*

Spelling it together, we end up with the word **dofikan** = *beautiful*.

mita nabun dog	*She is scared of the dogs.*
dog donabun	*Dogs are scary.*
dog nenabun muta	*A dog scared him.*

Here are more similar groups of words:

fau = *be bored*	najus = *be surprised*	hal = *find (smth) funny*
dofau = *boring*	donajus = *surprising*	dohal = *funny*
nefau = *make bored*	nenajus = *surprise*	nehal = *make laugh*

Family members

The poweful word construction ability of Nao allows you to create words for all family members using only three basic words:

> pau = *parent*   mu = *male*   kio = *sibling*

From two of them we create the opposite words:

> pai = *child*   mi = *female*

At first we make easy words:

> mipau = *mother*   mupau = *father*   mikio = *sister*
> mupai = *son*   mipai = *daughter*   mukio = *brother*

Then, if we say **paupau**, it means *parent of parent*, i.e. *grandparent*:

> mipaupau = *grandmother*   mupaupau = *grandfather*
> mipaipai = *granddaughter*   mupaipai = *grandson*

Repeating **pau** three times will give us *great-grandparent*, etc. To avoid repetition, you can use a number:

> pautui (pau3) = *great-grandparent*
> paupet (pau5) = *great-great-great-grandparent*

You can also use numbers to refer to cousins:

> kiodua = *first cousin (people who share common grandparents)*
> kiotui = *second cousin (people who share common great-grandparents)*

Going further:

> kiopau = *sibling of parent = uncle/aunt*
> paikio = *child of sibling = nephew/niece*
>
> kiopaupau = *sibling of grandparent = grand-uncle/aunt*
> paipaikio = *child of sibling = grand-nephew/niece*

To talk about in-laws, we can simply use **dasem** = *spouse*:

> mipaudasem = *mother of spouse = mother-in-law*
> misempai = *wife of child = daughter-in-law*

Words of physical structure

lio = liquid

fut = *fruit/vegetable*   bugin = *mouth*   bukan = *eye*
liofut = juice   liobugin = *saliva*   liobukan = *tears*

fua = gaseous matter / air

latok = *flow*   faia = *fire*
latokfua = *wind*   fuatifaia = *smoke*

ton = stick-shaped object

More specifically, it is an oblong hard object homogeneous in the cross section.

sek = *cut*   sotogelalun = *measure length*   lus = *write*
tonsek = *knife*   tonsotogelalun = *ruler*   tonlus = *pen/pencil*

bua = board-shaped object

sillia = *slide on water*   puclit = *press letters*   kofnebin = *cover and protect*
buasillia = *surfboard*   buapuclit = *keyboard*   buakofnebin = *shield*

pue = rope-shaped object

masboi = pasta   den = electricity
maspueboi = spaghetti   pueden = wire

kan vs **so**

Both of them might be translated as *see*, but what's the difference?

kan is about getting visual information with your eyes
so is about noticing, not necessarily with your eyes

> me kan te   *I am looking at you* **or** *I see you*
> me so te   *I notice you*

fam vs **fo**

fo is about having an opinion, a belief
fam is about the thinking process

> me fo mita luamus poli = *I think she sings well (that's my opinion)*
> me fam mita luamus poli = *I'm thinking about her singing well (imagining it)*
>
> te fo ke = *What do you think? (= What's your opinion?)*
> te fam ke = *What are you thinking about?*

pua

Some people **mistakenly** think that **pua** is the same as the English preposition *for*. In reality, its meaning is much more specific: **pua** = *for the sake of* **or** *in order to.*

> muta disakohom len'german pua go gos'german
> *He is learning German in order to go to Germany.*
>
> me kifa ta pua te
> *I did that for you (for your sake).*

ma vs **topa**

topa means *place* in general, it's a simple word. However, **ma** is much more specific, it means a place with a certain characteristics or function. So it is recommended against using **ma** as a standalone word.

podei vs genajus

Both words can be translated as *really*, but they are very different:

podei is used to eliminate doubt
genajus is used similarly with *very*.

ca te podei bio dagocua = Are you really an astronaut?
len'iapon dofeu genajus = the Japanese language is really (= very) difficult.

sandomai vs dei vs balodei vs folodei

All words can be translated as *right*, therefore they're often mixed up by many learners.

dei means *true/real*; most of the time it's applied to clauses
sandomai means *correct*; but keep in mind it's not applicable to people
balodei means to say something true; that's exactly what we apply to people
folodei means to believe something that is true

muta danesai dei = He is a true/real doctor.
kam ta sandomai = That word is correct.
muta balodei = He is right (he said something true)
muta folodei = He is right (his opinion is correct)

Note what happens when we use them wrong:

muta dei = He's true/real.	That's something we might hear if we meet a famous actor and we can't believe it's really him.
muta sandomai	A really strange phrase that would mean as if there are correct and incorrect types of people.

And of course the same concerns their opposites: deu, sandomau, balodeu, folodeu.

Verbal emoji

As you already know, Nao doesn't use any sentence finals like "!", "?", etc. Fortunately, Nao has something that is much more powerful and unambiguous – verbal emoji:

      te fa ke =hal=   *What are you doing? LOL*

As you can see, =hal= is a verbal emoji and is roughly equivalent to LOL. So to create a verbal emoji, you need to take a key word that describes your attitude to what is being said and use it in the beginning or at the end of the sentence (replacing the dash if any).

me no ku go ta =nabun=	I'm not going there (scared)
moikofomodei te sel =joi=	I hope you'll succeed (happy)
danel gobepa =pon=	Somebody has arrived (important)
hoike fa ta =punajus=	Why did you do that?! (extremely surprised)

Associativity

It is one of the main properties of Nao. Firsly, it implies the <u>unimportance of spaces.</u> Consider the English word **raincoat**. We might as well write it as **rain coat** and the meaning wouldn't change. So is **raincoat** one word or two words? It depends on whether we write a space or not. Nao grammar works exactly that way but on a much larger scale. Let's take a look at some examples:

henodutua can be disassembled in these ways:

heno dutua = *please don't give up*
he nodu tua = *please continue trying*

In both cases, the meaning is the same, which means that it doesn't matter where you put the spaces.

gonu dom = *exit [a/the] building*
go nudom = *go outside*

mupaupau me = *my grandfather*
mupau paume = *my parent's father*

danesaibuham te = *your dentist*
danesai buham te = *the doctor of your teeth*

hap putuimet = *8 kilometers*
happutui met = *8000 meters*

All of the above could even be written with no spaces at all.

Associativity also lets us change the meaning to the opposite without knowing the structure of the word:

janmeilin = *young*   →   janmeilun = *old*

Associativity implies that the same sentence can be disassembled in different ways while resulting in the same meaning. Consider this sentence: "*She makes her face beautiful.*"

mita	ne	dofikan	likbac	se		mita	nedofikan	likbac	se
subj	verb	adj	obj	adj		subj	verb	obj	adj

mita	nedofikan	likbacse		mita	nedofikanlikbacse	
subj	verb	obj		subj	verb	

That's why in Nao there are often no clear word boundaries and one can make really long words.

Verb + verb

Let's see what happens when we put two verbs together. If the first verb is a verb with a repeating subject, the meaning is clear and easy:

moi go = *want to go*
joi mit = *happy to meet*
mo tua = *can try*

We can spell them together, so for example moigo = moi go

If the second verb has no object, then it's quite obvious too:

fobei X = *believe that X exists*

If the second verb takes a verb as its object, then the resulting compound takes a clause:

nemai [pe] pil go = ne [pe] pil mai go
joikohunfali [pe] te gobepa = joikohun [pe] te fali gobepa
nepusfei [pe] mipaupau lis = ne [pe] mipaupau pusfei lis

…or a noun, for example: **nemai pil**

In other cases, the resulting compound will have two objects and we need to understand which one is the direct object and how to refer to the indirect object.

The origin of elementary words

Most of Nao vocabulary is built from elementary words. But where did the elementary words come from? Since Nao aims to facilitate the process of mastering the vocabulary, many elementary words were borrowed from popular languages or groups of languages.

1. From Proto-Indo-European, and consequently most European and many other languages:

me, te, no, se, to, ta, ke, dom, nom, ni, tai, kel, mil, dua, tui, set, maus, sit, sek, sil, ba

2. From Latin and consequently Romance languages and possibly English:

kon (connectere)	ko (con-)	fa (facere)	sim (similis)	kem (crīmen)
mem (memoria)	len (lingua)	les (lēx)	de (dē)	fio (flōrem)
dok (documentum)	lek (ēlēctus)	lan (planta)	mus (mūsica)	mof (movēre)
sai (sānus)	lit (littera)	nis (īnsectum)	fom (forma)	kof (cooperiō)
maie (magica)	sei (sī)	nol (nūllus)	sol (sōlus)	ten (tenēre)
dia (dia, dies)	sa (sapēre)			

3. From English:

sit (sit)	faia (fire)	lai (light)	mit (meet)	tu (to)	hit (hit)
dog (dog)	pig (pig)	go (go)	joi (joy)	bu (body)	kua(crawl/climb)
mai (may)	bai (buy)	tek (check)	kuk (cook)	puc (push)	fos (four)
tua (try)	'tcis (cheese)	lun (long)			

4. From Chinese, and consequently possibly Japanese, Korean and Vietnamese:

hua (画)	kan (看)	kai (開)	den (電)	sen (現)	nie (年)
jin (近)	lok (六)	dei (對)			

5. From Slavic languages:

lik (lik)	tok (tok)	son (sъn)	bui (by)	def (dervo)	lio,lia,lei (liti)
mes (męso)	pet (pętь)	mo (može)	po (po)		

6. From Germanic languages: mak, hol, gal, bua, kis, kuk

7. From Japanese: mik (右) keu (けど) kio (兄弟) heia (部屋)

8. From Turkic languages: bac (baš) kum (kum)

Words from specific languages:

tio   Finnish työ
ma   Finnish/Estonian maa
lis   French lisant, German lesen, Latvian lasīt
mak   Germanic and Slavic smak
dac   Russian даже

kam   Thai คำ

gos   Russian государство, Chinese 国, English government
nio   English need, Latin necessārium, Russian надо
nef   French neuf, Spanish nueve
la, lo   from Romance articles
jam   Indonesian jam
nal   Korean 날

Related elementary words

Some words were formed in groups so that they would be similar in form and meaning.

pu (GIANT-), pus (more), pul (adult), pun (big), pau (parent)
cu (top), cun (high), cua (space)
hu (particle of respect), hun (respect)
ku (FUTURE), kun (next), kuf (late)
ne (cause), nei (control)
fua (gaseous matter), fual (breathe), fuas (bird), fui (smell)
lia (water), lio (liquid), lei (wet), lias (fish)
ni (inside), nim (center), nik (container), nit (stick in)
fi (like), fia (be in love)
lus (write), luf (record)
le (time), lef (wait), lem (occurrence)
si (element), soi (part)
dou (hard), doua (stone)
go (go), gon (path)
ga (completely), gau (all), gaus (regularly)

Onomatopeia

Finally, some words were formed based on the sound association:

ban, hom, miau, bom, fua, fue, hal, foi, fu, fe, ham, he, hu, mua