SYLLABIC M IN TWO YOONG DIALECTS

Mary E. Sarawit
Srinakharinwirot University, Pitsanuloke

In this paper I would like to present some data on the Yoong dialect. I frist began to study the Yoong dialect in late 1976 when it came to my attention that one of my students spoke a dialect using a syllabic m̥ for negation. This year I have found a number of students who speak Yoong. The data and discussion that follows represents study basically of two Yoong speakers. One is Mr. Amnuay Uttraphayom from Makhua Jae /makh⁺a cê:/, the other is Mr. Wiwat Darunkaan from Ba Sang /pà: sa:ŋ/ Lampoon.

The Yoong dialect offers a number of interesting areas for linguistic analysis. The most striking feature of the dialect is certainly the syllabic m̥. Besides this, though, the Yoong dialect offers an excellent example of a dialect slowly being assimilated into a larger dialectal environment. For both my informants, who are in their late twenties, all of the distinguishing syntactic uses of m̥ as well as the distinctive prohibition form /pay²/ are in free variation with the more general forms used in Northern Thai, though, in general, the Makhua Jae informant would most often give the Yoong form in eliciting data while the Ba Sang informant would often give the Northern Thai form and then add that the old people use a different form or when asked would say he could use either the Yoong or Northern form.

The difference in the phonological inventory for the two Yoong dialects poses another problem, that of the direction of the change. At this point I have not been able to establish which village is the older of the two Yoong settlements nor answer the more general question of the history of the Yoong dialect.

In presenting the Yoong data I will use BS (Ba Sang) and MJ (Makhua Jae) to indicate where the two dialects differ. The inventory of consonants and vowels is similar to other Northern dialects. As in other Northern dialects the reflex of Proto-Tai voiced initials is unaspirated. In cases where the velar stop is the reflex of *ɣ rather than *g we find kh. When the initial was a cluster with r or l Northern dialects have simplified the cluster with compensatory aspiration in the case of *gl *gr *bl *br. Yoong differs from other Northern Thai dialects in not having both palatal glide from Proto-Tai *ʔy and nasal from *hñ and *ñ. Yoong has only one: BS y and MJ ñ.

Yoong Lampoon Initial Consonants:

ph	th	BS(ch)	kh (~kh^x)	
p	t	c	k	?
b	d			
	f	s		h
m̥				
m	n	MJ ñ	ŋ	
w	l	BS y		

Initial Clusters: khw   kw

Examples:

ph   'to divide' pha:^{3} 'big knife' pha:^{6} 'to turn over' phik^7

p   'year' pi:^{1} 'fish' pa:^{1} 'father' pɔ:^{4}

b   'leaf' bay^2

th   'to arrive' thɨŋ^1

t   'low' tam^3 'candle' te:n^2

d   'flower' dɔ:k^3

c   'Monday' wan^2 can^1 'to believe' cə:^{4}

kh   'egg' khay^3 'sweat' khay^2 'utensils' khə:ŋ^4 'night' khɨn^2

k   'chicken' kay^3 'pair' ku:^{4} 'middle' ka:ŋ^1

?   'to bathe' ?a:p^3

f   'sky' fa:^{6}

s   'left' sa:y^6

h   'fragrant' hɔ:m^1 'fence' ho:^{2}

m̥   'mango' m̥ mo:ŋ^4

m   'pig' mu:^{1}

n   'sit' naŋ^4

ñ   'mosquito' ñuŋ^2 'big' ñay^3 'to want' ña:k^5 (only MJ)

w   'day' wan^2

l   'liquor' law^4

y   'mosquito' yun^2 'big' yay^3 'to want' ya:k^5 (only BS)

khw   'right' khwa:^{1} 'to throw' khwa:ŋ^4

kw   'more' kwa:^{3}

<u>Consonant Finals:</u> m n ŋ p t k ʔ w y

Examples:

m	'altogether'	phɔ:m^6
n	'hammar'	khɔ:n^6
ŋ	'smooth'	ke:ŋ^5
p	'to count'	nap^7
t	'lung'	pɔ:t^3
k	'outside'	nɔ:k^4
ʔ	'to meet'	paʔ^2
w	'only one'	de:w^2
y	'heart'	cay^1

Discussion

As already noted the most noticeable difference between the two dialects is MJ ñ and BS y. My MJ informant pointed out that when he first began school he had to learn to say y. Another difference between the two dialects can be seen in words corresponding to Siamese ch initial. For the MJ informant all words are rendered with c. However, with the BS dialect Mr. Wiwat had a ch for 'tea' cha^2, 'early morning' cha:w^6, and 'to tear' chi:k^3. Another BS informant had c for all forms except 'to tear' and 'to like' for which he had s, si:k^3 and sɔ:p^4 respectively. Reconstructing Proto-Tai *˙h is problematic, the only form being 'to tear' which is a Chinese loan and for which vowel correspondences are irregular. However, for the other forms there are no exceptional features and indeed one is left to surmise that what is going on is most likely dialect mixture. As can be noted from the forms given for khw the Yoong dialect has khw as the reflex of both voiced and voiceless velar clusters, though my informants noted that "the old people" often say kwa:y^2 'buffalo', kwan^2 'smoke'.

<u>The vowel inventory:</u>

i	ɨ	u
e	ə	o
ɛ	a	ɔ

All the vowels occur long and short. Similar to many other dialects the diphthongs ia ɨa ua in Siamese are realized as mid vowels e: ə: o: respectively.

'ox' ŋo:^{2} 'beard' no:t^3

'bored' bə:^{3} 'earthworm' də:n^2

'wife' me:^{2} 'to stretch' MJ ñe:t^3

Tones:

Lampoon Yoong has the same tonal development as other Northern dialects. Yoong has seven tones, six of which may occur on smooth syllables. Four tonal distinctions are made on syllables of the checked type.

Proto-Tai	A	B	C	DS	DL
Initial Feature	Smooth Syllable			Checked Syllable Short-Long (Vowel)	
Voiceless Aspirated	tone 1 rising	tone 3 low level	tone 5 low-falling	tone 7 high level	tone 8 low level
Voiceless Unaspirated	tone 1	tone 3	tone 5	tone 7	tone 3
Pre-glottalized	tone 2 mid level	tone 3	tone 5	tone 7	tone 3
Voiced	tone 2	tone 4 mid-rising	tone 6 high-falling	tone 5 low-falling	tone 4 mid-rising