

# EASTERN NORTH BAHNARIC: CUA AND KOTUA

*Kenneth D. Smith*

In a discussion of Mon-Khmer subgroupings in Viet Nam, Thomas noted the divergence of Cua from other North Bahnaric languages:

Within the (North Bahnaric) group Cua appears to be slightly divergent; although it shows 56-61% cognates with Hrê, it is only 50-53% cognate with the other languages in the group. Cua also shows more phonological deviation from the other members of the group, which possibly led to a non-recognition of cognates. The others of the group, including Jeh, Rengao, and Halang, are 55-60% cognate with each other.<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of this paper is to state a unique but shared phonological shift of Cua and Kotua as well as other distinctives of these languages in contrast to the other North Bahnaric (NB) languages, giving rise to the classification of Cua and Kotua as Eastern North Bahnaric, (ENB).

Cua and Kotua are both languages found in Quang Ngai province of central Viet Nam. The Cua are in the eastern mountains arising from the coastal low lands whereas the Kotua are in the west between the Cua and the Sedang, occupying parts of both Quang Ngai and Kontum provinces. The linguistic border between the Kotua and the Sedang, significantly, coincides with the watershed between the South China Sea and the Mekong River Valley. The Sedang are west of the watershed entirely within Kontum province. The Kotua and the Sedang converge at present in resettlement villages at Mang Buk.<sup>2</sup>

## *Final nasal shift*

The most distinctive historical feature of Cua and Kotua phonology is the shift of some Proto-North-Bahnaric (PNB) final nasals to stops.<sup>3</sup>

After PNB initial nasals (N), *h*, and glottal stop (q), PNB final nasals are retained in ENB; but after all other initial consonants (C<sub>1</sub>), PNB final nasals become voiceless stops (P) at the same point of articulation as the former nasal. This is illustrated in the following formula.

Todrah is known to have a shift of PNB final nasals to stops. The Modra shift, however, is more restricted than that of ENB. In Modra only PNB final nasals following short vowels which in turn are not preceded by an initial nasal or glottal stop have become final stops:<sup>6</sup>

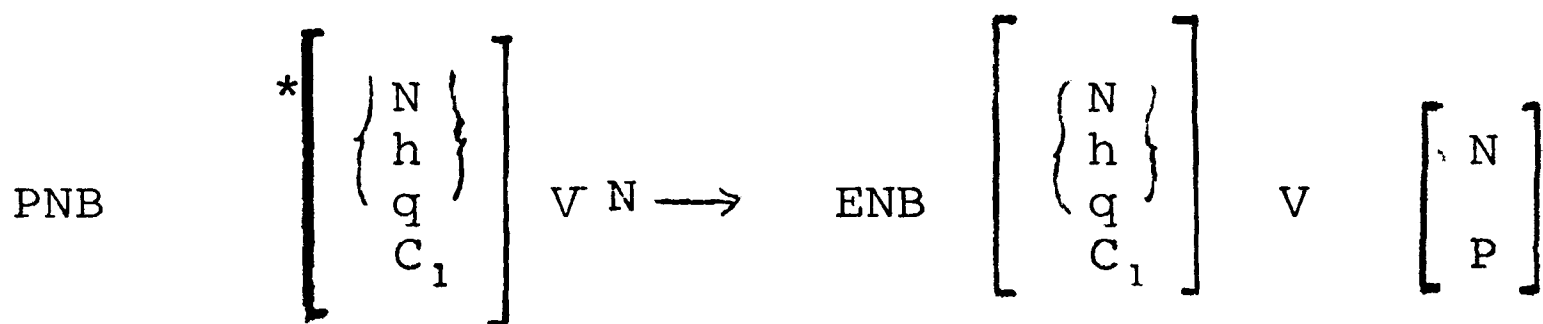
$$\text{PNB} \quad * \left[ \begin{array}{c} -\bar{V}N \\ \left\{ \begin{array}{c} q \\ N \end{array} \right\} \bar{V}N \\ \left\{ \begin{array}{c} \\ C \end{array} \right\} \bar{V}N \\ 2 \end{array} \right] \longrightarrow \text{M} \left[ \begin{array}{c} -\bar{V}N \\ \bar{V}N \\ VP \\ 2 \end{array} \right]$$

*Other ENB distinctives*

(1) Lack of register. Neither Cua nor Kotua evidence any vowel register contrast. All the other NB languages, excepting only Bahnar, have two contrastive vowel registers--a tense and a lax register. The lack of such a feature in Cua and Kotua further distinguishes them from the other NB languages. That the contiguous Sedang dialect *roteang koleq* likewise seems to lack this register phenomenon is presently inexplicable.

(2) Vocabulary differences. The following vocabulary differences between Kotua and the other NB languages were noted on the Kotua word-list footnoted above. Cua words subsequently added to this list include no cognates with Kotua, five with PNB. (S and R forms are given where a PNB reconstruction is lacking).

PNB	Cua	Kotua	gloss
*rapit	rapiat	liô	'tongue'
*ti	ti	lok	'hand'
*blèw	kataal	kôteq	'thigh'
*qbaq	baq	pap	'father'
*por	pong	poi <sup>g</sup>	'cooked rice'
PHrS *kaqmoak	kaqđoh	tako <sup>ng</sup>	'tree bark'
PHrS *kor.	apo	kodau	'roof'
S tritrôu	kajou	nggôu	'mosquito'
S nôu	miq	yôu	'mother'
S ngoh	ay	n <sup>h</sup> duq	'older brother'
S na	ay	naiq	'older sister'
S pó	baal êp	pi	'you--pl.'
S jia	kadrup	kru	'firewood'
S kodê	tiil	bit	'kill'
R koyal	khiil	hngaiq	'wind'
(3) Shift of final <i>r</i> to <i>l</i> in Cua, loss of final <i>r</i> in Kotua.			
*c(h)ũr.	suul	chu	'pig'
*qyěr	iil	iu	'chicken'
*qbar	baal	baiq	'two'
*akar	(kaqđuh)	akau	'skin'
*sur	(hiip)	tsu	'smell'
*por	(pong)	poi	'cooked rice'
Exceptions in Kotua:			
*manār	panuɽ	kanar	'wing'
*hagār.	gâl	kar	'drum'

Examples: <sup>4</sup>

Form	PNB	Cua	Kotua	gloss
*NVN	*hanã	sanum	hanam	'year'
	*manẽ	panêng	kaneng	'crossbow'
	*sanẽ	kanêêng	hneng	'tooth'
	*mã	kamung	mang	'night'
	*ranõ	ranâng	ranong	'neck'
	*tahngam	thoom	naham	'eight'
*hVN	PHrS *yihã	sum	siam	'breathe'
	Exceptions:			
	*hũ	tahôp		'bathe'
	*maham	bahaap/ phaap		'blood' <sup>5</sup>
*qVN	*ãm	am	âm	'give'
	*õ	õ		'boy, son-in-law'
	Exceptions:			
	*ũ	ôp		'winnow'
	*ũ		ut	'fire'
C <sub>1</sub> VN	*chẽ	sêp	chĩp	'bird'
	*baqdã	paqdap	patap	'five'
	*tachĩ	kasiit	chit	'nine'
	*kã	kôt	kôt	'big'
	*plĩ	plêk	plĩk	'sky'
	*hanglõ	salãk	hlok	'star'
	*(ka)rõ	karãk	rok	'back'
	*xgõ	gõk	kũk	'jungle'
	*khlom	klôp	hlôp	'blow'
	*klãm	kloop	kliap	'liver'
	*kon	koot	kuat	'child'
	*pun	poot	pôt	'four'
	*hriĩ	hareek	hrik	'hundred'
	*katsẽ	khiak	katsẽk	'bone'
	S trõ	trôk/ truak	chok	'path'
	S klõ	klook/ kalook/ kaloong	klok	'seed'
	R jẽ	jôk	njek	'leg'
	Exception:			
	*qdon		tuan	'ear'

In the case of Cua for which more data is available, the author has noted 72 examples exemplifying this final nasal shift with perhaps only 3 or 4 exceptions.

In the other NB languages only the Mõdra dialect of

(4) Shift of final *ɭ* to *w* in Kotua.

*apāl	pal	apau	'mortar'
-------	-----	------	----------

(5) Voiced fricative *ʒ* in Kotua.

*tsũk	kluk	ʒũk	'cloud'
-------	------	-----	---------

S sau	yoq	ʒuq	'fear'
-------	-----	-----	--------

(6) Affricated *ts* in Kotua:<sup>7</sup>

*katsen	khiak	katsek	'bone'
---------	-------	--------	--------

*sur		tsu	'smell'
------	--	-----	---------

*sũt	chuuy	tsut	'wipe'
------	-------	------	--------

Kotua has a fricativized voiceless lateral as in *hɭok* 'star'. Kotua initial voiced stops are prenasalized; e.g. *mb*. Kotua final nasals are sometimes prestopped; e.g. *d̥n*. The word-final voiceless lateral *ɭh* in Cua is unique among Viet Nam languages.<sup>8</sup>

In Sedang ethnodialectal terminology the Kotua are referred to as *rotéang koqnân*.<sup>9</sup> Though the inclusion of the Kotua group among the Sedang dialect terminology might suggest that Kotua is a dialect of Sedang, this is rather a case of the Sedang extending their dialect terminology to their neighbors (cf. *rotéang nam li* for the Sedang Rengao, the Rengao neighbors to the Sedang).

Cua vowel length does not regularly correspond to PNB vowel length; especially PNB short vowels more often correspond with Cua long vowels than Cua short vowels.

## FOOTNOTES

1. David D. Thomas, 'Mon-Khmer subgroupings in Vietnam.' *Studies in comparative Austroasiatic linguistics*, Norman H. Zide, ed., Mouton & Co., The Hague, 1966. pp. 194-202.
2. Of the approximately 22 villages represented in the five resettlement villages at Mang Buk, only two are Kotua. The others are all Sedang. These two are the original Mang Buk village and Lang Ruih (now in Dak Sea resettlement village).
3. Cf. Jacqueline G. Maier, 'Cua phonemes.' In *Mon-Khmer Studies III*, The Linguistic Circle of Saigon and The Summer Institute of Linguistics, Saigon, 1969. pp. 9-19. Especially footnote 5: "It is interesting to note that of the 1700 word dictionary used for this data, only 8% of the final consonants are nasals. Comparing this language with other Mon-Khmer languages (most of which have a much higher percentage of nasal finals), it would appear that Cua usually makes a shift to a voiceless stop at the same point of articulation as the nasal ending in these other languages." In Sedang, for example, over 30% of the words have a final nasal and, excluding open-syllable words, 47% of all words with final consonants have a final nasal.
4. PNB forms or, in their absence, Proto-Hrê-Sedang (PHrS), are from my "A phonological reconstruction of Proto-North-Bahnaric", to be published. The author is responsible for Sedang (S) forms. Cua forms are from a manuscript dictionary by Jacqueline Maier and Eva Burton of the Summer Institute of Linguistics. Kotua forms are from a 200-word list taken in Mang Buk by the author in February 1969 (informant Nai of Thu Thok village, reportedly two days' walk east of Mang Buk). Rengao (R) forms were kindly supplied by Kenneth J. Gregerson, also of the Summer Institute of Linguistics.

Orthography used herein is basically equivalent to the Vietnamese *quốc-ngữ* with the following exceptions: <sup>˘</sup> indicates short vowels in PNB whereas double vowels ī indicate long vowels in Cua; ˘ indicates lax register in PNB and R whereas ˙ indicates tense register in S. hʎ represents a voiceless fricative lateral in Kotua. q represents glottal stop.

5. This would not be an exception if the initial shift \*mah- to ph- preceded the final nasal shift, and if aspirated stops like *ph* were excluded from the *h* classification and associated with the  $C_1$  consonants.
6. See Kenneth J. Gregerson and Kenneth D. Smith, 'The development of Todrah register' also in this volume.
7. PNB \*ts was reconstructed on the basis of Bahnar *t*, Proto-Jeh-Halāng *s*, Sedang *s*, and Hrê *s* correspondences. This reconstruction is confirmed by such subsequent findings as Kotua  $\tilde{z}$  and *ts*, Rengao  $x$  [ts], and Todrah *ts*.
8. Maier, op. cit., p. 13.
9. See my 'Sedang ethnodialects', *Anthropological Linguistics* 11.5.143-47 (May 1969), and 'More on Sedang Ethnodialects' in this volume.