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# Mungong Orthography Guide

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## Abbreviations

//	underlying representation
[ ]	phonetic representation
~	is in free variation with
-w-	labialisation infix
Ø	no prefix
H	high tone
N	nasal consonant
n	noun
pl	plural
v	verb

## 1 Introduction

This paper proposes an orthography for Mungong, an Eastern Beoid Language spoken by about 1,500 people in the Bum Subdivision, Menchum Division, North West Region, Republic of Cameroon. The Atlas Linguistique du Cameroun (ALCAM) (Dieu and Renaud 1983) does not mention Mungong. The Atlas Administratif des langues nationales du Cameroun (Breton and Fohtung 1987) gives it the language code [885]. The *Ethnologue* (Lewis 2009) lists Mungong as a dialect of Ncane, ISO 639-3 language code: ncr. The language area is comprised of one village with its own chief.

Little linguistic research has been done on the Mungong language. Jean-Marie Hombert (1980) studied the noun classes of the Beoid languages, of which Mungong was included. A phonology sketch was completed by Richard Boutwell in 2011. Outside of this research, the authors are not aware of any other linguistic research that has been performed in Mungong.

This particular document was prepared with the assistance of several language informants, notably Mr. KEMCHA Gabriel and Mr. NGANTI Joseph. The data utilized in this document consist primarily of 1411 words based on the SIL comparative African wordlist (Roberts and Snider 2006), collected by Richard Boutwell in 2007.

## 2 Alphabet

The Mungong segmental alphabet is made up of 22 consonants and 9 vowels. They are represented below in upper and lower cases:

A a, B b, Ch ch, D d, Dz dz, E e, E e, Ə ə, F f, G g, Gb gb, I i, I i, J j, K k, Kp kp, L l, M m, N n, Ny ny, ŋ ŋ, O o, O o, S s, Sh sh, T t, Ts ts, U u, W w, V v, Y y

### 2.1 Consonants

The consonant phonemes, their allophones and graphemes are presented in the table below. The chart also shows their use in various positions in the word.

Phoneme	Allophone	Grapheme	Initial position	Medial position	Final position
/b/	[b]	<b>B b</b>	<b>bi</b> <i>goat</i>	<b>dzibə</b> <i>mushroom</i>	_____
/tʃ/	[tʃ]	<b>Ch ch</b>	<b>chu</b> <i>to heal, cure</i>	<b>fəchi</b> <i>whole</i>	_____
/d/	[d]	<b>D d</b>	<b>danda</b> <i>mat</i>	<b>budi</b> <i>bridge</i>	_____
/dz/	[dz]	<b>Dz dz</b>	<b>dzəŋ</b> <i>war</i>	<b>kidzo</b> <i>to appease</i>	_____
/f/	[f]	<b>F f</b>	<b>fikɔ</b> <i>cup</i>	<b>bufi</b> <i>knowledge</i>	_____
/g/	[g]	<b>G g</b>	<b>go</b> <i>to crush</i>	<b>kigi</b> <i>eggshell</i>	_____
/gb/	[gb]	<b>Gb gb</b>	<b>gbɪŋ</b> <i>hunting net</i>	<b>igbə</b> <i>veins</i>	_____
/dʒ/	[dʒ]	<b>J j</b>	<b>jimə</b> <i>yam</i>	<b>kiju</b> <i>place</i>	_____
/k/	[k]	<b>K k</b>	<b>ku</b> <i>box</i>	<b>loko</b> <i>cassava, manioc</i>	_____
/kp/	[kp]	<b>Kp kp</b>	<b>kpe</b> <i>moon</i>	<b>bəkpondo</b> <i>elbows</i>	_____
/l/	[l]	<b>L l</b>	<b>li</b> <i>to sleep</i>	<b>bala</b> <i>field</i>	_____

Phoneme	Allophone	Grapheme	Initial position	Medial position	Final position
/m/	[m]	<b>M m</b>	<b>mi</b> <i>to swallow</i>	<b>jimə</b> <i>yam</i>	<b>kintam</b> <sup>1</sup> <i>big(gest) drum</i>
/n/	[n]	<b>N n</b>	<b>na</b> <i>ox, cow</i>	<b>dzenə</b> <i>grinding stone</i>	<b>gwɛ intantan</b> <sup>1</sup> <i>breakfast</i>
/ɲ/	[ɲ]	<b>Ny ny</b>	<b>nya</b> <i>to give</i>	<b>kinyi</b> <i>relative (by blood)</i>	_____
/ŋ/	[ŋ]	<b>Ŋ ŋ</b>	<b>ŋaŋle</b> <i>to crawl</i>	<b>soŋo</b> <i>oil palm</i>	<b>faŋ</b> <i>to refuse</i>
/s/	[s]	<b>S s</b>	<b>soŋo</b> <i>oil palm</i>	<b>kusa</b> <i>ancestor</i>	_____
/ʃ/	[ʃ]	<b>Sh sh</b>	<b>shi</b> <i>chicken</i>	<b>gashe</b> <i>to divide, separate</i>	_____
/t/	[t]	<b>T t</b>	<b>taka</b> <i>fish bone</i>	<b>buta</b> <i>den, lair, hole</i>	_____
/ts/	[ts]	<b>Ts ts</b>	<b>tsema</b> <i>locust</i>	<b>tsutsu</b> <i>gravel</i>	_____
/w/	[w]	<b>W w</b>	<b>woŋ</b> <i>family</i>	<b>jiwa</b> <i>top</i>	_____
/j/	[j]~[ɟ] <sup>2</sup>	<b>Y y</b>	<b>yese</b> <i>to greet</i>	<b>fiya</b> <i>rat</i>	_____

### 2.1.1 Prenasalised Consonants

One kind of consonant cluster found in Mungong consists of clusters where the first consonant is a nasal consonant that is produced at the same place of articulation as the following consonant. Most consonants may be preceded by such homorganic nasal consonants (symbolised by “N” below), as in the following chart:

<sup>1</sup> Only one example each of word final [m] and [n] have been observed.

<sup>2</sup> The [j] and [ɟ] are in free variation in all environments, although there is some preference as to when it is [j] and when it is [ɟ]. The speakers themselves tend to perceive the phoneme as /j/.

Consonant Cluster	Allophone	Grapheme	Initial position	Medial position	Final position
/Nb/	[mb]	<b>Mb mb</b>	<b>mbamba</b> <i>namesake</i>	<b>kembɛ</b> <i>loincloth</i>	_____
/Ntʃ/	[ntʃ]	<b>Nch nch</b>	<b>nchamə</b> <i>rust</i>	<b>fincha</b> <i>fishhook</i>	_____
/Nd/	[nd]	<b>Nd nd</b>	<b>ndaŋ</b> <i>thread</i>	<b>kindəŋ</b> <i>throat</i>	_____
/Ndz/	[ndz]	<b>Ndz ndz</b>	<b>ndzi</b> <i>guinea corn</i>	<b>gundzə</b> <i>to persuade</i>	_____
/Nf/	[ɱf]	<b>Nf nf</b>	<b>nfu</b> <i>army ant</i>	<b>kinfə</b> <i>news</i>	_____
/Ng/	[ŋg]	<b>ŋg ɲg</b>	<b>ɲga</b> <i>hem</i>	<b>chanɡo</b> <i>spider</i>	_____
/Ngb/	[ŋmgb]	<b>ŋgb ɲgb</b>	<b>ɲgbə</b> <i>to shave</i>	_____	_____
/Ndʒ/	[ndʒ]	<b>Nj nj</b>	<b>nju</b> <i>cloth</i>	<b>kinjɛŋ</b> <i>cloud</i>	_____
/Nk/	[ŋk]	<b>ŋk ɲk</b>	<b>ɲka</b> <i>jigger</i>	<b>kinjkaŋ</b> <i>insect</i>	_____
/Nl/	[nl]	<b>Nl nl</b>	<b>nlɔ</b> <i>poison (n)</i>	<b>kinlanɲe</b> <i>to rejoice</i>	_____
/Ns/	[ns]	<b>Ns ns</b>	<b>nsaŋ</b> <i>thatch</i>	<b>kinse</b> <i>comb</i>	_____
/Nʃ/	[nʃ]	<b>Nsh nsh</b>	<b>nshəŋ</b> <i>ground, land</i>	<b>finshiŋa</b> <i>dung beetle</i>	_____
/Nt/	[nt]	<b>Nt nt</b>	<b>ntoŋ</b> <i>cutting grass</i>	<b>kinta</b> <i>bed</i>	_____
/Nts/	[nts]	<b>Nts nts</b>	<b>ntso</b> <i>tendril</i>	<b>kintso</b> <i>horn</i>	_____

### 2.1.2 Palatalised Consonants

Another consonant cluster is where the second consonant is the palatal glide [j], which is usually written in Mungong as *i*. There is a relatively small number of words containing palatalized consonants. Only the following consonant clusters have been found.

Phoneme	Allophone	Grapheme	Initial position	Medial position	Final position
/bj/	[bj]	<b>Bi bi</b>	<b>biu</b> <i>raffia palm</i>	_____	_____
/tʃj/	[tʃj]	<b>Chi chi</b>	_____	<b>finchia</b> <i>earring</i>	_____
/fj/	[fj]	<b>Fi fi</b>	<b>fiə</b> <i>to burn, to blaze</i>	<b>fiɛfia</b> <i>hoof</i>	_____
/gj/	[gj]	<b>Gi gi</b>	<b>giɛŋ</b> <i>grass</i>	<b>sogie</b> <i>soldier</i>	_____
/kj/	[kj]	<b>Ki ki</b>	_____	<b>kikie</b> <i>foot</i>	_____
/mj/	[mj]	<b>Mi mi</b>	<b>mia</b> <i>to blink</i>	_____	_____
/ʃj/	[ʃj]	<b>Shi shi</b>	<b>shiəŋ</b> <i>heart</i>	<b>kashie</b> <i>to threaten</i>	_____

### 2.1.3 Labialised Consonants

A third consonant cluster is where the second consonant is the labiovelar glide [w], which is always written in Mungong as *w*. The glide may only follow some consonants, as seen in the table below. In certain cases, labialisation may also be realised as a labio-dental fricative offglide. This occurs only with the consonants: **b**, **k**, and **g**. When these consonants are labialised before the vowel *u*, the *w* becomes either a *v* with the consonants **b** and **g**, or an *f* with the consonant **k**.<sup>3</sup> Note that the *v* only occurs with these consonants and is not a simple phoneme in the language.

<sup>3</sup> This labio-dental fricative offglide is also seen in Nooni, but it occurs with a greater variety of consonants (Andrus & Lux 2006).

Phoneme	Allophone	Grapheme	Initial position	Medial position	Final position
/bw/	[bw]	<b>Bw bw</b>	<b>bwɪ</b> <i>beam, rafter</i>	_____	_____
	[bv]	<b>Bv bv</b>	<b>bvu</b> <i>compromise</i>	<b>kibvu</b> <i>sky</i>	_____
/tʃw/	[tʃw]	<b>Chw chw</b>	<b>chwɪŋ</b> <i>latrine</i>	<b>chwɛnchwɛ</b> <i>to whisper</i>	_____
/dzw/	[dzw]	<b>Dzw dzw</b>	<b>dzwə</b> <i>mouth</i>	_____	_____
/fw/	[fw]	<b>Fw fw</b>	<b>fwi</b> <i>to blow (with mouth)</i>	<b>kifwə</b> <i>in front of</i>	_____
/gw/	[gw]	<b>Gw gw</b>	<b>gwəŋ</b> <i>illness</i>	<b>kigwoŋ</b> <i>owl</i>	_____
	[gv]	<b>Gv gv</b>	<b>gvu</b> <i>chest</i>	<b>kigvu</b> <i>tooth</i>	_____
/gbw/	[gbw]	<b>Gbw gbw</b>	<b>gbwə</b> <i>dog</i>	_____	_____
/dʒw/	[dʒw]	<b>Jw jw</b>	<b>jwə</b> <i>mouth</i>	<b>bunjwɛ</b> <i>fight</i>	_____
/kw/	[kw]	<b>Kw kw</b>	<b>kwa</b> <i>money</i>	<b>kikwijə</b> <i>hammer</i>	_____
	[kf]	<b>Kf kf</b>	<b>kfu</b> <i>rope</i>	<b>kikfu</b> <i>head</i>	_____
/mw/	[mw]	<b>Mw mw</b>	<b>mwa</b> <i>baby</i>	<b>imwəŋ</b> <i>dew</i>	_____
/ŋw/	[ŋw]	<b>ŋw ŋw</b>	<b>ŋwəŋ</b> <i>to carve</i>	_____	_____
/ʃw/	[ʃw]	<b>Shw shw</b>	<b>shwɛ</b> <i>to caress</i>	<b>fəŋshwəŋ</b> <i>noon</i>	_____

#### 2.1.4 Consonant Orthography Rules

Various rules on which consonants can occur in which positions or which can occur before and after other consonants are important to learn. Here is a partial list of consonant orthography rules:

1. Never write **h** without a **c** or **s** in front of it, unless the word is borrowed.
2. The only consonants that can be written at the end of a word are **m**, **n** and **ŋ**.
3. If you hear a nasal before **g**, **gb** or **k** always write **ŋ**.
4. At the beginning of words...
  - a. if you hear a nasal before **b**, always write **m**.

Example: **mbonda** 'potato'

- b. if you hear a nasal before **ch**, **d**, **dz**, **f**, **j**, **l**, **s**, **sh**, **t** or **ts**, always write **n**.

Examples: **nchi** 'law'  
**njaŋ** 'song'  
**ntolo** 'pepper'

5. In the middle of words, if you hear a nasal before any consonant, always write **ŋ** unless you hear a different nasal, then follow rule 4 above.

Examples: **kinlaŋyɛ** 'rejoice'      **ŋaŋle** 'crawl'  
**kinse** 'comb'      **kaŋse** 'complete'  
**finshiŋa** 'dung beetle'      **baŋshe** 'gather'

6. Never write a **v** without a **b** or **g** in front of it, except for borrowed words.

## 2.2 Vowels

The Mungong language has nine vowel phonemes, presented with their allophones and proposed graphemes in the table below. The table also shows their use in various positions in the word.

Phoneme	Allophone	Grapheme	Initial position	Medial position	Final position
/a/	[a]	<b>A a</b>	_____	<b>bala</b> <i>field</i>	<b>da</b> <i>sword</i>
/e/	[ɪ]	<b>E e</b>	_____	<b>dzenə</b> <i>grinding stone</i>	<b>kpe</b> <i>month</i>
/ɛ/	[ɛ]	<b>Ɛ ɛ</b>	_____	<b>jəmə</b> <i>sister</i>	<b>bɛ</b> <i>to choose, to pick</i>
/ə/	[ə]	<b>Ə ə</b>	_____	<b>bəfu</b> <i>foam</i>	<b>bə</b> <i>to belch</i>
/i/	[i]	<b>I i</b>	<b>ita</b> <i>side (of body)</i>	<b>bishi</b> <i>face</i>	<b>bi</b> <i>to cry, weep</i>
/i/	[i]	<b>ɪ i</b>	_____	<b>shikə</b> <i>gizzard</i>	<b>di</b> <i>to cook</i>
/o/	[o]	<b>O o</b>	_____	<b>boko</b> <i>to open</i>	<b>bo</b> <i>to give birth</i>
/ɔ/	[ɔ]	<b>Ɔ ɔ</b>	_____	<b>gɔŋ</b> <i>spear</i>	<b>gɔ</b> <i>to grind</i>
/u/	[u]	<b>U u</b>	<b>uwaŋ</b> <i>pain (n)</i>	<b>bukɔ</b> <i>ladder</i>	<b>bu</b> <i>to stab</i>

### 2.2.1 Nasal Vowels

Nasal vowels are contrastive with oral vowels in Mungong in a few instances and most occur at the end of the word. In writing Mungong, the nasal **ŋ** should be added at the end of the word to signify that the preceding vowel is nasalised.<sup>4</sup>

Phonemic	Phonetic	Orthographic	Gloss
/gba/	[gba]	<b>gba</b>	<i>bush country, rural area</i>
/bjã/	[bjã]	<b>biaŋ</b>	<i>gall bladder</i>
/kpɪ/	[kpɪ]	<b>kpe</b>	<i>moon</i>
/gbĩ/	[gbĩ]	<b>gbeŋ</b>	<i>hundred (100)</i>
/sɛ/	[sɛ]	<b>sɛ</b>	<i>to boil (water), bubble up</i>
/sẽ/	[sẽ]	<b>sɛŋ</b>	<i>to stink, smell (bad)</i>
/lə/	[lə]	<b>lə</b>	<i>to weave</i>
/lã/	[lã]	<b>lãŋ</b>	<i>to hurt oneself</i>
/tʃi/	[tʃi]	<b>chi</b>	<i>navel</i>
/tʃĩ/	[tʃĩ]	<b>chiŋ</b>	<i>guide (n)</i>
/dzi/	[dzi]	<b>dzi</b>	<i>to conquer, defeat</i>
/gbĩ/	[gbĩ]	<b>gbĩŋ</b>	<i>hunting net</i>
/bu/	[bu]	<b>bu</b>	<i>to stab</i>
/bũ/	[bũ]	<b>buŋ</b>	<i>to agree</i>

### 2.2.2 Vowel Orthography Rules

Various rules on which vowels can occur in which positions is important to learn. Here is a partial list of vowel orthography rules:

1. If two different vowels occur together, the first one must be **i** (see palatalised consonants in section 2.1.2).
2. If a vowel is nasalised, one must write **ŋ** after the vowel.

**Comment [RH1]:** Yes. Let's deal with this when you get there.

**Comment [rb2]:** this rule might need to be altered if we find that there are numerous word medial nasalized vowels. then we would want to limit this rule to word final position. otherwise, follow the NC rules?

<sup>4</sup> The choice [ŋ] over [n] at the end of word for signifying a nasalised vowel stems from speakers intuition and other work that has been done in the surrounding languages.

### **3 Tone**

#### **3.1 Historical Perspective**

There is much discussion regarding the best way to write orthographic tone. In writing tone in Cameroonian national languages, there has been a historical tendency toward either tone under-representation (not writing enough tone) or over-representation (writing all tone). Over the years, linguists have begun to recognise the importance of a balance between these two perspectives.

In recent years, Nooni orthographic tone has undergone extensive research to determine the best way to mark tone such that people can read and write more easily (Lux & Lux 1996; Andrus & Lux 2006). The goal in revising the Nooni tone orthography was “to reduce the number of diacritic marks on a printed page to the largest extent possible, while still adequately representing [the tones] functions in the language. What resulted was a system in which the former tone diacritics [ ` , ´ , ^ , ˘ ] no longer carry the sense of spoken tone, but instead perform grammatical and lexical disambiguating functions” (Andrus & Lux 2006:18). This completely revised Nooni tone orthography underwent field testing and is now being adopted by the Nooni Literacy Committee.

In approaching the Mungong tone orthography guide, the authors are proposing to research a similar system as in Nooni. The authors suggest starting off using under-representation in marking tone and continue ongoing research in conjunction with the language committee to determine the best tone orthography for the Mungong people. In the remaining section of this paper, basic phonetic tone in Mungong is discussed as well as certain diacritics to mark distinctions in grammatical meaning.

### 3.2 Basic Mungong Tone

Seven tone melodies have been identified in Mungong: three level tones (H, M and L) and four contour tones (HM, ML, MH, LM).

	Tone	Notation	Phonological Representation
Level	High	H	ˊ
	Mid	M	(unmarked)
	Low	L	ˋ
Contour	Falling	High-Mid	ˊˋ
		Mid-Low	ˋˋ
	Rising	Mid-High	ˋˊ
		Low-Mid	ˋˋ

At this point in time, many minimal tone pairs for words that contrast between high tone, mid tone, low tone and the falling tones have been observed. However, examples of the rising tones are very rare. Some examples are given below:

Tone	Phonetic	Gloss
H	[bɔ́]	<i>they (human)</i>
M	[bə]	<i>with</i>
L	[bì]	<i>to follow</i>
HM	[bí]	<i>to ask, request</i>
ML	[bī]	<i>to chase (v)</i>
MH	[bɔ́]	<i>belch</i>
LM	[dà]	<i>sword</i>

### 3.3 Lexical Tone

Tone in Mungong is contrastive and performs a lexical function by differentiating between two or more words that differ in sound only by tone. At this point, no proposal is being offered for distinguishing lexical tone orthographically. The following tone minimal pairings illustrate this:

Phonetic	Gloss
[bì]	<i>to follow</i>
[bí]	<i>to ask, request</i>
[gvúnə]	<i>corpse</i>
[gvunə̀]	<i>feather</i>
[kfùŋ]	<i>midrib of palm-frond</i>
[kfúŋ]	<i>bud</i>
[kfũŋ]	<i>current (river, stream)</i>

### 3.4 Grammatical Tone

Mungong tone also performs grammatical functions. The following sections describe only one of these functions and a proposal for representing it orthographically.

#### 3.4.1 Singular versus Plural Forms of Gender 9/10 Nouns

There are 12 noun classes in Mungong. The singular-plural distinction for gender 9/10 is based only on tone. Class 9 is the singular form of the word and Class 10 is the plural. The distinction between the two classes is a relatively higher tone for Class 10.<sup>5</sup> Examples of different phonetic tone for gender 9/10 nouns in Mungong are shown below.

Tone for 9 vs. Tone for 10	Class 9 (singular)	Class 10 (plural)	Gloss
Low – High	[ʃḍŋ]	[ʃóŋ]	<i>sheep</i>
Mid – High	[njə̀]	[njé̀]	<i>bee</i>
Falling ML – High	[bì]	[bí]	<i>goat</i>
Falling ML – Falling HM	[njũ̀]	[njũ̀]	<i>cutlass</i>
Low – Mid	[ŋgò̀]	[ŋgò̀]	<i>termite</i>

<sup>5</sup> This general distinction of relative difference in tone has also been observed by Hombert (1980:91). He states that “tone differences are found on the stem with relatively lower tones associated with the singular form [Gender 9].”

In writing orthographic tone for these classes, it could be possible to only mark Class 10 with a high tone diacritic and allow Class 9 to remain unmarked, as in Noonii. It would have to be verified, though, whether there are any other words (e.g. verbs) that have the same phonetic form with different or similar tone markings which need to be disambiguated. Here are the above examples written orthographically:

Singular	Gloss	Plural	Gloss
<b>shɔŋ</b>	<i>sheep</i>	<b>shóŋ</b>	<i>sheep (pl)</i>
<b>nyəŋ</b>	<i>bee</i>	<b>nyéŋ</b>	<i>bees</i>
<b>bi</b>	<i>goat</i>	<b>bí</b>	<i>goats</i>
<b>nyuŋ</b>	<i>cutlass</i>	<b>nyúŋ</b>	<i>cutlasses</i>
<b>ŋgo</b>	<i>termite</i>	<b>ŋgó</b>	<i>termites</i>

While the majority of gender 9/10 nouns are monosyllabic, there are some nouns that contain more than one syllable. For these words, only the first syllable should be marked for tone. Some examples are given below:

Singular	Gloss	Plural	Gloss
<b>biya</b>	<i>leopard</i>	<b>bíya</b>	<i>leopards</i>
<b>dzibə</b>	<i>mushroom</i>	<b>dzíbə</b>	<i>mushrooms</i>
<b>shikə</b>	<i>gizzard</i>	<b>shíkə</b>	<i>gizzards</i>
<b>tsema</b>	<i>locust</i>	<b>tséma</b>	<i>locusts</i>

## 4 Word Division

Mungong word division will be examined further at some later point in time. It will be especially important to develop appropriate criteria for distinguishing compound nouns from associative noun phrases.

In writing nouns, all noun class prefixes and suffixes will be written as part of the nouns, as in the examples shown below. (Note that classes 9 and 10 are discussed in section 3.4.1 above.)

Singular Class	Class Prefix	Example	Gloss	Plural Class	Class Prefix	Example	Gloss
1	∅	<b>na</b>	<i>cow</i>	2	bə-	<b>bəna</b>	<i>cows</i>
3a	∅	<b>gɔŋ</b>	<i>spear</i>	4a	i-	<b>igɔŋ</b>	<i>spears</i>
3b	-w-	<b>shwɛŋ</b>	<i>frog</i>	4b	∅/i-	<b>sɛŋ</b>	<i>frogs</i>
7	ki-	<b>kifə</b>	<i>hat</i>	8	bi-	<b>bifə</b>	<i>hats</i>
9	∅	<b>chɛŋ</b>	<i>monkey</i>	10	-H-	<b>chéŋ</b>	<i>monkeys</i>
14	bu-	<b>bukɔ</b>	<i>ladder</i>	25	maN-	<b>maŋkɔ</b>	<i>ladders</i>
19	fi-	<b>fimusə</b>	<i>cat</i>	26	mu-	<b>mumusə</b>	<i>cats</i>

## 5 Punctuation and Capitalisation

The punctuation marks and rules that govern the Mungong language are similar to those for English. The punctuation marks used for Mungong are as follows:

1. Full stop (.)
2. Question mark (?)
3. Exclamation point (!)
4. Comma (,)
5. Colon (:)
6. Quotation marks (“...”) and (‘...’)

### 5.1 Full Stop

The full stop (.) in Mungong marks the end of a declarative sentence.

**Dzaŋ itu.**

rain it is coming

*'Rain is coming.'*

### 5.2 Question Mark

The question mark (?) marks the end of an interrogative sentence.

**Wa yinə fə wɛŋ?**

you go to market

*'Are you going to market?'*

### 5.3 Exclamation Mark

The exclamation mark (!) is written at the end of a command, or is placed following exclamatory words and phrases. It functions to express interjections, surprise, excitement, forceful comments, and simple commands.

**Lege!**

run

*'Run!'*

### 5.4 Comma

Commas are used to separate clauses or parallel words within a clause, as below:

**Wu lá ŋgaŋa, wu tə bə shi, mbvuŋ bə mumbi.**

he travelled he came with fowl wine and cola nuts

*'He travelled and came with a fowl, some wine and some cola nuts.'*

## 5.5 Colon

Colons are used to separate a clause which refers to a concept in general terms from a clause or phrase which makes the concept more specific. It represents a pause in speech that could be replaced by words “that is” or “as follows” in English.

**Bə̃nchi bə wə̃ŋ ndzoŋo: Bəya bəsiliba fə wa ŋji nto.**

laws of village are good remove slippers before you enter palace

*‘The laws of the village are good: Remove your slippers before you enter the palace.’*

## 5.6 Quotation Marks

Quotation marks (“...” or ‘...’) occur at the beginning and end of direct speech, as below:

Note: In English and Mungong, other punctuation marks always precede closing quotation marks when they occur next to each other.

**Mə̃ŋ dəle, “kwələ ju!”**

Mami said fetch water

*‘Mami said, “Fetch water!”’*

## 5.7 Capitalisation

Capital letters are used at the beginning of sentences (see sections 5.1 to 5.6 above), after a colon (see section 5.5 above), the beginning of direct speech in quotation marks (see section 5.6 above), and for proper nouns (illustrated below).

**Chia, Mbo bə Kojoh bi la mwə̃ŋ.**

Chia Mbo and Kojoh went to farm

*‘Chia, Mbo and Kojoh went to the farm.’*

## **6 Need for Further Testing of the Orthography**

The suitability of several proposals in this orthography guide needs to be assessed further. In particular, the choice of **y** instead of **i** for palatalisation would render a more uniform system, matching the choice of **w** for labialisation. Also, the use of **v** could be eliminated if the underlying form of /gw/ and /bw/ were utilised for representation. A formal method of distinguishing between compound nouns and associative noun phrases needs to be investigated. Finally, the best way of marking important tone distinctions needs more research.

Any new orthography needs people to use it for a time before potential problems reveal themselves. It is our hope that this proposal will be a significant first step in allowing people to start reading and writing the Mungong language.

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