

Speedlang Challenge 14

Majakaopea

Phonology

	bilabial	palato-alveolar	velar	glottal
stop	p	t~c <t>	k	ʔ <c>
nasal	m, (ᵹ) <mm>		ŋ <n>	
tap		(r) <tt>		
fricative	ɸ <f>	s~ç <s>	(x)	h
approximant	w	j <y>	ɰ <j>	
	front	central	back	
close		i <i>		
mid	e		o	
open		a		

Marginal Phonemes

/ᵹ/

/ᵹ/ occurs in a large number of loanwords from the neighboring Proto-Hidzi (PH) language. PH has two voiceless nasals, /ᵹ/ and /ŋ/. Because Majakaopea lacks an alveolar nasal, both of the source phonemes enter it as /ᵹ/.

loan	source	definition and source definition
/ᵹemo/	/ᵹem/	dried fish (from <i>hnem</i> "fish")
/ᵹa/	/ᵹa/	worm (from <i>hnâh</i> "worm")
/hemi/	/xe.ᵹi/	itinerant worker (from <i>xehni</i> "bedroll")
/ᵹmike/	/ᵹik/	bandit (from <i>hnik</i> "thief")
/ᵹiti/	/ᵹit/	shack, worker's quarters (from <i>hnit</i> "shack")
/ᵹiʔa/	/ᵹiʔæ/	to beg (from <i>hnica</i> "spoon")
/ᵹa/	/ᵹa/	lunch (from <i>hnâ</i> "basket")
/kemeke/	/qæmek/	strawberry (from <i>qahmek</i> "strawberry")
/ᵹise/	/ᵹizæ/	specific type of lamp (from <i>hniza</i> "lamp")
/ᵹaɸuke/	/ᵹaɸuk/	to do enough, to finish, to achieve (from <i>hnavuk</i> "to weigh" (<i>middle voice</i>))

/kɛ̃mɛti/	/kɛ̃nɛt/	to travel, especially to work; to travel back and forth from homeland to where you work (from <i>kehnet</i> "to travel")
/m̃aro/	/ñalu/	asshole (literal) (from <i>nhalu</i> "ass, butt")
/m̃e/	/m̃e/	steep (from <i>hme</i> "steep, difficult")

Additionally, a form of hyperforeignism applies in which many speakers *also* assign /m̃/ to PH loanwords with /n/ or /m/ in the source. This does not occur in educated speech.

loan	source	definition and source definition
/pekɛ̃mi/ (expected /pekeni/)	/peken/	armed person, armed (adj) (from <i>beken</i> "secured, carried")
/s̃imɛ/ expected /sine/	/ʃiɔ̃mæ/	handsome (from <i>çicma</i> "thick, good looking")
/m̃ese/ (expected /mese/)	/mezæ/	fat (from <i>meza</i> "fat, pudgy")

/x/

Former /x/ in Majakaopea has disappeared in normal speech, merging with what is now /h/ (former /x/ after /o/ and word-initially) and /ɥ/ (otherwise), which sometimes disappears anyway, but lingers in upper-class and especially religious registers, reinforced by its usage in theater.

high register	normal speech	definition
/xomaxe/	/homaxɥe/	god
/paxaxe/	/paxɥaxɥe/	sanctified, pure
/xai/	/hai/	holy book analogous to the bible
/jixi/	/jiɥi/	underworld, afterlife
/kaixo/	/kaiɥo/	king
/oxa/	/oha/	bodyguard
/poxeophone/	/pouxɛphone/	castle

Sometimes speakers substitute /h/ with /x/ in words that *did not* have a former /x/, either intentionally, in *imitation* of the high register, or unintentionally, misbelieving a given word's etymology.

high register	normal speech	definition
/ɥoxoi/	/ɥohoi/	avatar, manifestation, facet (of a god)
/exo/	/eho/	shrine
/kekoxaa/	/kekohaa/	taxes

Finally, loans might be borrowed into the /h/ > /x/ paradigm if they fit into speakers' preconceived notions of the type of words that include /x/.

loan	source	definition and source definition
/xal/ ~ /hal/	/xal/	good, holy, righteous (from <i>xâl</i> "good, righteous")
/xike/ ~ /hike/	/xike/	modest (from <i>xike</i> "clothed, covered")
/iʔiwaxe/ ~ /iʔiwaha/	/iʔiβæx/	unit of soldiers (from <i>icivax</i> "row, column, line")

/r/

[r] exists in Majakaopea as an allophone of /t/ intervocalically (t > d > r) after /a o/. But because of speakers' familiarity with the sound, loanwords with /r/ or /l/ in the source language enter Majakaopea with phonemic /r/.

loan	source	definition and source definition
/eteri/	/etæ/	unimportant, trivial, stupid, useless (from <i>etal</i> "small, unimportant")
/oro/ha/	/ullah/	secret (desire, wish, crush) (from <i>ullah</i> "private")
/kerike/	/kʰlik/	elder, patriarch (from <i>khlik</i> "aged, old")

Morphophonological Conspiracy

In Majakaopea, two identical consonants cannot occur with only a single vowel between them. This manifests in a couple ways. When the first of two identical consonants is stressed (or more specifically, occurs in the first syllable of a trochaic foot, eg. /'ka.ka/ /'mo.me/) then the second consonant is *weakened*. When the second of two identical consonants is stressed, eg. /ka'ka.we/ /mo'me.we/, then the second consonant is *strengthened*. Stops display different behavior than other consonants in these cases.

Weakening

Stops are weakened by *voicing*.

eg. /'ka.ka/ ['ka.**g**a] /'pi.po/ ['pi.**b**o].

Specifically before an affix, stops instead weaken by *lowering*. (Because the behavior of /w/ means it often elides between vowels, that means /k/ weakens by disappearing in these cases.)

eg. /'ka.ka + 'meja/ [,ka.(**u**)a'me.ja] /'po.pi + 'me.ja/ [.,po.**w**i'me.ja].

original stop	weakened (_affix)
/p/	[w]
/t/	[j]
/k/	[w~∅]
/ʔ/	[h]

Consonants other than stops are weakened by *pushing*.

eg. /'mo.me/ ['m^o:.me].

(That lengthening does not count as a second syllable for the purposes of prosody, but does separate the two identical vowels enough that they can occur in sequence.)

Strengthening

Stops are strengthened by *ejectivization*.

eg. /ka'ka.we/ [ka'k'a.we']

Other consonants are strengthened by *gemination*.

eg /mo'me.we/ [mo'm:e.we]; /ʔi'ʔo.we/ [ʔi'ʔ:o.we]; /jo'jo.we/ [jo'j:o.we]

Grammar

Majakaopea is a split-ergative language. Since the **ergative** and **accusative** markers are relatively new innovations in the language, coming from the **perlativ** and **dative** adpositions respectively, they are almost always transparently marked with the corresponding suffixes *-ho* and *-si*.

Pronouns

Majakaopea pronouns recognize three grammatical persons, two numbers (singular and plural,) and four natural but not grammatical genders (masculine, feminine, inanimate, and third gender.)

nominative/absolutive

	singular				plural			
	masc	fem	inan	third	masc	fem	inan	third
1st	o	ke	a	hei	po	pane		hepi
2nd	ahe		wi		hene		wine	
3rd	mo	moa	ma	mai	wa		pa	mapi

dative / accusative (-ho)

	singular				plural			
	masc	fem	inan	third	masc	fem	inan	third
1st	oo	keo	ao	io	poho	paho		pio
2nd	heo		wio			neo		
3rd	moo	mao		maio	wao		pao	mapio

ablative (-ye) / genitive (-yi)

	singular				plural			
	masc	fem	inan	third	masc	fem	inan	third
1st	oye	kee	ae	heiyi	poye	panee		hepiyi
2nd	ahee		wie		henee		winee	
3rd	moye	mae		maiye	wae		pae	mapiyi

perlative / ergative (-si)

	singular				plural			
	masc	fem	inan	third	masc	fem	inan	third
1st	<i>osi</i>	<i>kesi</i>	<i>asi</i>	<i>heisi</i>	<i>posi</i>	<i>panesi</i>		<i>hepisi</i>
2nd	<i>hesi</i>		<i>wisi</i>		<i>nesi</i>		<i>winesi</i>	
3rd	<i>mosi</i>	<i>masi</i>		<i>maisi</i>	<i>wasi</i>		<i>pasi</i>	<i>mapisi</i>

Tense, Aspect, Mood, Voice

When discussing TAM categories in Majakaoepa, aspect is clearly the most important to examine on a grammatical level. Tense is largely absent from the language, and speakers often leave it to context, or use "time indication phrases" like "yesterday," or "in the morning." Mood, for the most part, is achieved through auxiliary verbs, serial verbs, and the like. There are two main aspectual categories, the **aorist** and the **imperfective**.

The **aorist** can be said to deal with general truths. Namely, it does this in three ways.

1. It talks about things that happened in the past as completed actions (**perfective**): "A girl ate fruit."
2. It talks about general facts and the way the world works (**gnomic**): "Girls ate/eat/will eat fruit (in general, back then, these days, etc.)"
3. It talks about things that occur as a pattern, or are predictable (**habitual**): "A girl used to eat/eats/will eat fruit (regularly)."

The aorist is unmarked, and uses nominative-accusative alignment. Because the aorist has conflated the perfective past with the tenseless gnomic and habituals, all three have the implication of presumption, confidence, and truth.

The **imperfective** deals with actions that take place over extended periods, and with resultant or expectant states. It comes as a result of passive constructions using Majakaoepa's nominal adpositions, thus it is marked (with preverbal words that come from those adpositions) and uses ergative-absolutive alignment. There are four "flavors" of the imperfective.

1. Using the preverbal word *a* (from the locative preposition *ja-*), the **progressive/iterative**: "A girl was/is/will be eating fruit."
2. Using the postverbal word *o* (from the dative postposition *-ho*), the **inchoative/prospective**: "A girl was/is/will be starting to eat fruit." / "A girl was/is/will be about to/planning to/starting to eat fruit."
3. Using the postverbal word *e* (from the ablative postposition *-ye*), the **cessative**: "A girl was/is/will be finishing/stopping/about to stop eating fruit."
4. Using the postverbal word *i* (from perlative postposition *-si*), the **continuative**: "A girl was/is/will be still/in the middle of eating fruit (and doesn't plan to stop)."

Lack of Stative Verbs

Majakaoepa has no stative verbs. Thus, for what might be a stative verb in another language, there are a few avenues to explore.

For thoughts, opinions, beliefs, feelings, and other mentality-related concepts the associated nouns are said to be "held." One doesn't "hate" bad music, they "hold bad music hate." One doesn't "understand" math, they "hold math understanding." Alternatively, math understanding "comes." For some opinion-related concepts, one can say something like "to me, corn, good."

This includes sense-related concepts. There are nouns associated with the sense, like "vision/image," or "flavor." One doesn't "see" the lake, "the lake vision comes." This applies to things like "imagine" as well, as it can just be thought of as an inner vision.

Relatedly, the language has no part of speech that can be reasonably analyzed as adjectives or adverbs. Instead, what might often be an adjective or a stative verb in other languages is rendered as a noun in Majakaopea.

This includes colors and other qualities. These nouns behave like all other nouns; they can be declined and form nominal compounds. e.g. *Yinea* is "redness; a thing that is red." *Yinea oyo* 'red thing + clothes' is "red clothes" as in "the type of clothes related to redness."

Predication is achieved purely through syntax and sometimes prosody, especially since the use of the genitive is often not preferred. Let's look at two words: *ama* "marmot" and *fitoa* "longness, length; long thing." We'll put them together in both orders.

with no pause between words (optional genitive)

ama (yi) fitoa - the marmot's length / the marmot's long one (toy, baby, etc.)

fitoa (yi) ama - a long marmot

with pause between words

ama, fitoa - The marmot (is) long. / The marmot is a long one.

fitoa, ama - The length (is) (equal to) a marmot. / The long one is a marmot.

as a compound (only one stress)

amafitoa - a "marmot-length"

fitoama - long-marmot (proper noun of species, etc.)

Body-part prefixes

There is a smallish closed class of shortened affix forms associated with full nouns. These forms have two main functions, depending on whether they attach to verbs or nouns. A subset of the short forms have associated spatial or metaphorical meanings.

prefix	nouns	metaphorical extensions
<i>a</i>	<i>ape</i> - skin <i>amo</i> - body	the cover or outside of something
<i>co</i>	<i>cohosa</i> - arm <i>cowajo</i> - elbow <i>ona</i> - bicep, upper arm <i>coakei</i> - wing <i>cokiji</i> - armpit	
<i>fe</i>	<i>fewa</i> - head <i>fetati</i> - scalp	the top of something
<i>hi</i>	<i>sihita</i> - back <i>sihino</i> - back of the head	the back of something, the other side
<i>i</i>	<i>ime</i> - side <i>imeyae</i> - rib <i>imejeo</i> - thigh (outer) <i>ima</i> - ear	the side of something, going around

prefix	nouns	metaphorical extensions
<i>io</i>	<i>iosi</i> - breast <i>ioaani</i> - nipple	
<i>jo</i>	<i>joko</i> - leg, lower leg <i>joeo</i> - shin <i>joweca</i> - calf	
<i>ko</i>	<i>koi</i> - hand <i>koica</i> - finger <i>koatie</i> - fingernail <i>kojeo</i> - knuckle <i>kociehi</i> - paw	(instrumental applicative)
<i>mi</i>	<i>miako</i> - penis <i>mikime</i> - tail	the part of something that sticks out
<i>ne</i>	<i>nejo</i> - anus <i>nejio</i> - butt <i>nekapoa</i> - intestine	the exit of something
<i>p(o)</i>	<i>epoma</i> - hip <i>epoma pia</i> - hip bones <i>masaepoma</i> - groin, crotch <i>epomajeo</i> - thigh (inner)	the edge or border of something
<i>pi</i>	<i>pia</i> - bone	the frame, support, or inside of something
<i>soo</i>	<i>soofoki</i> - eye <i>sookea</i> - eyelash <i>sooca</i> - white of eye <i>sookaja</i> - iris	
<i>tio</i>	<i>tioipa</i> - foot, feet <i>tiohasa</i> - ankle <i>tioma</i> - toe <i>tiotie</i> - toenail <i>tioipa tanai</i> - heel	the bottom or foundation of something
<i>wee</i>	<i>weehopi</i> - face <i>weema</i> - nose <i>weekaka</i> - cheek <i>weekaka pia</i> - cheekbone	the obvious or main part of something (obviousness, loudness, or pride)
<i>ya</i>	<i>yata</i> - mouth <i>yape</i> - lip	the entrance of something
<i>ye</i>	<i>yeko</i> - chest, front <i>masayeko</i> - belly <i>yece</i> - belly button	the front of something
<i>ci</i>	<i>cipawe</i> - neck <i>ciyena</i> - throat <i>cieo</i> - uvula	the path between two things
<i>to</i>	<i>toami</i> - tooth <i>tokao</i> - tongue	

Verbal affixes

As verbal affixes, the short forms typically change the valency of the verbs they are attached to. They relay information about what would normally be the object of the verb (eg. *epo-ayofaa*, "to hip-touch") or the direction of an action (eg. *hi-kepo*, "to go (around) to the back").

(Di)transitive verbs change their object from a body part noun to what would have been part of a genitive phrase.

transitive verb with prefix <i>po</i> "hip"	example
<i>afoyaa</i> - to touch	Osi ke (ye) epoma afoyaa. o-si ke ye epoma- afoyaa 1.SG-ERG 3.FEM.SG GEN hip-ABS touch
<i>pafoyaa</i> - to hip-touch	Osi ke pafoyaa. o-si ke- po-afoyaa 1.SG-ERG 3.FEM.SG-ABS hip-touch

Intransitive verbs gain an (optional) object: what would have been the complement of an optional locative or motion phrase. This also means that the former subject is now marked in the ergative and the new object is the unmarked absolutive. Note that these cases are somewhat marginal and are used to highlight an indefinite and/or general action.

intransitive verb with prefix <i>hi</i> "back"	example
<i>kepo</i> - to go	O kepo ciwihiho. " <i>I go to the back of the house.</i> " o kepo ciwi-hi-ho 1.ABS go house-back-DAT
<i>hihokepo</i> - to 'towards-the-back'-go	Osi ciwi hihokepo. " <i>I go-towards-back a house.</i> " o-si ciwi- hi-ho-kepo 1.SG-ERG house-ABS back-DAT-go <i>A person might use this phrase if, for example, their job involved visiting people's houses and fixing something usually stored at the back. They are asked a question like "What do you do to the house?" Both to keep "house" as the object, and to emphasize the routine/general nature of the action, they might answer this way.</i>

There are also several examples of verbs with body part prefixes becoming lexicalised. Use of the prefix **wee** "face" often has to do with obviousness or pride, rather than any literal relation to a face or even a spatial metaphor involving faces. **Ko** "hand" is most often an applicative that promotes what would be an instrumental phrase.

Nominal affixes

Additionally, these short forms can be used to form compound nouns, both as prefixes and suffixes. These compounds have more metaphorical/spatial meanings than they would with the full noun forms. In most cases, the compounds with the short forms are preferred for adpositional phrases.

If the short form comes first, it modifies the second component:

compound with short form*feso*a - the top(most) tree**compound with full noun***few*asoa - the head(-like) tree**spatial phrase with full noun**soa *ja***fewa** - the tree at/by the head

If the short form comes second, it gets modified by the first component:

compound with short form*soa***f**e - treetop**compound with full noun***soa***fewa** - the tree(-like) head**spatial phrase with full noun**soa (ye) **fewa** - the head of the tree

Adpositions

Majakaopea has four adpositions. These cover basic/general location (1 preposition) and motions (3 postpositions) in space. Further distinctions are made by the use of the body-part compound prefixes eg. "**At the house-back**," or sometimes by adpositional/genitive phrases eg. "**At the back of the house**."

Locative

Marked by the prefix *ja-* /ʝa/, the locative deals with static locations (at, on, in, under, above, around, with).

*ja***ciwi** - at the houseja-ciwi
LOC-house*ja***ciwihi** - at the back of the houseja-ciwi-hi
LOC-house-back*ja***mahase** - at the farmja-mahase
LOC-farm*ja***mahasepo** - at the edge of the farmja-mahase-po
LOC-farm-hip

Dative

Marked by the suffix *-ho* /ho/, the dative deals with motion *towards* something (to, for, of, towards).

*ciwi***ho** - towards the houseciwi-ho
house-DAT*ciwi***hiho** - towards the back of the houseciwi-hi-ho
house-back-DAT*mahase***ho** - towards the farmmahase-ho
farm-DAT*mahase***poho** - towards the edge of the farmmahase-po-ho
farm-hip-DAT

Ablative

Marked by the suffix *-e* /e/, the ablative deals with motion *away from* something (from, of, because of, away from).

*ciwi***e** - away from the houseciwi-e
house-ABL*ciwi***hiho** - away from the back of the houseciwi-hi-e
house-back-ABL*mahase***e** - away from the farmmahase-e
farm-ABL*mahase***poe** - away from the edge of the farmmahase-po-e
farm-hip-ABL

Perlative

Marked by the suffix **-si** /si/, the perlative deals with motion *along, through, or via* something.

ciwisi - through the house

ciwi-si
house-PERL

ciwihisi - along the back of the house

ciwi-hi-si
house-back-PERL

mahasesi - through the farm

mahase-si
farm-PERL

mahaseposi - along the edge of the farm

mahase-po-si
farm-hip-PERL

Extra showcase stuff

Types of "yes"

- **eki**: yes in response to positive verb (can also be used to elicit positive responses)

Wi woniiwiho maofi? Eki.

wi woni-iwi-ho mao-fi | eki
2.NOM fruit-love-ACC hold-Q | yes.positive
"Do you love fruit?" **"Yes, I do."**

- **yoce**: yes in response to negative verb

Moa kepotofi mahaseho? Yoce.

moa kepo-to-fi mahase-ho | yoce
3.ABS go-NEG-Q farm-DAT | yes.negative
"She's not going to the farm?" **"That's correct, she's not."**

- **kee**: yes in response to an order

Fekiho hapoi oa isi. Kee, o a awi.

feki-ho i-si-hapoi oa | kee o a awi
pail-ACC side-PERL-carry IMP | yes.obey 1 IPFV do
"Carry the pail around the side (of it)." **"Yes, I'm doing it now."**

- **fa**: yes to being addressed

Weitika ce! Fa.

weitika ce | fa
NAME VOC | yes.address
Hey, Weitika! **"Yes?"**

- **ijofa**: yes (agreeing)

Cajete. Ijofa.

cajete | ijofa
cold | yes.agree

"(It's) cold." **"Yes, that's true."**

- *ii*: yes (interest/listening)

O a kepo ciwiho... -- li. -- Mi akikoikea nana.

o a kepo ciwi-ho | ii | mi akikoi-kea nana
1 IPFV go home-DAT | yes.listen | and NAME-vision come
"I am walking home..." **"Right."** "And I see Akikoi."

Example sentences

5MOYD 1850

"He will be speaking into it, which will not be easy."

Mosi a piahonaahe, tamenoaoyo.

mosi a pia-ho-naahe tamenoa-oyo
3.MASC.ERG IPFV bone-DAT-speak easy.one-NEG.noun

"He is 'into-it-speaking,' not easy."

- Shows natural gendered pronoun
 - Shows body-part-locative incorporation
 - Shows adjective-less-ness
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5MOYD 1840

"A draught came, and our crop dried and our cattle died, they said."

Jeki nana, pe poye pekiye sewojeki mi po keca eai, wa naahe noni.

jeki nana pe po pekiye se-wo-jeki mi po
keca eai wa naahe noni
dry.one come and.then 1.MASC.PL crops completely-become-dry.one and 1.MASC.PL
horse die 3.PL speak thus

"A dryness comes, so our crops dry out and our workhorses die, so they say."

- Shows use of the aorist that is read as either gnomic or simple past tense, without use of time indication phrase to disambiguate
 - Shows two different types of "and," one that happens as a result and one that co-occurs
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5MOYD 1830

"In the old days, the king treated people working in the palace very well."

Aakane, kaijo ijaa, cija japojehone potineho.

aakane kaijo ijaa cija ja-pojefone poti-ne-ho
past king kind.one work LOC-castle person-PL-DAT

"Back then, the king was kind, to the people working in the castle."

- Shows how time indication phrases don't necessarily need adpositions
 - Shows pseudo predication with "king, kind one" = "king was kind"
 - Shows nested relativization with "working in castle people" rather than "people who work in (the) castle"
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5MOYD 1820

"I have zero desire to do anything."

O amaoyoho maoto.

o ama-oyo-ho mao-to
1.NOM desire-NEG-ACC hold-NEG

"I don't have no wants."

- Shows how feeling-based stative verbs in English are handled with nouns
 - Shows double negatives
-

5MOYD 1810

"The woman, it rained before Andrew saw her."

Kaofa, yokaji ca jatioka, moakea nana Eetioho.

kaofa yokaji ca ja-tio-ka moa-kea nana eetio-ho
woman rain fall LOC-foot-time 3.FEM-vision come NAME-DAT

The woman, rain fell (at the time) before the vision of her came to Andrew.

- Shows topic fronting
- Shows sense verb being rendered as "X vision came"