

AWING ORTHOGRAPHY GUIDE

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Abbreviations

AM	Associative Marker
COMP	Complementizer
EMPH	Emphasis Marker
HAB	Habitual Aspect Marker
IMP	Imperative Mood Marker
NEG	Negative Marker
PAST	Past Tense Marker
Pl.	Plural
PROG	Progressive Aspect Marker
Sg.	Singular
2s	Second person singular pronoun
3s	Third person singular pronoun
3p	Third person plural pronoun
Ń-	High tone homorganic nasal prefix (the nasal consonant is always pronounced at the same place in the mouth as the following consonant)

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1. Introduction

This paper* proposes an orthography for Awing, a Grassfields Bantu language spoken by about 19,000 people in the Mezam division, North West Province, Republic of Cameroon. According to the Ethnologue (Grimes, 2000:29), Awing is a Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Wide Grassfields, Narrow Grassfields, Mbam-Nkam, Ngemba language, related to Baminkumbit. As far as the authors know, the only previous research done on this language was on phonology (Aziishi, 1994).

2. Alphabet

The Awing 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, E e, Ɛ ɛ, Ɔ ɔ, F f, G g, Gh gh, I i, I i, J j, K k, ' ', L l, Mm, N n, Ny ny, ŋ ŋ, O o, Ɔ ɔ, P p, S s, Sh sh, T t, Ts ts, U u, W w, Y y, Z z

2.1 Consonants

The consonant phonemes, their allophones and graphemes are presented the table below. We also show their use in various positions in the word. All Awing words end with a vowel so word-final consonants do not exist (except the word for "only" shown below).

Phoneme	Allophone	Grapheme	Initial position	Medial position	Final position
/t/	[t]	T t	tóamə <i>choke (v)</i>	nətô <i>intestine</i>	—
	[tʰ] ¹		túmə <i>send</i>	atúə <i>head</i>	—
/k/	[k]	K k	kaŋtá <i>stumble</i>	ləmká <i>smell (v)</i>	—
	[ʔ] ²	' '	—	zó'ə <i>hear</i>	nda' ² <i>only</i>
/b/	[b]	B b	—	lóbətə <i>plan (v)</i>	—
	[p] ³	P p	pímə <i>believe</i>	apɛ̃ɛlə <i>mad person</i>	—
/d/	[d]	D d	—	sɛdná <i>turn round</i>	—
	[l] ⁴	L l	lɛdná <i>sweat (v)</i>	alóəmə <i>tongue</i>	—
	[l] ~ [r] ⁴		—	fɛlə <i>breastbone</i>	—
/g/	[g]	G g	—	fógə <i>blow (v)</i>	—

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Phoneme	Allophone	Grapheme	Initial position	Medial position	Final position
/ɣ/	[ɣ] ⁵	Gh gh	ghaŋə <i>chest</i>	nəghǒ <i>grinding stone</i>	—
/ts/	[ts]	Ts ts	tsó'ə <i>heal (v)</i>	atsáŋə <i>punishment</i>	—
/tʃ/	[tʃ]	Ch ch	cha'tó <i>greet</i>	achǐə <i>blood</i>	—
/f/	[f]	F f	fələ <i>breastbone</i>	afǔə <i>leaf, medicine</i>	—
/s/	[s]	S s	sednó <i>turn round</i>	nəse <i>grave</i>	—
/ʃ/	[ʃ]	Sh sh	shǐə <i>stretch (v)</i>	əshúə <i>fish</i>	—
/z/	[z]	Z z	zó'ə <i>hear</i>	azagó <i>odour</i>	—
	[dz] ⁶	Dz dz	—	ndzǒ <i>beans</i>	—
/ʒ/	[ʒ]	J j	jágə <i>yawn</i>	ajúmə <i>thing</i>	—
	[dʒ] ⁶		—	njwǐŋə <i>whistle (n)</i>	—
/m/	[m]	M m	mǐə <i>swallow (v)</i>	lúmə <i>bite (v)</i>	—
/n/	[n]	N n	nó <i>drink (v)</i>	lednó <i>sweat (v)</i>	—
/ɲ/	[ɲ]	Ny ny	nyagló <i>tickle (v)</i>	anyeŋə <i>claw (n)</i>	—
/ŋ/	[ŋ]	Ŋ ŋ	ŋá'ə <i>open (v)</i>	ghaŋə <i>chest</i>	—
/w/	[w]	W w	wáakó <i>sand</i>	nəwúə <i>death</i>	—
	[ɥ] ⁷		—	akwáalə <i>support (n)</i>	—
/j/	[j]	Y y	yíkə <i>harden</i>	ayáŋə <i>wisdom</i>	—

Notes:

¹ The aspirated consonant phone [tʰ] occurs before high vowels, [t] elsewhere.

² The consonant [k] occurs root-initial, while the phone [ʔ] occurs in other positions (it only occurs final in one exceptional word in the language, the word for "only" shown in the chart).

³ The consonant phone [p] occurs stem-initially while the alternate consonant phone [b] occurs in other positions.

⁴ The consonant phone [l] varies freely with [r] between vowels inside a root, while the alternate consonant phone [d] occurs after a nasal consonant.

⁵ Contrary to most Grassfields Bantu languages, Awing does have contrast between [g] and [ɣ] between vowels, though this contrast is neutralized in other environments (like other Grassfields Bantu languages, Awing has only [ɣ] word-initial and only [g] after nasal consonants).

⁶ Consonant phones [dz, dʒ] occur only after nasal consonants while alternate consonant phones [z, ʒ] occur in other positions. While the authors suggested writing the predictable [dz] with just "z", the Awing Language Committee insisted on writing this allophone with "dz".

⁷ The semi-vowel phone [ɥ] occurs before non-back vowels, [w] elsewhere.

2.1.1 Prenasalized Consonants

One kind of consonant cluster found in Awing consists of clusters where the first consonant is a syllabic nasal consonant that is pronounced at the same place of articulation as the following consonant. This consonant is written ‘m’ before ‘b’ and ‘n’ elsewhere. Quite a few consonants may be preceded by such homorganic syllabic nasal consonants (symbolized as ŋ), as in the following chart:

Consonant Cluster	Allophone	Grapheme	Initial position	Medial position	Final position
/ŋb/	[ɱb]	Mb mb	mbe'tə <i>shoulder (n)</i>	ambeenó <i>abscess</i>	—
/ŋt/	[ɱt]	Nt nt	ntóamə <i>heart</i>	nanteemó <i>pimple</i>	—
	[ɱtʰ]		ntúmkə <i>entrance hut</i>	məntid <i>maggots</i>	—
/ŋd/	[ɱd]	Nd nd	ndě <i>neck</i>	məndě <i>necks</i>	—
/ŋts/	[ɱts]	Nts nts	ntsoolə <i>war</i>	məntsoolə <i>wars</i>	—
/ŋtʃ/	[ɱtʃ]	Nch nch	ńchí' <i>rub</i>	—	—
/ŋz/	[ɱdz]	Ndz ndz	ndzǒ <i>beans</i>	məndzǒ <i>groundnuts</i>	—
/ŋʒ/	[ɱdʒ]	Nj nj	ńji'ó <i>eggusi</i>	nənjwínnə <i>fly (n)</i>	—
/ŋk/	[ɱk]	Nk nk	nkadtə <i>back</i>	ankoomə <i>ram</i>	—
/ŋg/	[ɱg]	Ng ng	ng'ə <i>hardship</i>	nəngoomó <i>plantain</i>	—
/ŋm/	[ɱm]	Mm mm	ńmə <i>try</i>	—	—
/ŋn/	[ɱn]	Nn nn	ńnáj <i>look at</i>	ghánnə <i>stagger</i>	—
/ŋɲ/	[ɱɲ]	Nny nny	ńnyĩ <i>defecate</i>	—	—
/ŋŋ/	[ɱŋ]	ŋŋ ŋŋ	ńŋá' <i>open (v)</i>	—	—

2.1.2 Palatalized Consonants

Another kind of consonant cluster is where the second consonant is the palatal glide [j], which is always written in Awing as "y". Only a few consonants have been found so far followed by this glide, as in the following chart:

Phoneme	Allophone	Grapheme	Initial position	Medial position	Final position
/tj/	[tj]	Ty ty	tyá'lə <i>straddle</i>	tyáalə <i>strain off</i>	—
/kj/	[kj]	Ky ky	kyagó <i>untie</i>	akyámə <i>bile</i>	—

/bj/	[pj]	Py py	pyáabə <i>watch (v)</i>	—	—
	[bj]	By by	—	mbyáabə <i>guard (n)</i>	—
/gj/	[gj]	Gy gy	—	ngye <i>voice</i>	—
/fj/	[fj]	Fy fy	fyáalə <i>chase (v)</i>	nəfyáanə <i>a spank</i>	—
/lj/	[lj]	Ly ly	lyáŋə <i>hide (v. tr.)</i>	nəlyanə <i>shelter(n)</i>	—
/mj/	[mj]	My my	mya'á <i>throw away</i>	—	—

2.1.3 Labialized Consonants

The last kind of consonant cluster is where the second consonant is the labiovelar glide [w] or its labio-palatal glide allophone [ɥ] (before all non-back vowels), both of which are always written in Awing as "w". Quite a few consonants may be followed by these labialized glides, as in the following chart:

Consonant Cluster	Allophone	Grapheme	Initial position	Medial position	Final position
/tw/	[tɥ]	Tw tw	twáŋə <i>bury</i>	mətwé <i>saliva</i>	—
/kw/	[kɥ]	Kw kw	kwágə <i>cough (v)</i>	akwe <i>response</i>	—
/bw/	[pɥ]	Pw pw	pwónə <i>dip (v)</i>	məpwódnənə <i>(be) kind</i>	—
	[bɥ]	Bw bw	—	mbwódnə <i>blessing</i>	—
/dw/	[dɥ]	Dw dw	—	ndwigtə <i>end (n)</i>	—
	[lɥ]	Lw lw	lwéŋkə <i>fill</i>	nəlwíə <i>nose</i>	—
/gw/	[gɥ]	Gw, gw	—	ngwáŋə <i>salt</i>	—
/fw/	[fɥ]	Fw fw	fwə'ə <i>chisel (n)</i>	—	—
/ʃw/	[ʃɥ]	Shw shw	shwa'a <i>razor</i>	ashwí'ə <i>swelling (n)</i>	—
/ʒw/	[ʒɥ]	Jw jw	jwíə <i>breathe</i>	ajwikə <i>window</i>	—
	[dʒɥ]		—	njwíŋə <i>whistle sound</i>	—
/tʃw/	[tʃɥ]	Chw chw	chwigá <i>spy (v)</i>	nəchwélə <i>hearth</i>	—
/nw/	[nɥ]	Nw nw	nwáŋə <i>disappear</i>	mənwáŋə <i>bone marrow</i>	—
/ŋw/	[ŋɥ]	ŋw, ŋw	ŋwáglə <i>bell</i>	məŋwǎ'nə <i>(be) clean</i>	—
/lw/	[lɥ]	Lw lw	lwénkə <i>fill (v)</i>	nəlwélə <i>bump (n)</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 an "r". If you hear an "r", write an "l".
2. Never write "t" or "d" at the beginning of a word.
3. Never write "b" at the beginning of a word, write either "p" or "mb" instead.
4. Never write a "p" after an "m", write a "b" instead.
5. Never write a consonant as the last letter of a word.
6. If you hear a nasal consonant before "b", write "m"; if you hear a nasal consonant before any other consonant, always write "n".
7. Always write "gh" and never "g" by itself at the beginning of words.
8. Always write "ng" and never "ngh" when a "g" sound is preceded by a nasal consonant.

2.2 Vowels

The Awing language has 9 vowel phonemes, presented with their allophones and proposed graphemes in Table II below. The sounds are shown as they occur in different positions of the word.

Phoneme	Allophone	Grapheme	Initial position	Medial position	Final position
/i/	[i]	I i	—	léŋə <i>lick (v)</i>	—
/i/	[ị]	Ị ị	—	kí'ə <i>prevent</i>	—
/u/	[u]	U u	—	lúmə <i>bite (v)</i>	—
/e/	[e]	E e	—	ne'ə <i>limp</i>	nəse <i>grave</i>
/ə/	[ə]	Ə ə	əshúə <i>fish</i>	nəpe <i>liver</i>	ghaŋə <i>chest</i>
/o/	[o]	O o	—	tsó'ə <i>heal (v)</i>	nətô <i>intestine</i>
/ɛ/	[ɛ]	Ɛ ɛ	—	pénə <i>dance (v)</i>	fê <i>give</i>
/ɔ/	[ɔ]	Ɔ ɔ	—	nóŋə <i>suck</i>	—
/a/	[a]	A a	apô <i>hand (n)</i>	náŋə <i>look for</i>	ŋwa'á <i>shine (v)</i>

2.2.1 Vowel Length

Awing has both short and long vowels¹, the long ones written as a sequence of two vowels. Several long vowels are used quite extensively: [eɪ, oɪ, ɛɪ, əɪ, aɪ]. Examples of these vowels and their contrasting short vowels are given below:

nəpéenə	<i>crown of head</i>	nəpená	<i>edge</i>
ndzəəmə	<i>dream (n)</i>	ndzəmə	<i>back</i>
əlɛələ	<i>bridge</i>	əlɛlə	<i>beard</i>

Long [iɪ, ɪɪ, uɪ, oɪ] do not occur, though sometimes short vowels with high tone seem a bit longer.

2.2.2 Vowel Diphthongs

Of all the possible combinations of adjacent vowels, only three vowel sequences are possible in Awing, as shown in the following chart:

Phoneme	Allophone	Grapheme	Initial position	Medial position	Final position
/iə/	[iə]	lə iə	—	—	atīə <i>tree</i>
/iə/	[iə]	lə iə	—	—	əkīə <i>gizzard</i>
/uə/	[uə]	Uə uə	—	puánuə <i>dip in water</i>	apúə <i>ashes</i>

These diphthongs vary in their frequency. Both of the sequences [iə] and [uə] are common and do not contrast with palatalisation and labialisation before [ə]. Thus it would be possible to consider these two sequences as allophones of [yə] and [wə] and write them “yə” and “wə”², but we consider them to be diphthongs as they sound as long as two separate syllables. The remaining diphthong [iə] is quite rare; the only example we have to date is the one given in the chart above.

2.2.3 Prefix vowels

As in other Grassfields Bantu languages, Awing has neutralization of vowel contrast in prefixes, specifically between the vowels ‘e’ and ‘ə’. Though Awing speakers have free variation between [e] and [ə] word-initially, the more frequent ‘ə’ will always be written in this position, as in the examples below:

Phoneme	Allophone	Grapheme	Initial position	Medial position	Final position
/e/ ~ /ə/	[e] ~ [ə]	Ə ə	əfoo <i>fon</i>	—	—

¹ Long vowels only occur as the first vowel in noun and verb stems.

² The initial sounds are longer than other glides, but they could be phonetically lengthened due to the weak nature of the following [ə].

2.2.4 Vowel Orthography Rules

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

1. Never write "yə" right after a consonant. If you hear "yə", write "iə".
2. Never write "wə" right after a consonant. If you hear "wə", write "uə".
3. Never write "e" at the beginning of a word, always write "ə" instead.

3. Tone

3.1 Lexical Tone Contrasts Marked by Diacritics

Awing has three pitch levels (high, mid and low) and a variety of pitch glides between various levels.

3.1.1 Tone Marking for Short Vowels

Awing has a lot of minimal tone contrast between high and low and between mid and low, but none between high and mid tones. The main reason for this is that most non-low tones following a low tone are mid and not high. Though there are occasional mid tones that do not follow a low tone, we have not found any minimal tone pairs in which these particular mid tones contrast with a high tone. The result of this finding is that we have decided to write both high and mid tones with the same diacritic **á** (actually describing this diacritic to Awing speakers as a "non-low tone" mark). As in most tone languages where tone needs to be marked, we choose one tone to be marked by the absence of a diacritic on the vowel in question. In the case of Awing, we have chosen not to write any diacritic on syllables with low tone. We have decided to use the symbols **â** and **ǎ** for any falling and rising tone glides respectively, though these symbols are relatively infrequent in Awing. The tone marking system we propose is therefore illustrated below:

Tone	Phonetic (IPA)	Grapheme (Diacritic)
High	[á]	á
Mid	[ā]	
Low	[à]	a
Rising	[ǎ]	ǎ
Falling	[â]	â

In addition to marking tones on vowels, tone is also marked in Awing on syllabic nasal prefixes. Since all such prefix tones are low for nouns, beginning nasals in Awing nouns do not have any diacritic marked on them. Syllabic nasal prefixes on verbs, however, are always high and therefore always marked. We show some examples below of such nasal prefixes on various nouns and verbs:

mbéenə	[m̀bééǹə]	<i>nail</i>	ńbeenǎ	[ńbéén̄ǎ]	<i>hate</i>
mbɛŋǎ	[m̀bɛ̀ŋǎ]	<i>cockroach</i>	ńbéŋǎ	[ńbéŋǎ]	<i>missing</i>
ndoonə	[nd̀òò̀ǹə]	<i>misfortune</i>	ńdóónǎ	[ńdóón̄ǎ]	<i>beg</i>
ngoónǎ	[ŋ̀g̀òò̀n̄ǎ]	<i>patient</i>	ńgoónǎ	[ŋ̀g̀óón̄ǎ]	<i>sick</i>

As with many recent orthographies in Cameroon, our proposal is to write tone on all main Awing words (nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs) as these words are pronounced in isolation (i.e. as they occur when pronounced by themselves), and it is these forms that will be written in the lexicon. Various grammatical words however (pronouns, tenses, aspects, negatives, conjunctions, prepositions and associative/genitive markers, complementizers, etc.) will be written without any tone marks as they never contrast with other words within sentences. When reading, Awing speakers should have no problem pronouncing the actual phonetic pitch of entire sentences once they recognize the meanings of the individual words that make up those sentences.

It is fairly easy to find Awing words where the only difference between them is tone. For example, note the minimal tone pairs (or triplets) below:

kóŋá	[kóŋá]	<i>ditch</i>	fǎgá	[fǎgá]	<i>blight (n)</i>
kóŋə	[kóŋə]	<i>flow</i>	fǎgə	[fǎgə]	<i>blow (v)</i>
koŋə	[kòŋə]	<i>owl</i>			
koŋá	[kòŋá]	<i>yell at</i>			
akoolá	[àkò:rā]	<i>latrine</i>	ngə'á	[ŋgə'á]	<i>termite</i>
akoolə	[àkò:rə]	<i>leg</i>	ngə'ə	[ŋgə'ə]	<i>stone</i>
aləmá	[àləmā]	<i>pool</i>	əfǎgá	[əfǎgā]	<i>blind person</i>
alómə	[àləmə]	<i>cloud</i>	əfǎgə	[əfǎgə]	<i>malaria</i>
yə	[jə]	<i>he</i>	ko	[kò]	<i>take</i>
yǎ	[jǎ]	<i>come</i>	kǒ	[kǒ]	<i>snore</i>

3.1.2 Tone Marking for Long Vowels and Diphthongs

As we have seen in sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 above, the Awing language has long vowels and vowel diphthongs. In the case of long vowels and diphthongs, it is very important to decide upon a system for writing the tone on these kinds of vowels. In Awing, we have decided to write all the tones found on any long vowel or diphthong on the first vowel of the vowel pair. **Therefore, there will never be any tone marked on the second vowel when two vowels are adjacent within a word.** We believe that this kind of system ends up with fewer diacritics on vowels and hopefully therefore a higher level of acceptability by the Awing community.

Below are a few examples of tone marks on long vowels and diphthongs in Awing:

akoobá	[àkò:bā]	<i>forest</i>	akwúə	[àkwúə]	<i>corpse</i>
alóəmə	[àlō:mə]	<i>tongue</i>	káchǎ	[kátʃǎ]	<i>cricket</i>
əghâa	[əyâ:]	<i>season</i>	pîə	[pîə]	<i>give birth</i>
nóolə	[nó:rə]	<i>snake</i>	pǎ	[pǎ]	<i>sow</i>

3.2 Grammatical Meanings Marked by Diacritics

Many Grassfields Bantu languages need one or two additional diacritics for specific grammatical meanings because these meanings are signaled only by changes in pitch. While it appears that Awing does not have such a need for marking the hortative mood (like various related languages), it does appear to mark habitual aspect by changing the pitch of various words in a sentence. We believe that this kind of situation is best handled by using a special diacritic to signal "habitual aspect" directly. We feel the best diacritic for this purpose is the diuresis (two dots over the vowel) **ä**. Our rule is that this diuresis diacritic should be placed on the first vowel preceding the verb in a sentence.

As an example of this marker, please note the following sentences where the consonants, vowels and word-level tone diacritics would not be enough to indicate the difference in meaning intended, therefore the diuresis is added in the habitual aspect sentence:

A kə ghənó mäteéná. [à kə yènə mātē:nə]
 3p PAST go market
He went to the market.

A kǎ ghənó mäteéná, a pən únkéénə. [à kǎ yènə mātē:nə, à pèn únkéénə]
 3s PAST.HAB go market, 3s now tired
He used to go to the market, but now he's too tired.

4. Word Division

Awing word division will hopefully 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 the meantime, we mention that all the normal Bantu noun class prefixes will be written as part of the nouns, as for the classes shown below:

Class	Noun	Gloss
1	mǎ	<i>mother</i>
2	pəmǎ	<i>mothers</i>
3	əkɯunó	<i>bed</i>
5	nəkəŋó	<i>pot</i>
6	məkəŋó	<i>pots</i>
7	alá'ə	<i>village</i>
8	əlá'ə	<i>villages</i>
9	nduə	<i>hammer</i>

5. Word Forms: Long and Short

One of the complications of words in Awing is that most words have long and short forms and you can not predict the actual long form from the short form or vice versa. This means that at least two forms (actually four if you count the plural form for nouns and the prenasalized form for verbs) need to be written for each word in any lexicon or dictionary of Awing.

In Awing nouns, both the singular and plural forms will have short and long variants, as we show in the examples below:

<u>Sg. Long</u>	<u>Sg. Short</u>	<u>Pl. Long</u>	<u>Pl. Short</u>	
apeemə	apa	əpeemə	əpa	"bag"
apéenə	apá	əpéenə	əpá	"flour"
nkəŋá	nkəŋá	mənkəŋá	mənkəŋá	"steep place"
nkəŋə	nkəŋ	mənkəŋ	mənkəŋ	"traditional peace plant"

Each Awing verb root also has four forms: short and long forms for verbs with a high tone nasal prefix /ŋ́-/ (except for verbs with either /f/ or /s/, which never show the nasal prefix) as well as for parallel forms without that prefix, as in the examples below:

<u>Long</u>	<u>Short</u>	<u>/ŋ́-/ + Long</u>	<u>/ŋ́-/ + Short</u>	
táəmə	tí	ńtáəmə	ńtí	"stand"
təənó	tí	ńtəənó	ńtí	"be mature"
fínə	fínə	fínə	fínə	"resemble each other"
finá	fi	finá	fi	"sell"

Important Note: For nouns, the lexical tone of the root is the one found on the long forms; for verbs, the lexical tone of the root is the one found on the long form without the nasal prefix /ŋ́-/. It is these tones that should be written all the time on the same root, even if the tones change slightly in certain grammatical constructions.

6. Elision

In Awing associative constructions, word-final /ə/ is often deleted in regular speech. In the orthography, this ə is always written, as in our examples below:

Lě nəpə'ə. [lě nəpə'ə]
 this pumpkin
This is a pumpkin.

Lě nəpə'ə nə kónáŋá. [lě nəpə'ə nə kónáŋá]
 this pumpkin AM chameleon
This is a "chameleon pumpkin" (type of melon).

In addition, when a word ending with a vowel is followed by a word starting with a vowel, the second vowel is always deleted in normal speech. In the orthography however, both vowels are always written, as below:

nətó'ə nə atíə [nətó'ə nə tíə]
 potato AM tree
climbing potatos (type of potato)

7. Punctuation and Capitalisation

The punctuation marks and the rules that govern the Awing language are the same as those for English. The punctuation marks used for Awing are therefore as follows:

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

7.1 Full Stop

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

Móonə a tə noɣnə a əkwunə.
baby 3s PROG lie on bed
The baby is lying on the bed.

7.2 Question Mark

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

A ghelə́ lə aké?
3s do COMP what?
What is he doing?

7.3 Exclamation Mark

The exclamation mark is written at the end of a command, or it is placed following exclamatory words or phrases. It functions to express interjections, surprises, excitement, and forceful comments as well as simple commands; as below.

Lǒ!
leave.IMP
Get out!

Kə pinkə́ sóhə!
NEG again say.IMP
Don't mention it again!

7.4 Comma

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

Po ma ngyĩə lə əfê, po ghenə́ lə nkĩə.
3p NEG come to here, 3p go to stream
They are not coming here, they are going to the stream.

Ŋwu yə a túgə pəngyě pən pəpě, məngáb mən mənteelə nə tá’ə ngwúə.
man that 3s have wives AM two, chicken AM three and one dog
That man has two wives, three chickens and one dog.

7.5 Quotation Marks

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

Máma a tə mbítə ngə, “Ghě ghenó lə əfó?”
grandmother 3s PROG ask COMP, 2s go to where
Mama (grandmother) is asking, “Where are you going?”

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

7.6 Capitalisation

Capital letters are used at the beginning of sentences, for proper nouns, and after a colon.

First word in a sentence:

Po zí nóolə.
3p see snake
They have seen a snake.

Proper nouns:

Mbá’chi, Apenə nə Mbyáb tə nkó’ə atíə.
Mbachia Apenə and Mbyaabə PROG climb tree
Mbachia, Apenə and Mbyaabə are climbing a tree.

After a colon:

Ló anuə: Táta akě ndé chíə pó.
be thing: Tata (grandfather) NEG house in NEG
It is true: Tata (grandfather) is not in the house.

8. Need for further testing of the orthography

Any new orthography needs people to use it for a time before potential problems reveal themselves. This orthography has already been in use for one year now and has benefitted from a good amount of constructive criticism.

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