

Problems of language contact in Vietnam
(The Main Features of Language Change)

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Like most of other countries in Southeast Asia , Vietnam is a nation of many languages and peoples . According to figures from the General Government Statistics Office and the Ethnology Institute of the National Center for the Social Sciences and Humanities , Vietnam today has 54 nationalities (see Appendix 1) comprising hundreds of regional groups .
- 1.2. Ethnic Vietnamese , or Kinh , have historically been concentrated primarily in the delta and coastal regions which stretch the length of the country . Today , Kinh are present in nearly all of Vietnam's provinces , although their level of distribution is uneven . Nearly all of ethnic minority peoples live in the forest and mountain regions of the North , the highland and border areas to the West , and the Southwestern part of the country . Only two minority groups - the Cham and the Khmer - live in the delta areas intermingled with the Kinh . The Cham live in the two provinces of the South Central region , with a number also settled in the Mekong Delta provinces of Angiang , while Khmer live in the provinces of Mekong Delta . For different reasons and due to different waves of migration , more than 920,000 ethnic Chinese are settled throughout the various regions of Vietnam . There are a few groups living in the mountain , some other groups living in the lowland countryside while others living in the urban areas . The economic activity of the Chinese vary according to their place of residence : mountain cultivation , lowland farming , trade , and business (see Map Appendix 2) .
- 1.3. Today (mid 1990s) , these fifty-four ethnic groups combine to form a community of about seventy million people : The Vietnamese community . This community has formed gradually over many millennia . With a few peoples forming the original nuclei , many other groups were integrate into this community at different points of the time and for different reasons : ancient migratory movements , expansion of inhabited areas , economics , geography , society , history ... Of course , at whatever time and for whatever reason , each people or group of peoples who become a part of the

community made a distinct contribution to the cultural and linguistic storehouse shared by all .

- 1.4. Certainly , this is a feature of nearly all areas in the world with mixed immigrant populations , including all of Southeast Asia . Nevertheless , the form and outcome of integration depend on the pattern of language contact and on the relative position and relationship between the different peoples who are the owner of contact languages .

II . Language Contact in Vietnam during the Building of the Ancient Vietnamese State

- 2.1. As a scientific approach originating from the field of socio-linguistics , the theory of language contact allows us examine the reasons , evolution , and results of linguistic processes by relying not just on linguistic structures , but also on factors outside of language . This approach is particularly necessary for examining prehistoric linguistic activity in Vietnam .
In this paper , extra linguistic factors refers to historical legends , archaeological artifacts , and historical sites reflected in the name of places , rivers , and mountains .
- 2.2. According to the legend , the union between Lac Long Quan (Lac Dragon lord) , the prince of the sea , and Au Co , a princess of the mountains , produced the Hung royal line . Examined from the perspective of linguistic activity , this legend makes it possible to see the first contact between ethnic group living in the lowland and the highland regions of Vietnam . With the emergency of the Hung kings , different tribes were unified to form the state of Van Lang , a development which also provided the first nucleus for the concentration of the Vietnamese language . A number of historians and linguistics have determined that these tribes spoke different dialects with Austro - Asiatic characteristics (Hoang T.C , Ha V.T , Pham D.D , Taylor K.W) . Thus , a linguistic cradle (Koine) stemming from the Austro - Asiatic family emerged in the territory of Vietnam .
- 2.3. Scientists have verified the existence of the Ancient Au - Lac state and the historical figure of An Duong Vuong , who replaced the Hung line as King . Linguistically , this enables us to think about expansion of the sphere of language contact on a new scale . It is possible that these two large tribal groups which did not stem from the same linguistic family , Austro -Asiatic and Kadai for example , developed a language for the tribal alliance .

Examinations of contemporary and ancient population distribution patterns in the areas to the south of the Yangtze River show, as many scholars have already asserted, that a number of Austro - Asiatic and Kadai peoples are descended from the different populations which comprised the ancient Bach Viet homeland. The intersection between Kadai (Thai) and Austro-Asiatic in Vietnamese language (Haudricourt A.G , Phan .H.L) certainly stems from this period of language contact .

- 2.4. The legend of the magic crossbow , the tragedy of My Chau and Trong Thuy¹ , and historical documents about Trieu Da's conquest and domination of Au Lac for more than sixty years are indirect evidence of the first contact *between the ancient Vietnamese language and Chinese* . This contact was certainly neither deep nor widespread among the entire population . It may only have occurred among those of echelons of Au Lac society which had direct relations with the officials and military garrisons dispatched by Trieu Da . At that time , language contact between the Au Lac peoples and the Bach Viet populations had already begun to be controlled by Trieu Da's strategy of Sinicization (Phan H.L , p. 214) .

Although the population in Nam Viet * descending from Trieu Da numbered less than half that of Au Lac (Phan H. L p. 215) , naturally the composition of the population was quite diverse . Although there have been migrations over the centuries between the time of Trieu Da and the present , the overall picture of population distribution has not changed much (Taylor K.W , page 13-17) . From the arguments above , it is possible to hypothesize that during the historical period of Trieu Da's occupation of Au Lac , Ancient Vietnamese, having already interacted with Kadai , had become to have contact not only with Chinese , but also with the broader group of peoples comprising Bach Viet , among them Hmong , Dao , and Tibetans .

Although we still need historical and linguistic evidences to support the above hypothesis , the information we do have enables us to acknowledge the existence of quite extensive linguistic contact at the dawn of Vietnamese civilization from prehistoric to early feudal times .

III . Linguistic Contact During the Period of Vietnam's Domination by the Chinese Empire

¹ Nam Yuch - Nam Viet , Chao T'o - Triều Da

- 3.1. The scheme of Sinicization begun during the Trieu Da period was intensified significantly , especially following the merciless repression of the Trung sisters revolt (40-43 A.D) by Ma Vien . During this time , in addition to Han military garrisons , many other types of people were permanently settled in the territory of Giao Chi (ancient Vietnam) to form plantations , farms , towns , and neighborhoods of overseas Chinese . Along with the regions around the chief towns and stations , Vietnamese - Han language contact also occurred in a number of population areas . The Han officials , nobles and literati who came to administer or make their livings in Vietnam established schools for their children . A number of Vietnamese who were allowed to attend these schools(Ly Tien , Ly Cam , Truong Trong ...) displayed significant ability and were even appointed as mandarins . Under the rule of the Chinese governors Tich Quang , Nham Dien , and Si Nhiep** , Confucianism was strongly propagated through the construction of “ School teaching culture “ . At that time , a person on Giao Chau passed the Confucian exams . The emergency in Vietnamese society of a Han-educated intellectual class meant the Vietnamese - Han language contact occurred not just through the spoken language , but also through literature . This new factor gradually became the primary vehicle for Vietnamese - Han language contact until the time of Vietnamese independence .
- 3.2. With the formation of the Luy Lau Buddhist center and the appearance of traders and Buddhist clergy from India during the first century A.D , Buddhist entered Vietnamese society . This , in turn , created an opening for Vietnamese - Hindu language contact . Although not as extensive as that between Vietnamese and Chinese , Vietnamese - Hindu language contact contributed a series of Buddhist terms which were Vietnamized: But (Buddha) , bo de (bodhi tree) , Bo tat (Bodhisattva) , phu do (buddha's relics) , chua (pagoda) , thap (tower) , tang gia (Buddhist priest) , etc , as well as a number of terms from daily life , such as ya xoa (yaksa , or evil spirit) .
- 3.3. This history raises an important question : during thousands of years domination marked by an aggressive program of Sinicization and close cultural contact under the domination of a vast empire , how were the conquered 'people able to preserve their spoken language ? This situation

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may be related to Vendryes' observation about the Greeks' respond to contact with the language of their Turkish conquerors .² Of course the situation in Vietnam was different . The Vietnamese did not disregard the language and literature of their foreign rulers because they knew that it was the language of a rich culture which had actively incorporated the essences of the entire Sinicized world . Therefore , along with the common people's unconscious acceptance of the Chinese spoken language , intellectuals who received Chinese education adopted the language writing system with the explicit goal of Vietnamizing them in order to enrich their own language . One must wonder if the general constancy of Vietnam culture³ is a reflection of centuries of historical experience of language contact .

IV . Vietnamese Language from the 10th to the 19th Centuries

- 4.1. With the victory of Ngo Quyen (938) , Vietnam seized its independence after thousands of years of domination by expansionist forces from the North . As we all know , language plays an extremely important role in building a self - governor nation . Reflecting both external and internal policies , language serves as the mean for building a culture and fostering cohesion among the constituent people in the community .

Historical development shows that Vietnamese at this time continued to struggle , both resolutely and flexibly , to preserves its independence and territorial integrity . At the same time , Vietnam never abandoned the language and writing system of its adversary . In fact all the feudal Vietnamese dynasties viewed Han language and script not only as the *lingua del pane* , but as the language of culture . Through books and educational system , Viet-Han language contact occurred on wider level than ever before . Thanks to these methods of transmission , Vietnam has a wealth of Han language literature transmitted from the Ly and Tran dynasties to the Nguyen dynasty .

This pattern of contact played a significant role in strengthening literary vocabulary , particularly a system of technical terms for the social sciences . Using the Han script as a model , Chinese - educated Vietnamese scholars in the late 12th and early 13th centuries developed the *nom* script . Along with the use of Han words and script , Vietnamese needed such a writing system , which would truly reflect the *lingua del cuore* when they “ used [their] mother tongue to make poems set to music ,to conveniently recite musical pieces evoking feelings of joy or sorrow (LeTac , P. 48) .

- 4.2. The end of 10th century onward was also the period in which the ancient Dai Viet Kingdom expanded its existing space southward . The form of population integration and cultural contact , which had previously been limited by “ the remote areas “ (that is the distant border) , expanded significantly during this period . This period marked the beginning of a meeting between the nucleus of ancient Vietnamese language and other languages in the new territory occurred widely and continuously until today .

During this time , Vietnamese came into contact with a number of continental Austronesian language (Cham , Gia Rai , Ede , Churu , Raglai , etc) , Austro-Asiatic mountain languages spoken in the highlands or in the eastern mountains of the Truong Son range , and the Khmer language spoken in the eastern and western provinces of modern - day southern Vietnam . We can view this as a process to spread Vietnamese which the same time incorporated and expanded linguistic components joined in the Vietnamese language .

This process of dissemination and incorporation also shaped dialects and semi-dialects in Vietnamese . Today's geographic variants of Vietnamese are not vestiges of domination by feudal lords , but the result of language contact between Vietnamese and the population in each territory ⁴ . This includes contact with the people of ancient Champa from the 11th to the 17th century , and interaction with the population of ancient Funan which later became part of Chenla in what is today the southernmost part of Vietnam .

- 4.3. Simultaneous with this ongoing language contact among indigenous groups inside the Vietnamese territory , from the 16th century onward a new direction communication began between Vietnamese (which already included a collection of languages) and the languages of the West . This language contact raised two unusual issues which Vietnam had never before encountered in the history of its linguistic activity : spoken languages which belonged to different language typologies (inflectional type) and different forms of written alphabets (Latin) . These factors were at first quite novel , but after a period of hesitation they were incorporated into the structure of contemporary Vietnamese through interference .

With respect to the writing system , everybody can clearly see that the Vietnamese Romanized script , or *chu quoc ngu* , resulted from this contact ⁵ . With the emergence in the 20th century of a group of Vietnamese

intellectuals advocating new learning , the influence of contact with western languages was clearly imprinted in newspapers and journals and in the literary language of contemporary Vietnamese •

- 4.4. One characteristic of language contact from the 17th century until the early decades of the 20th century was the simultaneous functioning of different languages (as well as different writing systems) in the sectors of literature of government administration : Vietnamese and the *nom* script , then *quoc ngu* , Han language and characters , and the French language and writing system .

At the beginning of this historical period , the Han writing system dominated both linguistically and socially . The 17th century and especially the 18th century witnessed the strong rise of the Vietnamese and the *nom* script . *Nom* literature reached its pinnacle in the tale of Kieu , which formed the social foundation for cultural policies of Quang Trung (1788 - 1792) , which intended to make Vietnamese and the *nom* script the national language . The establishment in Vietnam of a French colony with its own linguistic policies had the effect of shifting the evolution of Vietnamese language in a new direction , perhaps even in ways different from the wishes of policymakers 7 . Vietnamese language and the *quoc ngu* script evolved to its current status as the language of culture and science

5. Language Contact : A Colorful Mosaic of Languages in Contemporary Vietnam

- 5.1. Appendices 1 and 2 show a colorful mosaic of language in present-day Vietnam . This is the concentration of contemporary languages which unites with each other due to three types of relationships : genetic (Appendix 3) , typological , and areal . All three types of relationships show the indirect or direct effects of language contact .
- 5.2. The process of language contact leads to the inter-penetration of features of the language structure . The transformation of language which results is one reason why linguists have different views when they classify languages in Vietnam (as well as entire Southeast Asian region) . This situation occurred throughout almost the entire the 20th century . Of course , regardless of the explanation one supports , the languages which have combined in Vietnamese still have genetic relationship , be it near or far . And debate about the origin of Vietnamese - whether it belongs to the Austro - Asiatic or Thai family - only enhance the noteworthiness of the effects of language

contact on Vietnamese and the other languages which have combined to form the Vietnamese language .

- 5.3. Language contact has the important effects of changing typology of a number of languages in the Vietnamese group. Such as the case for the Chamic languages . Stemming from the Austronesian language family , which tend toward agglutination , the Chamic languages in Vietnam today are shifting toward the typology of an isolated language .

Looking at the Cham language in the delta region , or Giarai , Rhade , Radlai , and Chru in the highlands , we can see that the languages in this group are all gradually losing their system of affixes . An example is the causal morpheme , which is gradually being replaced in these languages by an analytic construction .

Jarai language : to live

to resurrect

is being replaced by :

hơ dip

pơ hơ dip (affix : *pơ*)

ngăbrei hơ dip glai (to make alive again)

Rhade language : big :

to make big :

is being replaced by :

prong

bi prong (affix : *bi*)

Ngă brei prong (to make big) which is becoming *ngă prong* (to grow)

Contemporary Cham language has seen the disappearance of the structure affixes in order to form new words . These affixes were acknowledged at the beginning of this century (E. Aymonier , A. Cabaton , 1906 , xxiii-xxiv) . The formation of a tonal system in contemporary Cham is a linguistic phenomenon which an increasing number of authors have confirmed (Hoang T.C , Bui K.T , Phu Van Han , et al ...)

This is assuredly an internal evolutionary law , but one of the forces having an influence on this linguistic transformation is intersection , such as that which resulted from the exchange between Vietnamese and Cham languages in areas with Cham -Viet populations .

- 5.4. When researching about the different language in Vietnam , Russian linguist N.F.Alieva mentioned the union of Indochinese languages (N.F. Alieva 3-24) . Many years before , E.Gaspardone noted , “ The language in Indochina ... have an especially high level of concentration “ (quoted in G.Coedes , page 65) . With the general issue of linguistic union as a topic for debate , we can rely on linguistic and socio-linguistic factors to speak of a

Vietnamese language pack , a Vietnamese language area . This is the result of inter-penetration and mutual integration of structural factors through the process of language contact within the territory of present-day Vietnam . “ A groups of languages that has come to share a range of features through contact is said to constitute a linguistic area “ (Blake .B.J.)

In the Vietnamese language pack , people have observed a grouping with respect to sub-typology isolation , with the syntactical order S-V-(P)-O , N-Adj receiving the most emphasis . The system of grammar markers (function words) has similar usages and semantic which can usually be easily borrowed from one language to another . Syntax , causal , passive , and some other syntactic constructions have a tendency to imitate each other (N.F. Alieva , 1982 , 1991)

With respect to phonology , the tendency to collect is new for both the remote minority peoples and for Vietnamese society as a whole . More specifically , the necessity for the new words to express different meanings is demanded by every language in the Vietnamese language pack . In the process of strengthening new words , besides those terms from the Han language which have had a high degree of Vietnamization , there are lexicological factors specific to each language which serve as the materials for structuring compound words - the primary way to create new words among isolated language types . Thanks to related structural and semantic forms and a high degree of raw material to create new words - factors from Han language which have been Vietnamized - There is a clear tendency to form a common lexicological group shared by the entire Vietnamese language pack (Bui K.T., 1988) .

In the contemporary period of language contact in Vietnam , the most notable characteristic is the formation of a linguistic area which groups a solid language pack . This pack contains languages which are developing according to a process of aggregation which rests on long-standing relations between near and distance language families . The development of this pack is due in part to social factors , but also reflects the impact of the structural changes brought about through language contact .

VI. The Distribution of Social Functions in the Collection of Languages

- 6.1. For historical and social reasons , Vietnamese have long been the common language for all the populations in the community . This status was not the result of a law or an order , but was gradually acknowledge and consolidated as Vietnamese play the role of collecting and combining the people in the task of building , preserving , and unifying the country . The prominence of Vietnamese was increasingly confirmed through its gradual affirmation as an efficient instrument to protect and develop the culture of Vietnam , which comprises many groups who have lost their country .

From the middle of the 1860s until the middle of this century , the new system of Vietnamese writing - *chu quoc ngu* - enabled cultured people in each ethnic group to build a rich corpus of literature and publications . Although the *quoc ngu* language and written script were used only in some parts of the official colonial system of elementary education , starting with the Tonkin Free School Movement (1907 - 1908) , education entirely in Vietnamese using the quoc ngu script had become the norm through journals and publishing . For this reason , when Vietnamese declared its independent at the end of 1945 , all- around education in Vietnamese at every level began right away , without any need for language reform (as in Turkey with Mustafa Kemal , for example) . Today , after exactly half a century of being tested as the instrument for building and transmitting a Vietnamese culture consisting of many components -a macroculture - Vietnamese have been affirmed as the national language . The Romanized writing system is truly the national language - the literal translation of *quoc ngu* - as its name has long signified .

- 6.2 The task of expanding the social function of Vietnamese has also confirmed the status of the languages of the different peoples and ethnic groups in the life of the country . A government advocacy council focusing on the spoken and written languages of minority peoples has decreed : “ The spoken and written languages are both a treasure for each people and a cultural property shared by the entire country . In the areas inhabited by ethnic minorities , the language and writing system of the peoples will be used at the same time as the general language [i.e. Vietnamese . Bui K.T.] . Those minority peoples which do not have a writing system will be helped to build one using the Roman alphabet . If need be , those peoples who have an ancient writing system will also be assisted in constructing a new Romanized writing system

." This is a re-affirmation of the path which was charted after September 2, 1945 .

Linguistic activity in the past half century has focused primarily on two as : 1) Standardizing all aspects of Vietnamese ; and 2) Increasing the functional capacity of ethnic minority languages , primarily through improving and building their writing systems .

In addition to the ancient writing systems possessed by traditional cultures such as the Cham , Khmer , and Northwestern Thai , and a number of Romanized scripts dating from before 1945 , there are today a few dozen writing systems which have only recently been created . Following research and description of the major languages spoken by large numbers of people

(hundreds of thousands and higher) , smaller groups of people such as the Pu Peo , Ruc , and Ksing Mul have recently garnered the attention of linguists . One of the focal points of this type of research have been language contact and changes in the language of minority peoples through this process . The big question posed today is what consequences the distribution of populations (both spontaneous and planned) will have for minority languages in the future . There are not enough time to experiment in order to have a definitive answer , but we can clearly see that language activity in these areas have already changed compared with the previous situation of isolated populations living in remote regions .

- 6.3. A distinctive characteristic of bi-lingualism / multi-lingualism in contemporary Vietnam is the participation of Vietnamese in the system's different components . In the frontier region during the past , the usual pattern of bi-lingualism / multi-lingualism involved the minority groups living in each area . In each of these regions , factors such as population size or socio-cultural status would lead to the prominence of one language , which would serve as an *intermediary both among the minority people and between these population and the Kinh (ethnic Vietnamese)* . Examples include Thai in the Northwest , Tay-Nung in the North , and Ede in Daklak . Today , however , because of the number of Kinh who now live in highlands , these region are increasingly populated . In particular , improvements in the educational and cultural level of the minority peoples and expansion the media (both broadcast and print) has made Vietnamese increasingly popular in every area and among every class . In nearly all the bi-lingual /multi-

lingual areas , Vietnamese in the *quoc ngu* script have become the key unifying component for the process of language contact .

Under these new circumstances , language education activities to reinforce bi-lingualism / multi-lingualism occur on two planes : popularization of the Vietnamese language and writing system for all of the populations in minority areas , and continued efforts to improve the results of using the language and writing system for the minority peoples .

It is necessary to add that bi-lingual education have existed in Vietnam for a long time - particularly since 1945 - and is an important part of general education in Vietnam .

- 6.4. When discussing language contact in Vietnam today , it is insufficient to talk only about the relationship between Vietnamese and foreign languages . If in the past foreign languages had a position of prestige compared to Vietnamese (see section 3, 4 and 5) , then from 1945 until now there has been an adjustment . In Vietnam cultural history , there has never before been a need and movement for foreign language study as extensive as today . At the beginning of 1995 in Ho Chi Minh city there were hundreds of places teaching foreign languages which offered both long and short-term courses during the day and at night . The languages which are receiving attention are not limited to Chinese , French , English (the most popular) , Japanese , and Korean . The languages of all the countries in the region are taught in specialized programs (Thai , Indonesia , Malay) . To study and develop the ability to use a foreign language is not just a matter for intellectuals , as in the past , but now includes no small number of the general population . In this situation , a primary emphasis on the effects which languages engaged in a contact relationship have on each other is focused on three areas : 1) Improving the communicative effectiveness and adding to the richness of the national language so that it is closely linked to the task of preserving its identity ; 2) Develop suitable methods to help the languages of different peoples embody the cultural characteristics of each group to the optimal extent ; and 3) Improve the capacity of officials and especially the younger generation of Vietnamese to use foreign languages .

VII . Conclusion

- 7.1. Language contact is a socio-linguistic phenomenon which have existed in Vietnam from the time of the state's formation until today. During this process , relationship between the language in question have changed , with many

aspects differing according to social change and historical development . Through this process , the position and role of Vietnamese today - the national language and the language of communication for every member of the majority of community - has gradually and naturally emerged

- 7.2. In the relationships of contact with foreign languages , Vietnamese has accepted many new factors in order to enrich its expressive capacity . Most notably , during periods when Vietnam lost its independence , the people preserved their language so that it did not degenerate and did not cease to develop .
- 7.3. Contact between autochthonous languages within Vietnam's present borders has been marked by a basic tendency to combine . This direction of development has shaped a languages pack which have many characteristics of an isolated sub-typology . Along with the effects of language contact , languages with roots near and far have encouraged an even closer commingling among the languages in the Vietnamese pack .
- 7.4. With its historical experience , the community of the ethnic majority Vietnamese and Vietnamese language now have a form of popular linguistic activity : bi-lingualism /multi- lingualism . This is an appropriate type of language communication which originated from the distant past and certainly is the ideal form of language activity for Vietnam in the long-term .

Notes

¹ . According to the legend of My Chau and trong Thuy , An Duong Vuong receive the magic crossbow made from the claw from the golden turtle fairy Kim Qui . He was told that when he used the crossbow in battle tens of thousands of the enemy would be destroyed by a single arrow . For this reason , the Chinese general Trieu Da could not defeat him . Trieu Da sent his son , named Trong Thuy , to marry An Duong Vuong's daughter , My Chau . My chau showed the magic crossbow to her husband , who stole it and brought it to his father . Trieu Da then used the bow to defeat An Duong Vuong .

² Vendryes wrote in *Le Language* : “ La volonté qu’avaient les Grecs de ne pas sacrifier leur langue à celle d’un vainqueur qu’ils méprisaient a préservé le Grec à travers les âges , jamais les turcs n’a pu le supplanter ni même empiéter sur lui . On parlait les langues de l’oppreur pour les besoins administratifs ; mais , comment disent les Italiens , jamais la *lingua del cuore* n’a cédé à la *lingua del pane* . La prestige se justifie le plus souvent par la valeur de la langue “ (p. 333)

³ Tran quoc Vuong wrote : “ The usual trait of Vietnamese culture is ‘ not to refuse ‘ to accept , digest , and master the influence of foreign cultures “ (Vietnamese history , Volum 1, pp. 379-380)

⁴ Therefore , it is not without reason that L.Thompson writes : “ There are several modern studies which provide the basis for perceiving the overall picture of gradually changing patterns from North to south “ (L. Thompson , p. 79)

In my view , this observation only emphasizes the transitory character of Vietnamese from one region to another , constant with the spread of Vietnamese from North to South , but it does not necessarily contradict the description of dialects and semi-dialects in Vietnamese . These ideas differ in detail about the distribution of Vietnamese dialects displayed in reality . We must not forget that dialects belong to the realm of history .

⁵ Appearing later , but also like Romanji Japan , the *quoc ngu* script was at first used with the limited goal of proselytization by missionaries . From the beginning of the 20th century , however , especially after the Tonkin Free School Movement , *quoc ngu* gradually became the writing system of Vietnamese culture when it came into contact with the West .

⁶ The influence of French language on Vietnamese literature has already been acknowledged in many memoirs and essays by Vietnamese intellectuals

during the early and middle part of this century (Vu Ngoc Phan , The Lu , Xuan Dieu , Luu Trong Lu , Hoai Thanh ...)

This phenomenon is closely linked to the renovation of lexicology and syntax which A.Martinet mentions in “ *Elements de linguistique generale* “, Paris 1967 , pp. 174-75).

⁷ John DeFrancis quotes Nguyen Van Vinh's words , “ The future of our country depends on the future of *quoc ngu* “ and Tran Tan Binh's words , “In the whole world there is no country that can be called civilized which does not have its own language and writing . Language is an instrument ; even more , it is like your hand , which serves for everything you do “ .

⁸ Field resaerch conducted in the begining of November 1995 in Tho Son hamlet , Bu Dang (Song Be province) shows that the distribution of Mnong population settlements have changed significantly . This is a Mnong village with 1500 househols . In 1975 there were only thirteen Vietnamese families . Today (1995) there are 500 Vietnamese families , who represrent 80% of the hamlet's population .

In Binh Long district of Song Be , besides Kinh , there are the following minorities : Mnong , Stieng , and Ma . Instead of dicrete settlements composed of members of one group , it is now far more common to find families from different groups living side-by-side .

Appendix 1

In the present time there are 54 ethnicities living in Vietnam . Among them the Kinh (Viet) , which is the main ethnicity , accounts for approximately 90% of the whole population . Some other ethnicities such as The Tay , Thai , Muong , Khmer , and Hoa have population ranging from 500,000 to one million . But some ethnic groups , like the Sila , Pupeo , O du , Romam ... have only 200 or 300 people . They represent almost all language families found from south of the Yang'tze to all over Southeast Asia .

The following lists these ethnicities by the size of their population , from largest to smallest :

1. Viet (Kinh)	2. Tay	3. Thai	4. Hoa (Han)
5. Khmer	6. Muong	7. Nung	8. Hmong (Meo)
9. Zao (Mien)	10. Gia Rai	11. Ngai	12. Edeh
13. Bahnar	14. Sedang	15. San Chay	16. Kohor
17. Cham	18. San Ziu	19. Hre	20. Mnong
21. Raglai	22. Stieng	23. Bru	24. Tho
25. Giay	26. Kotu	27. Gie - Trieng	28. Ma
29. Khmu	30. Chor	31. Ta Oi	32. Choro
33. Khang	34. Ksing Mul	35. Ha Nhi	36. Chu Ru
37. Lao	38. La Chi	39. La ha	40. Phu La
41. La Hu	42. Lu	43. Lolo	44. Chut
45. Mang	46. Pa Then	47. Co Lao	48. Coong
49. Bo Y	50. Sila	51. Pu Peo	52. Brau
53. O Du	54. R' mam		

LEGEND

I. AUSTRO-ASIATIC
VIET - MUONG

1. Viet (Kinh)
2. Muong
3. Tho
4. Chut

MON - KHMER

5. Khmer
6. Bahnar
7. Sedang
8. Kohor
9. Hre
10. Maong
11. Sueng
12. Bru
13. Kora
14. Gié Trieng
15. Ma
16. Khmu
17. Chor
18. Ta Oi
19. Choro
20. Khang
21. Kang Mui
22. Mang
23. Brau
24. O Du
25. R'man

TAY - THAI

26. Tay
27. Thai
28. Nung
29. San Chay
30. Giay
31. Lao
32. Lu
33. Bo Y

MEO - ZAO

34. Hmong (Meo)
35. Zao
36. Psthen

OTHERS

37. La Chu
38. La Ha
39. Co Lao
40. Pu Peo

II. MALAI-POLINÉSIA

41. Gia Rai
42. Edeh
43. Cham
44. Raglai
45. Chu Ru

III. SINO-TIBETAN

HAN

46. Hoa (Haa)
47. Ngai
48. San Ziu

BIRMA-TIBETAN

49. Ha Nhu
50. La Ha
51. Phu La
52. Lolo
53. Coong
54. Sila

LEGEND

I. AUSTRO-ASIATIC

VIET - MUONG

1. Viet (Kinh)
2. Muong
3. Tho
4. Chut

MON - KHMER

5. Khmer
6. Bahnar
7. Sedang
8. Kohor
9. Hre
10. Maong
11. Sueng
12. Bru
13. Koku
14. Gié Tneng
15. Ma
16. Khmu
17. Chor
18. Ta Oi
19. Choro
20. Khang
21. Kaeng Mui
22. Mang
23. Brau
24. O Du
25. R'maa

TAY - THAI

26. Tay
27. Thai
28. Nung
29. Sao Chay
30. Giay
31. Lao
32. Lu
33. Bo Y

MEO - ZAO

34. Hmong (Meo)
35. Zao
36. Pathen

OTHERS

37. La Chu
38. La Hu
39. Co Lao
40. Pa Peo

II. MON-KHMER

III. SINO-TIBETAN (MALAI-POLYNEXIA)

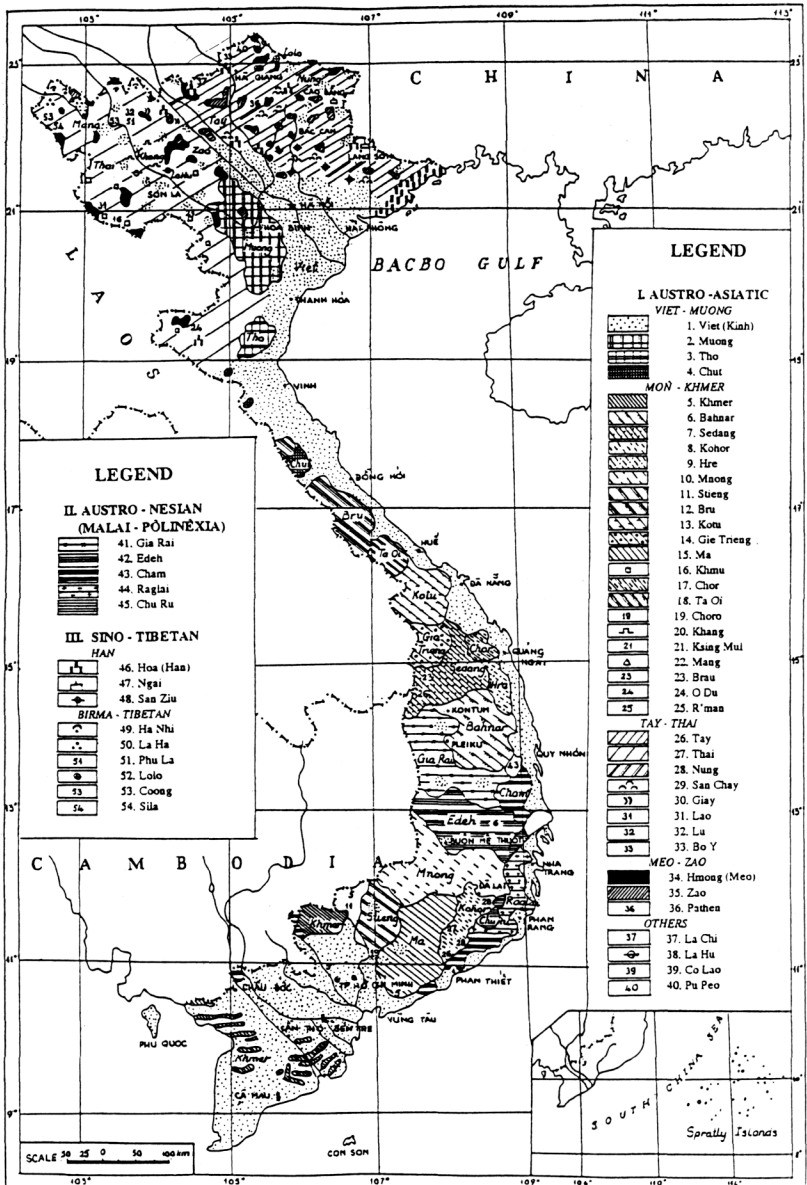
HAN

41. Gia Rai
42. Edheh
43. Cham
44. Raglai
45. Chu Ru

BIRMA - TIBETAN

46. Hoa (Han)
47. Ngai
48. San Ziu
49. Ha Nhi
50. La Ha
51. Phu La
52. Lolo
53. Coong
54. Sila

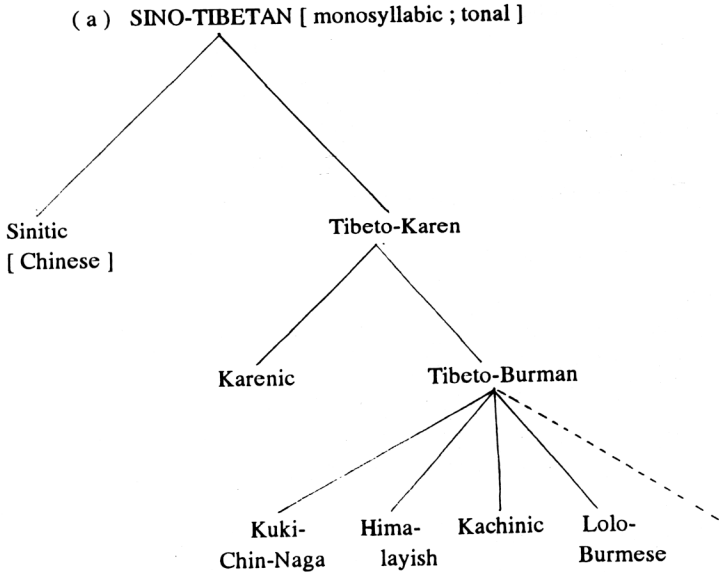
SCALE 0 25 50 100 km



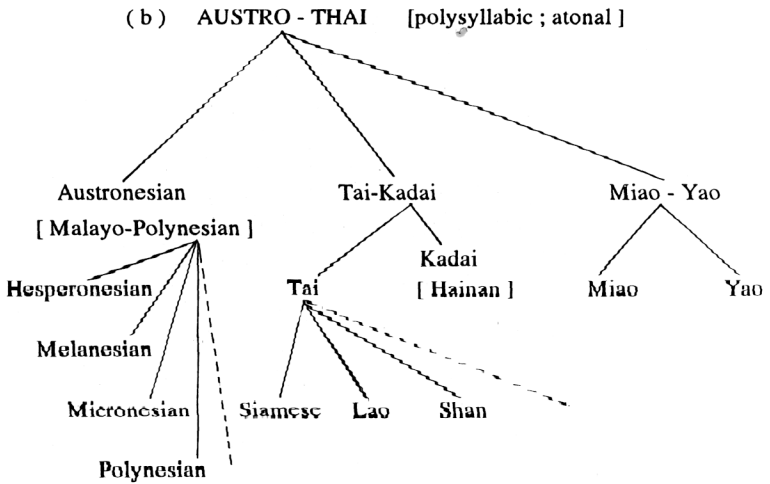
Appendix 3

2. Classification given by J . A . Matisoff
 (Source : Tonogenesis in Southeast Asia - 1993)

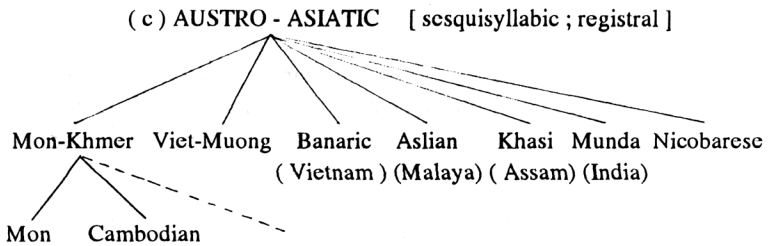
The Three Superstocks



Homeland : eastern Tibet / western Szechwan , Yunnan ;
 headwaters of the Yangtze , Brahmaputra ,
 Irrawaddy , and Mekong Rivers



Homeland : Very close geographically to
the Sino-Tibetan Urheimat



Homeland : mainland Southeast Asia

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