**Length, Stress, and Pronunciation**

The pronunciation of a word will orient itself on the stressed vowel. Vowels indicated with an accent have the **primary** stress in a word. Some vowels are long, whereas some are short. Long vowels contribute more weight to a syllable. A syllable only needs a certain amount of weight to be a cohesive unit. This is why some vowels can be dropped – the syllable structure is complete without them.

A Period before a vowel indicates that the vowel can be dropped – it is unstressed, while a colon after a vowel represents a long vowel. Dropping a vowel can reduce the number of “beats.” Unstressed, dropped final vowels sometimes lead to disagreements about what the final vowel is. To find out from a speaker what vowel (s)he has underlyingly, have them add a question particle like –s, or –tsu.

1 beat 2 beats 3 beats 4 beats

n**í O**s**í**gw.u tsanad**í**sg**o**.’i didinil**v**´sadad**i**sdisg**v**.’i

had**í** haw**í**n.a agwadaw**ó**sd**i** denad**a**goh**v**y**u**

y**í**g.i **á**sgaya g**v´**g**e**yuw.ahalist**á**yah**v**ga

**ó**sd.a asg**á**y.a

am**á**  **u**n**v´**d.i

**á**m.a agw**é**nvs**v**.’i[[1]](#footnote-1)

Factors like vowel deletion or the addition of suffixes will often change the tonal pattern and/or “beat” count of the words.

Sight reading

haw**á** its**ú:**la dunats**ó:**sd**i** tsunad**é**lokw**a:**sd**i**

sg**í** gal**v**´:quod**i** wid**a**tsin**é:**g**i**s.i **á:**gw**e**n**v**s**v**.’i[[2]](#footnote-2)

gats**v**´ un**é**hlan**v**h.i **a**day**v**:lat**í**sg.i igid**ú:**w**a:**g**i**

How many beats?

1. K**a**giy**ú:**sd**i**
2. Usg**á**s**e**hd**i**
3. Gal**v´:**lad**i**
4. **A**gwats**é:**li
5. Dunad**o**hlg**v´**:’i

1. “my home” [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. “I come from…” [↑](#footnote-ref-2)