

Rohingya

Language Rules

Rohingyalish is the modern writing system for the true spoken language of Rohingyas, the indigenous but oppressed Muslim minority people of Arakan State in the north-western part of Burma (Myanmar). Rohingyalish uses Latin alphabets A-Z, and two other characters **Ç** and **Ñ** along with the five accented vowels **ÁÉÍÓÚ**. **Ç** is a variant of *R*, used for rolling-tongue sound and pronounced as *rd'i*. **Ñ** is a variant of *N*, used for nasal sound and pronounced as *an'h*. While the normal vowels are used for soft sound, the accented vowels are used for stressed sound. **C**, though originally used for *K* and *S* sound, is now used only for the **Sh** sound and thus it is named to *shi*.

Aa	Bb	Cc	Çç	Dd	Ee	Ff
Gg	Hh	Ii	Jj	Kk	Ll	Mm
Nn	Ññ	Oo	Pp	Qq	Rr	Ss
Tt	Uu	Vv	Ww	Xx	Yy	Zz

New Alphabets:

Cc = *shi*

Çç = *rd'i*

Ññ = *an'h*

Numbers: 0123456789

Fig 1. Rohingyalish Character Set Table

All the Rohingyalish alphabets (capital and small forms) with its proper arrangement are shown above in *Fig. 1* above followed by the rules 1 through 16 that explain in details how to write Rohingya words. For numbers, Rohingyalish uses Arabic numerals 0-9 as shown above and how to read and count them are shown at the end in rule number 16.

1. The original English vowels (a, e, i, o, u) are used as soft vowels.

In English, the vowels (**a, e, i, o, u**) are used as hard (*emphasized*) vowels. But the Rohingyalish uses these vowels as soft (*and also as short*) vowels. Whenever hard vowels are required, Rohingyalish uses another set of vowels (**á, é, í, ó, ú**), which are normally known as accented (*gutá*) vowels.

These accented vowels (**á, é, í, ó, ú**) can be typed in Computer by simply choosing the keyboard type as *United States-International* through the Windows control panel. To set in Windows 98 follow the steps as "Start – Settings - Control Panel – Keyboard – Language - English (United States) – Properties --United States-International – OK – OK". After setting the keyboard, you can get (**á**) by first typing a single quote (') followed by (**a**). Similarly, to get (**ç**) type (') followed by (**c**), and for (**ñ**) first type (~) followed by (**n**). For Windows 2000, and Windows Xp, add and select the "United States-International" as the default keyboard.

See below how **Ba** and **Boo** in English are equivalent in Rohingya to get the same sound.

Ba (in English) = **Bá** (in Rohingya)
Boo (in English) = **Bú** (in Rohingya)

Rohingya words with soft vowels (**a, e, i, o, u**) and hard vowels (**á, é, í, ó, ú**) are shown below as examples with meaning. The last line in the example shows the 6th vowel (**ou** and **óu** are explained later) of the Rohingya.

Bak	=	tiger	Bák	=	share
Bet	=	cane stick	Bét	=	intention
Kil	=	punch	Kíl	=	wedge
Zor	=	fever	Zór	=	rain
Ful	=	hole/bridge	Fúl	=	flower
Zouloi	=	Nail	Zóuli	=	bamboo fence

2. Rohingya has a total of (12) basic vowels where six are of the soft-sounds and the other six are of hard-sounds.

To understand here easily, the consonant K is used as reference to show the sound of each vowel.

English

In English, the sound of each vowel is not fixed to a particular sound. The sound of any vowel varies from words to words causing enormous difficulties to know which sound is the correct one, particularly for whom English is the 2nd language. Moreover, there is no method to know which vowel needs to be emphasized and which one is not to be emphasized depending on how the particular English word is pronounced. The five basic English vowels along with K are:-

Ka	Ke	Ki	Ko	Ku	(vowels used as hard or soft sound)
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Rohingya

In Rohingya, the sound of each vowel is fixed to one particular sound. Therefore, Rohingya has 12 basic fixed sounds, where the first six are for the soft sounds and the other six are for the hard sounds as shown in the table below.

Ka	Ke	Ki	Ko	Ku	Kou	(vowels used as soft sounds)
Ká	Ké	Kí	Kó	Kú	Kóu	(vowels used as hard sounds)

The pronunciation of each soft sound can be represented with an English phrase “**On Februari Tour**” where Februari means the month February. Another similar one is “**Put America on Tour**”. The following are some comparative examples with English words:-

Ka is pronounced as **Ca** as in the word **Calculator**, but not to be pronounced as in the word **Can**.

Ke is pronounced as **Kay** as “e” is pronounced in English words **Let, Bet, Get, Net, and Wet** but in soft sound.

Ki is pronounced as it is pronounced in the word **Kilo**.

Ko will be pronounced as **Kaw** (*but in short*) as “o” is pronounced in English words **Dot, Not, God, Lot, Rod** but in soft sound.

Ku will be pronounced as **Cu** in the word **Calculator**.

Kou will be pronounced exactly as English **Ko**. Here Rohingyaish “ou” is made equal to English “o” as it is used in English words **Go, Old, Won, Own, Toll, Sold, Bold, Mold, Fold** but in soft sound.

3. Rohingyalish words should not be read the same way English is read.

In English, the words are read after analyzing the whole word and then pronounced correctly. This is not required in Rohingyaish. Simply read the consonant vowel pairs from left to right. Apply the following methods in the order shown to get the best possible results:

- (a) If the word follows the sequence of one consonant and one vowel then pronounce one consonant and one-vowel pairs individually and then combine the results. For example;

Mazé = **Ma** + **Zé** = **Ma Zé** (middle)
Fala = **Fa** + **La** = **Fa La** (pillar)
Salu = **Sa** + **Lu** = **Sa Lu** (moving)
Thalasabí = **Tha** + **La** + **Sa** + **Bí** = **ThaLaSaBí** (lock and keys)

- (b) If the word follows the sequence of one consonant and one vowel followed by another consonant then pronounce the three combined together. Do the same for the rest. Finally combine the results. For example;

Sultán = **Sul** + **Tán** = **Sul Tán** (the name Sultan)
Tormus = **Tor** + **Mus** = **Tor Mus** (water melon)
Bañdor = **Bañ** + **Dor** = **Bañ Dor** (monkey)
Fandhúk = **Fan** + **Dhúk** = **Fan Dhúk** (pipe)

- (c) The word may follow both rules mentioned above. For example;

Burus = **Bu** + **Rus** (brush)
Gorom = **Go** + **Rom** (hot)
Hañdá = **Hañ** + **Dá** (shoulder)

Fonná = Fon + Ná (education)

(d) There may be two vowels together side by side. For example;

Sail = Sai + L (trick)
 Beil = Bei + L (sun)
 Soil = Soi + L (rice)
 Tui = Tui (you)
 Gouru = Gou + Ru (cow)
 Mouloi = Mou + Loi (Arabic Teacher)
 Maana = Maa + Na (free)

4. New Alphabets (Ñ) and (Ç) pronounced as an'h and rd'a.

These two new alphabets are taken from Latin Alphabets and are very important for Rohingyaish to produce nasal sound using (Ñ), and a variant of R sound(i.e. tongue rolling sound) using (Ç). These two sounds are not used in English Language. A list of Rohingyaish words are shown below as examples:

Nasal sound examples: normal without ñ (left) and nasal with ñ (right):

Ara = Fence	Añra = Coal
Fas = Pass	Fañs = Five

Tongue rolling sound examples: normal with r (left) and tongue rolling with ç (right):

Bara = fishing fence	Baça = exchange rate
Bera = Visit	Beça = Husband
Fara = Village	Faça = chili grinding flat rock
Fúra = Infectious spot	Fúça = Drop

More nasal sound examples: normal without ñ (left) and nasal with ñ (right):

Sáda = White	Sañda = donation or tax
Kurá = chicken	Kuñra = bring together/chicken food

More nasal and tongue rolling sound examples:

Keñça = fish bone	Meçá = bottle cap
Suañ = bamboo pipe	Meçi = soil, ground
Súañ = Stick	Theçá = not straight

5. The alphabet (C) has been used differently.

Rohingyalish does not need the alphabet C because it has two different sounds which can be replaced with K and S. However, Rohingyaish words have a lot of 'sh' sounds and it would be easier to use a single character 'C' instead of two characters 'sh'. Therefore, 'C' is made equal to 'sh' and named as 'shi'. See Examples:

Cúndor	(Shúndor)	= beautiful
Camic	(Shamish)	= spoon
Cuñça	(Shuñça)	= cigars
Doc	(Dosh)	= ten
Óñc	(Óñsh)	= loose

Fáñc	(Fáñsh)	=	fertilizer
Cícciçi mas	(shíshshiiçi mas)	=	a kind of fish
Cóccoçar	(shóshshoçar)	=	ducks looking food in shallow water

6. The differences in (T), (Th) and (D), (Dh)

The **T** sound is taken as the sound of **Th** as used in the English word **Think**. Alternatively, the **Th** sound is taken as the sound of **T** that is used in the English word **Total**.

See examples of Rohingyaish words with meaning in English:

T aza	=	fresh	M utha	=	fat
T alu	=	Bald	Th ambu	=	tent
T al	=	music	Th al	=	pile
T uta	=	parrot	Th aththi	=	toilet

The normal **D** sound is taken exactly the same sound of the word **The** in English. The **Dh** sound is taken as the sound of the normal **D** in English, i.e. as in the word **Donut**. See examples of Rohingyaish words with meaning in English:

D ándah	=	profession	Dh andha	=	short rod for beating
D uwa	=	prayer	Dh uwa	=	soil container at the root of a plant
D uadi	=	busy; quickly	Dh andhari	=	tales

7. Three kinds of (H) sounds

The three kinds of H sounds are produced by a single quoted **H'**, a single **H**, and **Kh** respectively as shown below in examples.

H'a = sound produced at the beginning of the mouth by blowing air out, as in the word H'ava meaning air in Rohingyaish. There are a few words only with this sound. Because of very few words a single quote requirement is made optional unless necessary. In the case where there are two alternative saying for the same thing such as **áñti** or **háñti** (meaning elephant), **áñc** or **háñc** (meaning duck), the single quote will be always omitted. Interestingly, the saying difference is based on either he/she is from north or south of Arakan. Examples: *háva*, *howá*, *háñala*, *háñc*, *háñtih*, *hórin*, *húñciar*, *háff*, *hála*, *hál*, *hoñsu*, *hoñiçá*, *hoñinya*, *hoñroi*, *hámbah*, *hóraç*, *hottú*.

Ha = Rohingyaish adopted this sound to work like Kha (below) which produces sound from the middle of the mouth, as in the words **hána** (*Khána*) and **holom** (*Kholom*) meaning food and Pen respectively. Since more than 90% of the all **Ha** sounds are in this category, Rohingyaish uses more simpler method which is **hána** and **holom**. Many Languages have only one variety of **Ha** sounds with the most exception being Arabic

language having three distinct **Ha(s)**. Examples: *hala, holom, háiye, hosóm, hóbor*.

Kha = sound produced from the middle of the mouth as above. But this is to be used only for Arabic name such as “*Khaled*” instead of writing “*Haled*”.

8. The most useful vowel (o) and its replacement (ou) in Rohingyaish.

O, used as **au**, is 40% of all the vowels used in Rohingyaish words. Most European and Asian languages use sounds either vertical (such as Bu) or horizontal (such as Ba). However, in Rohingyaish there are many sounds that are neither complete vertical nor complete horizontal and it is rather exactly in between which can be said, in other words, 45 degree sounds (0 degree means horizontal and 90 means vertical). Examples are Baw, Daw, Naw, Saw, etc.. These can be better spelled as Bau, Dau, Nau, Sau etc. by using both horizontal and vertical vowels together. Since 40% of the words in Rohingyaish will have these sounds in average, it is better if we can adopt only one vowel instead of the two vowels **a** and **u** together, so that the word will be short and easier to read. Therefore **o** is adopted to pronounce as **au** always, as it is pronounced in the English word **For**. While doing that **ou** is adopted to pronounce as the true sound of the English **o** as it is found in the English words **Go, No, Both, Old, Won** but in soft way. See examples below.

Norom = soft	Gorom = hot
Holom = pen	Zonom = birth
Córom = shyness	Nolor = not taking
Goró = do it	Hóro = sore
Boro = big	Doró = hard

Gourib = poor	Gouru = cow
Mouloi = Arabic teacher	Mouris = chilly
Fourís = read	Gourís = do it; perform it, act on it
Zouloi = nail	Sóuloi = matches
Fouli = mad lady	Tooul = in perfect mix or balance

9. Extending sound using long vowel that is (2) vowels side by side.

Like the soft and hard vowels change the meaning of the word, short vowels like (a) and long vowels like (aa) do change the meaning too such as **Mana** (=let accept) and **Maana** (=free) are not the same. We extend the sound by placing two vowels side by side. For example:

Gaa = body	Maana = free
Neel = Leave/come out	Biili = birth given (lady)

Doo = knife	Zoo = prosperity
Fool = mad	Hoor = cloth
Foona = ripen	Moota = funeral
Muu = face	Zuu = tide

10. Ascending (aá) and Descending (áa) long vowels.

Sometimes two soft-vowels used side-by-side as above is not enough to get exact sound and also the meaning. In some place we need the 1st vowel as a soft and the second vowel as a hard vowel. For example, in Rohingyaish the word **Saá**, which means tea or see, requires two vowels but the 1st one soft and the 2nd one hard. This arrangement is known as ascending long vowels. Similarly, the two vowels when arranged the other way around such as in the word **Sáa**, meaning filter, (where the 1st vowel is hard and the second vowel is soft) is known as descending long vowels. See the examples below.

Baá = climbing	Táa = staying
Gaá = sing	Gáa = infection
Saá = tea	Sáa = filter
Waá = steep	Fáa = the gap
Maáni = meaning	Táani = next
Keén = how	Théer = stop , wait
Meél = mill	
Fiíl = field	Síil = seal
Ziín = (of) which	Zií = daughter
Boól = ball	Sóol = sheep
Muúntu = in front of	Súura = Verses of Quran

11. Using (ai) instead of y.

Though y is a consonant, it is also used as a semi-vowel in words such as By, My etc. Since Rohingyaish understand y as a consonant only, **ai** is used instead of **y** is used as a vowel. Therefore instead of My, By, Fy it will be used as Mai, Bai, Fai.

Bai = dizzy (head)	Bái = brother
Sai = fish trap	Sái = ashes
Lai = basket	Nái = not there
Félaidé = throw it	Hálaide = make the skin removed
Solaiféla = make it move	Fúaiyé = has been dried

12. Using (oi, ói) to get rolling sounds.

Boroi = tablet (medicine)	Borói = palm
Touloi = bamboo mat	Mouloi = religious teacher
Hoñroi = heated rice grain	Óroói = grain for mustard oil
Soil = rice	Boil = fruit in flower stage
Moillo = value	Hoil = Quarrel
Bóin = sister	Óiye = done

13. Usages of (ei) and (ui)

Beil = sun	Dheil = upper level land area
Plein = aero plane	Teilla = cooking oil producer
Kéil = game	Théil = branch of trees
Neillé = has leaved	Féillé = has dropped
Théilleh = has pushed	Kéilleh = played
Meillé = opened	Neiththé = has laid down

Mui = I	Tui = you
Muic = jungle cow	Tuñic = rice skin
Fúnic = needle	Tuñí = you (for younger)
Fúille = swelled	Kúille = opened
Súille = skinned	Kuiththa = get things ready, in cut

14. (Ñg), (Ñy), and (Ts) sounds

Ñgapúra, Ñgapali, and Ñyong Cóng are the area names in Myanmar (Burma). These names can be also written as Ngapúra, Ngapali and Nyong Cóng because Ng and Ny are used as international standard.

Ts is a variant of S producing sound with tongue out as in the word Tsúmma meaning ‘then’ in Arabic language. Ts is rarely used by Rohingyas.

15. Ending the word with double consonants to get echo, vibrating or trailing effect

Amm = mango	Áff = snake
Córr = sailing cloth	Rell = rail

16. The counting system.

0	sifír	11	egaro	22	ekkuri-dui	100	ek-cót (cót)
1	ek	12	baró	23	ekkuri-tin	101	ekcó-ek
2	dui	13	teró	501	Fañscó-ek
3	tin	14	soiddó	29	ekkuri-no	900	no-cót
4	sair	15	fundóroh	30	tíríc	1.000	ek-ázar
5	fañs	16	cúlloh	40	calic	10.000	doc-ázar
6	só	17	háñtaroh	50	fonjaic	1.00.000	ek-lák
7	háñt	18	añçároh	60	áit	10.00.000	doc-lák
8	añtho	19	unnúic	70	ótoir	1.00.00.000	ek-kurul
9	no	20	kuri	80	ací	10.00.00.000	doc-kurul
10	doc	21	ekkuri-ek	90	nobboi	1.00.00.00.000	ek-kuthí

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Email: rohingyalanguage@yahoo.com