ON AUSTRONESIAN LEXICON
IN VIETNAMESE

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The sources of Vietnamese lexicon have been much discussed as regards Chinese, Tai, and Mon-Khmer vocabulary (Maspero 1912; Schmidt 1926; Haudricourt 1954), and one may now presume that Vietnamese is rather safely established as an Austroasiatic language. The Austronesian (AN) subset of Vietnamese lexicon, however, while clearly not having gone unnoticed (qv. discussion in Benedict 1976), continues to invite a good deal of sorting out. The present paper mentions some well-known Austronesian forms as well as raising questions about whether certain other Vietnamese items are ultimately of Austronesian (or Austro-Thai?) origin. The effort here is to contribute towards a more deliberate Vietnamese perspective on Austronesian lexical associations with Austroasiatic.

1. Function forms
Vietnamese possesses several very regularly used grammatical or closed-set function words that appear to have Austronesian counterparts.

1.1. Aspectuals
The following forms function as regular Vietnamese (VN) aspectuals:

(1a).  đả ‘already
Tới đả mua xe rồi.
I already buy auto already
'I have already bought a car.'

b.  sắp ‘about to’
Tới sắp mua xe.
I about-to buy a car
'I am about to buy a car.'

c.  đang ‘in process’
Ông ấy đang làm việc.
grandfather that in-process do work
'He is working.'

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1. A version of this paper was presented at the Eighteenth International Conference on Sino-Tibetan Languages and Linguistics (Bangkok) in 1985. I gratefully acknowledge helpful comments from Paul Benedict, James Matisoff, Nguyễn Đình Hoa, and Bill Gage, though certain things still survive that are perhaps not to their liking.

2. The ultimate Austronesian origin of Vietnamese is a notion that has existed for some time (cf. e.g. discussion in E. Sauvignet 1922; K. Wulf 1942; as well as by Binh Nguyễn Lộc, c.1960 in his Nguyễn goc Malai, so Prof. Hoa informs me).

3. Some, though not all, Vietnamese illustrative forms are from Nguyễn Đình Hoa, 1971.
d. măi ‘continuative’
   Ho di bô măi den Thú-Đức.
   They go by-foot continue to Thú-Đức
   ‘They walked all the way to Thú-Đức.’

These forms may be compared with the following in Bahasa Indonesia
(BI): 4

(2a). sudah ‘already’
   Ia sudah pergi.
   he already go
   ‘He has already gone.’

b. siap ‘ready’
   Mereka siap untuk pergi.
   they ready for go
   ‘They are ready to go.’

c. sedang ‘while, in process’
   Ia sedang membaca ketika saya datang.
   he in-process read when I arrive
   ‘He was reading when I arrived.’

d. masih ‘still, yet’
   Ia masih tidur.
   he still sleep
   ‘He is still sleeping.’

As exemplified above in 1a and 2a, VN dă ‘already’: BI sudah ‘already’
both occur in preverbal position to signal Perfective aspect. In VN it will
be observed that a clause-final roi reinforces the same completive meaning
redundantly. This form is perhaps the ‘true’ Austroasiatic marker (cf.
Rengao (Rg.) hodroi ‘before’) into whose territory dă has intruded.

The tone on dă accords well with diachronic expectations clarified
originally by Haudricourt (1954), which may be generally summarised as
follows:

(3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Finals</th>
<th>open syllable</th>
<th>final stop</th>
<th>final spirant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>voiceless</td>
<td>CV(N)</td>
<td>CVČ</td>
<td>CVH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>voiced</td>
<td>CV</td>
<td>CVČ</td>
<td>CVH</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. A number of the sample Indonesian sentences and lexicon are from Echols and Shadily (1974).
Thus, depending on the original voicing status of the initial consonant (C-) and the closure status of the final (-V(N), -VC, or VH), a particular contrastive tone has developed in Vietnamese, typically, with a concomitant loss of most of the original conditioning features. The High Tones associated with old voiceless or implored consonants are \( \bar{V} \) (symbolised in our exposition with \( \bar{V} \) for clarity though it (the macron \( \bar{\cdot} \)) is not written in Vietnamese orthography), \( \bar{V} \), and \( \bar{\acute{V}} \). The Low Tones that originally occurred with voiced initial consonants are \( \bar{V}, \bar{V}, \) and \( \bar{\grave{V}} \).

At this point, however, when dealing with disyllabic forms, such as BI \textit{sudah}, it is crucial to unravel the ‘pecking order’ that dictates \textit{which initial consonant counts as to voicing status} in the selection of the High vs. Low tone set in (3) above. That is, in \textit{sudah} does the \textit{s-} or the \textit{d-} take precedence? Clearly, the voiced initial \textit{d-} had prevailed, and the \( \bar{V} \) tone has been appropriately selected, and \textit{sudah} \( \bar{\grave{d}a} \).

To clarify this consonant precedence, it is perhaps worth the digression to discuss the discoveries of Friberg and Hor (1977) as to initial consonant ‘dominance’ with respect to the register (\(+\text{ATR}\) vs. \(-\text{ATR}\)) selection of stressed (main) syllables in Western Cham (Austronesian of southern Vietnam and Cambodia). Distinguishing register A (\(-\text{ATR}\)) consonants from register B (\(+\text{ATR}\)), Friberg and Hor (1977: 36) summarise how precedence is established and register effects determined on the phonation of vowel quality of the succeeding syllable:

\[
\begin{array}{cccccc}
(4) & A (-\text{ATR}) & B (+\text{ATR}) \\
1. & p & t & c & k & b & d & j & g \\
 & ph & th & ch & kh & bh & dh & jh & gh \\
2. & s & h & m & n & \tilde{n} & \eta \\
 & w & l & y & r \\
\end{array}
\]

Register A and B in Western Cham words were accounted for by the following ‘dominance’ rules:

\[
(5)a. & A + A = A \\
b. & B + B = B \\
c. & A1 + B1 = \text{second element} \\
d. & B1 + A2 = B \\
e. & A + B2 = A \\
\]

These rules (following Purtle (1969) for Khmer), although neither ordered with respect to each other nor within the left-hand members, indicate register of tonic syllable. Quadrant A1 and B1 are equally strong; they both dominate A2 and B2. A2 also dominates B2. This analysis is based entirely on the consonant ‘strength’; the consonant is seen to ‘dominate’ or determine the register characteristics of the following vowel. And, based on the five ‘dominance’ rules noted above, certain atonic syllable initial

\* = Advanced Tongue Register (Ed.).

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consonants exert their strength over an intervening tonic syllable initial to
determine the 'registriness' of the tonic syllable vowel.

In the following examples, consonant dominance is seen in the
combining of various syllables to form words (a grave accent /´/ is
added to indicate second (+ ATR) register clearly):

(6)   A1 + B1    /ka/ + /baw/       /kabaw/ 'buffalo'
       B1 + A1 no examples (historically B1 has become A1).
       B1 + A2    /bal/ + /haw/       /bahaw/ 'new'
       A2 + B1    /ha/ + /dom/        /hadom/ 'how much'
       A1 + B2    /ka/ + /ro/         /kar0/ 'strong'
       B2 + A1    /la/ + /kaw/        /lakaw/ 'to step over'
       A2 + B2    /ha/ + /nin/        /hanin/ 'bow'
       B2 + A2    /la/ + /say/        /lasay/ 'cooked rice'

Returning now to sudah > dâ, one may usefully compare this process
with Friberg and Hor's A2 + B1, in which /ha/ + /dôm/ > /hadôm/, the
word initial spirant yielding to the main syllable initial stop as the prosody
determining element. Then, of course, Vietnamese ultimately reduces the
form to a monosyllable.

Resuming our discussion of the other aspectuals, it will be observed that
the pair VN sâp 'about to': BI siap 'ready' are also preverbal forms.
The tone of sâp results straightforwardly from its syllable type as CVC (cf.
1.1.(3) above).

For VN dâng 'in process': BI sedâng 'in process' one must, as with dâ,
assume a simplification which ultimately drops the first syllable. As to
tone assignment, one expects either level (unmarked) or  'with a CVN
syllable (no. (3) above), but with Friberg and Hor's rules an initial s-
should have yielded to d- and resulted in *dâng. Perhaps the situation is
more complex historically and Friberg and Hor-type dominance is further
conditioned by other factors. A prime candidate is perhaps an original
stress difference in Austronesian. Specifically, for example, note:

(7)   BI 'sudah 'already'
       BI se’dang 'in process'
in which VN dâ derivs from an unstressed syllable while dâng
corresponds to a stressed one.

The pair VN mâi 'continuative': BI masih 'still, yet' do not function
quite like the other aspectuals above, for mâi occurs as a post-verbal while
masih is a pre-verbal. Phonetically, one can assume a reduction masih >
mai (i.e. CVH), after which, given the voicing of the initial, the resultant
mâi is completely expected (qv. (3) above).

1.2 Desiderative
The following sentences are instances of desiderative modality in VN or
BI: