

Four Languages of the Vietnam-China Borderlands

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1. *The Vietnam connection.* The peopling of SE Asia has displayed several long-term and persistent trends.¹ One of the most obvious of these has been the migration of language groups from southern China into Mainland SE Asia. This fact is undisputed. Uncertainty remains, however, as to questions of linguistic affiliation at greater time depth and as to the sources and routes of these migrations, cf. Edmondson and Li 1996. In pursuit of answers to such questions large and small languages throughout SE Asia have been discussed in the literature, e.g., Benedict 1975, Hudak 1991, 1995. The majority and minority groups in Thailand, for instance, have been investigated linguistically in great depth for several decades and much new material about the ethnicities within southern China is exemplified in earlier research by Li Fang Kuei and subsequently by other scholars in China, notably works appearing in the journal 民族语文 *Minzu Yuwen* [Minority Languages and Literatures]. What still remain obscure, however, are details on the linguistic groups that lie across borders whose antecedents are still to be found in southern China. A notable chapter in this regard is what one might call the *Vietnam Connection*, an area to which the current paper aims to make a modest contribution.

There is great overlap between the minority groups of Yunnan, Guangxi, Guizhou, and Sichuan Provinces and the stocks of northern Vietnam. Some are clearly recent immigrants; others may be autochthonous peoples of the borderlands areas. So for example, in the Chinese translation of *Các dân tộc ít người ở Việt Nam (các tỉnh phía bắc)* 1978 it is noted that of the thirty-six languages of the northern-most part of Vietnam, fully 23 of them are also found in China often today living in locations at great distances from one another. One way that linguists

can contribute to an understanding of such borderlands groups is to explore migratory patterns using dialectological similarity between linguistic strains in Vietnam and their brethren in China. The present paper will treat of only four groups who have apparently come to Vietnam in relatively recent times: (1) the Kam; (2) the Sui; (3) the Pa-hng; and (4) the Giáy.²

2. *Kam.* Kam is a Kam-Sui language in the Kadai Branch whose speakers are primarily found in Guizhou Province, China. They are thought to have come to Vietnam in small numbers about 150 years ago and are found today in one village, *Đồng Mộc*, of *Tuyên Quang* Province. It has been generally unknown to non-Vietnamese scholars until recently that Kam is spoken outside of China and few if any purely linguistic publications exist on the Kam of Vietnam. However, brief ethnographic notes and a short word list are found in *Nguyễn Khắc Tụng* (1975:306-16) and there is a brief description of the cultural practices of the Kam in *Các dân tộc ít người ở Việt Nam (các tỉnh phía bắc)* (1975:287-90).

Local authorities helped us to find what we believe to be the best speaker of Kam in Vietnam, Mr. *Thạch Kim Đồng* or in Chinese *Shi Jindong* 石金侗.³ Mr. *Đồng* learned the language from his mother, the now 96 year old *Ngô Thị Thang* (with family name *Wu* 吴), who had also taught him much about Kam culture and history. He has reported to us that in his village there are about 35 people who would claim to be Kam. Among them, though, only the family of the matriarch *Ngô Thị Thang* can still speak the language and Mr. *Đồng* is said to speak the best, now that his mother has grown deaf in her old age.

2.1. *Tones of Viet Kam.* Kam is one of the languages of Asia that has carried the process of tone splitting to an extensive degree. Mr. *Đồng* speaks a kind of Kam that has not split its tones as fully as most kinds.

It is the usual assumption that the Kam-Sui languages, like the Tai languages in general, had five proto tones, now conventionally designed A, B, C, DL, and DS, cf. Li 1965, 1977. From the five tones then arose ten by a sound change known as *tone bipartition*, as it has been called in Haudricourt 1961. It was usually the case that forms with original voiced consonant initials developed low tones, whereas those with original voiceless consonant initials developed high tones, cf. Liang Min 1984, Wang 1984, and Edmondson and Yang 1988. We can represent these changes as in Figure 1:

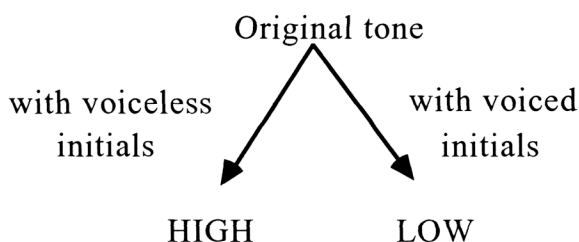


Figure 1 Tonal bipartition into HIGH and LOW reflexes

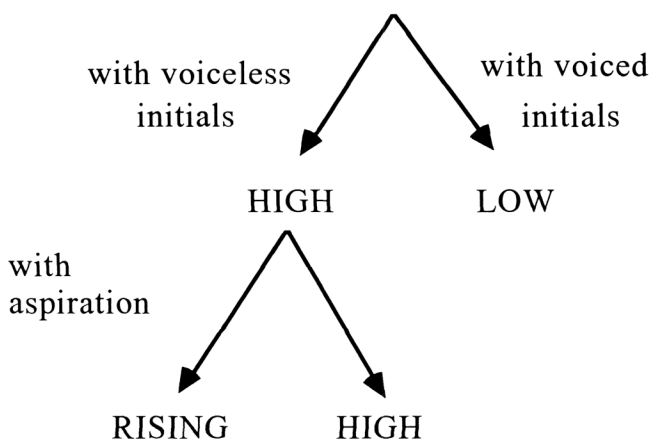


Figure 2: Tripartition into HIGH, LOW, RISING tones

Kam, however, belongs to a select group of area languages that have undergone *tripartition* through a second historically distinct tonal bipartition whenever the original consonant initials possessed aspiration (voiceless friction, as it is called by Gedney 1972). Rising tones were the result. The process is illustrated in Figure 2.

The above scenario eventually led to nine tones in open syllables and six in closed syllables.⁴ The tripartition of tones is attested in four of the six generally recognized varieties of Kam with bipartition in the other two, the latter being found in extreme southeast Guizhou at Liping Shuikou (designated area 5 in the unpublished but comprehensive dialectological report Dongyu Diaocha Baogao 1957) and in Rongshui County of Guangxi Province, area 6, on the very southern edge of Kam speaking territory.

We found that Viet Kam clearly reflects at least six tones, which would constitute bipartition. However to complicate the picture, some tendencies were also observed possibly reflecting additional developing tones in Mr. Đồng's speech. Specifically, those vocabulary items with aspirated stop or voiceless friction initials typically had a higher onset than vocabulary with plain voiceless stop initials. While this effect may be only phonetic and not a contrastive feature of the language, it may reflect "work in progress" of a familiar tonal sort in this linguistic area, i.e. emerging tripartition.

The organization of Viet Kam tones as developments from proto categories may be represented as in Figure 3:⁵

A	B	C	DL	DS
1 [44]	5 [53]	3 [24]	9 [34]	7 [55]
2 [212]	6 [33]	4 [52]	10 [31]	8 [32]

Figure 3: Viet Kam tone categories

We have constructed plots of representative forms with these tones from our tape recordings.⁶

Viet Kam Tone A

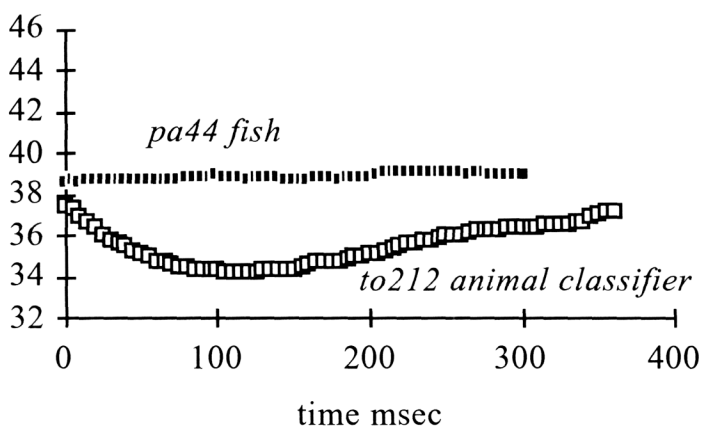


Figure 4: Viet Kam Tone A (> tone 1 and tone 2) illustrated in *pa*¹ 'fish' and *to*² 'animal classifier'

Viet Kam Tone B

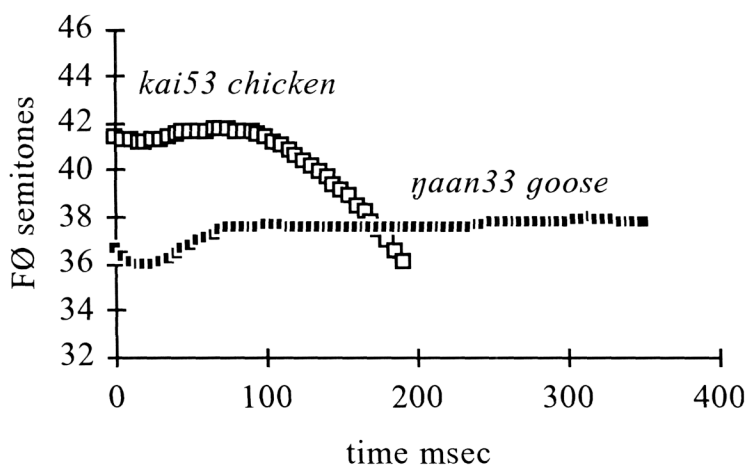


Figure 5: Viet Kam Tone B (> tone 5 and tone 6) illustrated in *kar*⁵ 'chicken' and *yaan*⁶ 'goose'

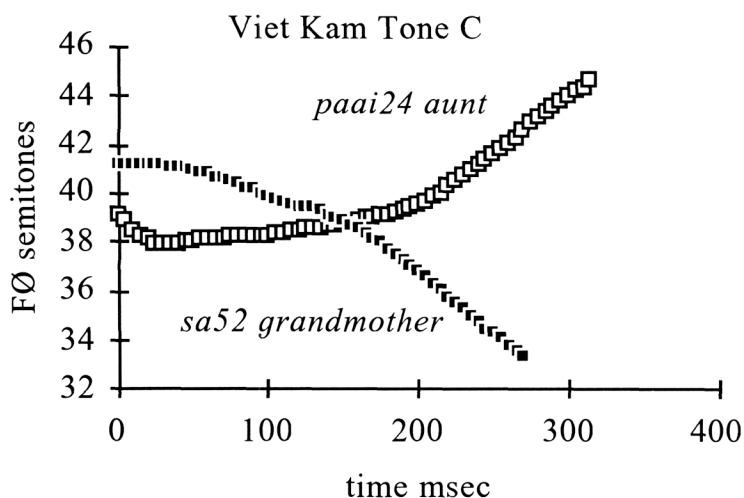


Figure 6: Viet Kam Tone C (> tone 3 and tone 4) illustrated in *paai*³ 'aunt' and *sa*⁴ 'grandmother'

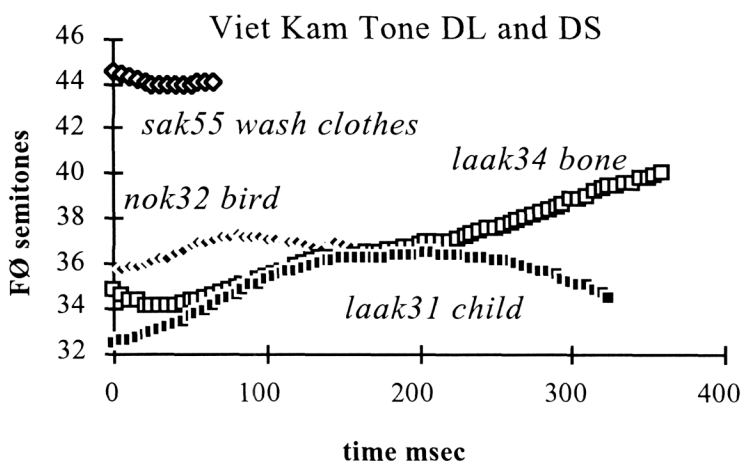


Figure 7: Viet Kam tone DS (> tone 7 and tone 8) illustrated in *sak*⁷ 'wash clothes' and *nok*⁸ 'bird' as well as tone DL (> tone 9 and tone 10) illustrated in *laak*⁹ 'bone' and *laak*¹⁰ 'child'.

Thus, tone 1 is a 44 mid-high level, about 39 semitones (st), while tone 2 is a 212 with a low “dishing” in the middle to about 34 semitones. Tone 5 in the above is a 53 falling tone (from 42-36 semitones) while tone 6 is a 33 mid-level tone (in the range of 36-37 semitones). Tone 3 is a 24 rising tone (from 39-46 semitones) and tone 4 is a 52 falling tone (from 41-33 semitones). In Figure 7 tone 7 possesses a very high and short 55 pitch trajectory at the 44 semitone level. In the case of Tone 8 (32) the initial voiced nasal causes the onset to begin at a depressed level of about 36 semitones whereas the vocalic part of the syllable begins at the peak of the trajectory and falls from 37 st to 35 st. The two long closed syllable tones, tone 9 (34) and tone 10 (31) also begin with voiced sonorants, namely *l*-, and thus the vocalic part of the syllable starts at a point about halfway through the course of the syllable (200ms). Tone 9 rises from 36 st to 41 st, while Tone 10 falls from a high of 36 st to 34 st.

The six tone system of open syllables in Viet Kam above compares favorably with the varieties of Kam found in China at Congjiang Guandong, Liping Pingtu, Liping Shuikou, and Congjiang Guandong, cf. Yang (1988:29-30). Viet Kam as well as its counterpart varieties in Kam of Area 5 above has only six tones in open syllables at the same time preserving a richer set of initial consonant than at virtually all other locations.

2.2. Initials in Kam.

Viet Kam initials:

<i>p</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>tʃ</i>	<i>k</i>	<i>q</i>	<i>ʔ</i>
<i>ph</i>	<i>th</i>	<i>tʃh</i>	<i>kh</i>		
	<i>s</i>	<i>ɕ</i>	<i>h</i>		
<i>v</i>					
		<i>j, l</i>			
<i>hw</i>		<i>hj, hl</i>			
<i>m</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>ɲ</i>	<i>ŋ</i>		
<i>hm</i>	<i>hn</i>	<i>hnɲ</i>			

<i>pj</i>	<i>pw</i>	<i>kw</i>
<i>phj</i>		<i>khw</i>
<i>mj</i>		
	<i>lj</i>	

Initials at Liping Shuikou

<i>p</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>t̥</i>	<i>k</i>	<i>q</i>	<i>ʔ</i>
<i>ph</i>	<i>th</i>	<i>t̥h</i>	<i>kh</i>	<i>qh</i>	
	<i>s</i>	<i>ɕ</i>	<i>h</i>		
			<i>ɣ</i>		
<i>w</i>		<i>j, l</i>			
<i>hw</i>		<i>hj, hl</i>			
<i>m</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>ɲ</i>	<i>ŋ</i>		
<i>hm</i>	<i>hn</i>	<i>hɲ</i>	<i>hŋ</i>		
<i>pj</i>	<i>pw</i>		<i>kw</i>		
<i>phj</i>			<i>khw</i>		
<i>mj</i>			<i>ɲw</i>		
<i>hmj</i>			<i>hɲw</i>		
	<i>tj</i>	<i>lj</i>			
		<i>lhj</i>			
	<i>thj</i>	<i>nj</i>			

It is worth noting that the transcriptions *hm hn hl* etc do not represent /*m̥ n̥ ɲ̥ l̥*/ but rather a cluster in which the *h* onset is timed to precede the sonorant. The sonorants may retain at least some of their original voicing. Thus, *hl* might, in finer transcription, be [*h̥l*].

2.3. Viet Kam vowels. In Kam all vowels in open syllables are inherently long. In Viet Kam like standard Rongjiang Kam of China there occur the vowels /*a aa e ə o i u*/, among which only the vowel *a* (and to some lesser extent the vowels *e* and *o*) distinguishes for length. The short *a* is usually realized as [ɐ] and the long *a* as [a]. In the case of *e* and *o*, short *e* is often [ə] or [ɛ] and short *o* is [ɔ]; long *e* is [e] and long *o* is [o]. There is, however, a particular distribution for what was historically vowel length in Kam. Only in syllables that end in /*p t k m n ŋ i u*/ do the vowels /*a o e*/ show

contrast. Thus, there is a contrast between *mɛi*⁴ ‘tree, wood’ and *nai*² ‘this’, the latter now reflecting a back vowel and the former a central vowel. In syllables with codas /p t k/ there are also differences of pitch trajectory, vocabulary with long vowel nuclei generally resemble vocabulary with pitch shapes like tone C and vocabulary with short vowel nuclei generally resemble vocabulary with pitch shapes like tone A. The vowel *o* is often [ɔ] and *e* often [ɛ] in closed syllables especially.

The vowel *i* is unusually far back in the mouth resembling the phonetic value of [ɨ]. This feature becomes especially evident with labial initials; thus there is a clear contrast in vowels between *miŋ*⁴ ‘fate, destiny’ and *mjiŋ*² ‘cotton’ or *pjin*¹ ‘rain’ vs. *pɛ*² ‘skin’. After palatal and palatalized initials /pj phj mj lj ɲ ɲh/ the /i/ is fronted to [i].

2.4. Vocabulary. Kam, as a speech form in Vietnam, is today restricted to only a very few individuals and is not being passed on to their children. It is, therefore, a matter of some urgency that we preserve copious examples of the language now for future generations. Clearly, we are not many years away from losing all live speech evidence on this historic Kam migration into the Vietnam-China borderlands. Even so, we were impressed that languages don’t disappear easily and that a speaker, such as Mr. Đồng had acquired the lexical richness and phonological complexity of his first language despite growing up in a community possessed of few conversational partners in Kam. In this regard, one expects to see some contraction as a result of the small speech population, especially in the area of vocabulary. Indeed, we found such to be the case. Certain vocabulary items found among the Kam of China, for example, are no longer present. For instance, Mr. Đồng uses only the phrase *Nyenc Gaeml* [ɲen²kəm¹] ‘Kam people’ and does not employ the equally common expression used in China, *Lagx Nyenc Gaeml* [laak¹⁰ɲen²kəm¹] ‘Kam people’. On the other hand, he has the archaic word *bui*² for ‘cotton’

as well as the more modern Han borrowing *mjiŋ*². We did not, however, find the older form *maan*³ for ‘village’ (cf. Sui *ʔbaan*³) only *ɕaai*⁴.

2.5. Locating the original settlement area of the Viet Kam. In order to locate the possible original home area of the Viet Kam, we tabulated a body of Viet Kam forms as to whether they were identical with parallel items in 22 Kam villages at different locations in China. We ranked these identities of form for all items we checked with the result that some villages overlapped very little and others a great deal. The sites numbered 1-22 in Figure 8 below reflect the degree of similarity. The sites 6 and 9-22 show little similarity to Viet Kam, whereas sites 4, 5, 7, and especially 8 show a very high degree of identical shared forms. We can, therefore, suggest that at this stage of our survey the *Urheimat* of the Viet Kam was perhaps Liping Shuikou of Guizhou Province, China or at least a speech community very much like it.

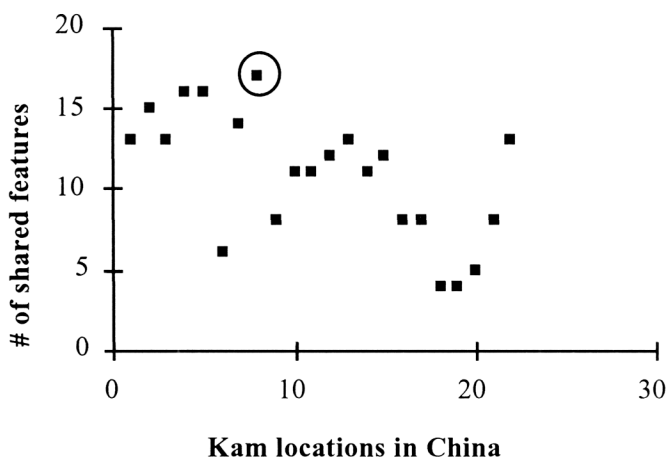


Figure 8: Shared forms in 22 Kam locations.

3. *The Thủy or Sui nationality of Vietnam.* The Thủy or Sui nationality of Vietnam is one of the country's smallest groups. According to the census data of 1982

they numbered only 55 individuals. This fragile population today totals about 100 as indicated by our informant. They are all located in Hồng Quang Village of Chiêm Hoa District, Tuyên Quang Province. This village is situated about 62 km to the NW of Chiêm Hoa City near the border with Hà Giang Province and the last thirty km of the road must be traversed on foot. As the old people of the village tell it, eight families immigrated to Vietnam about 100-200 year ago but exact times remain uncertain. Since their arrival the members of two clans—the Yang clan and the Fan clan—have assimilated to other ethnic identities. Consequently, there exist only six Sui families today, among which Mr. Lý Văn Míng reckoned the families: Meng, Li, and Pan. The Sui of Hồng Quang Village live with the Pa-hng and the Tày and multilingualism is universal.

In October 1995 we were fortunate enough to be able to work with Mr. Míng, 46, of this community, who provided us with a 600 word vocabulary, some grammatical structures, and information about the current state of the Sui language in Vietnam. He was accompanied by Mr. Phán Văn Đông, 45 years of age, a member of the Pa-hng nationality (concerning which more below).

3.1. Sui tones. The Viet Sui of Mr. Lý's speech has six tones in open syllables and four tones in closed syllables. These can be illustrated in our composite plots of the lexical items indicated in the figures below.

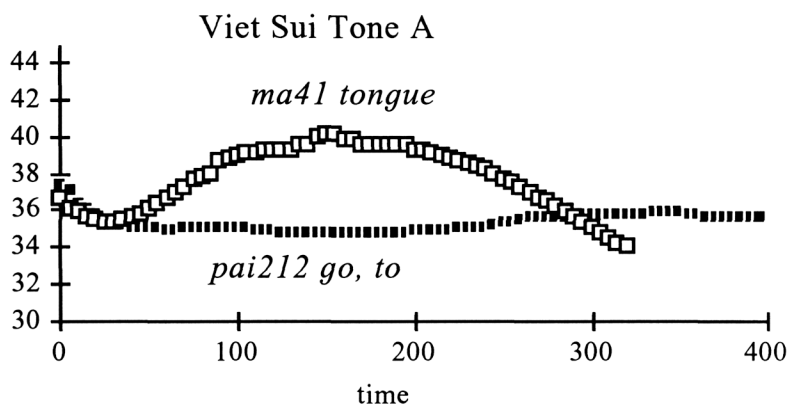


Figure 9: Viet Sui Tone A (> tone 1 and tone 2)
illustrated in *pai*² 'go, to' and *ma*⁴ 'tongue'

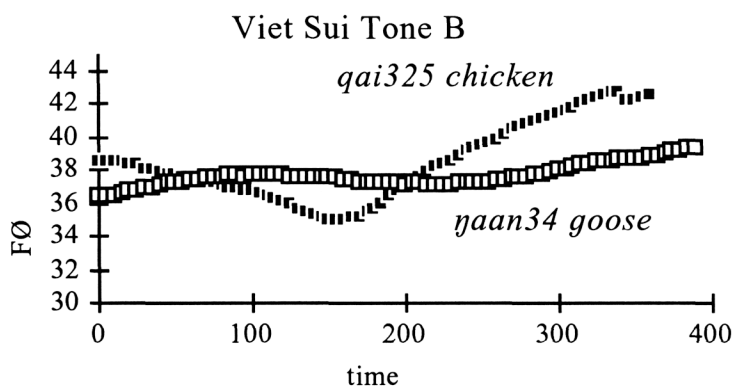


Figure 10: Viet Sui Tone B (> tone 5 and tone 6)
illustrated in *qai*³ 'chicken' and *ηaan*³ 'goose'

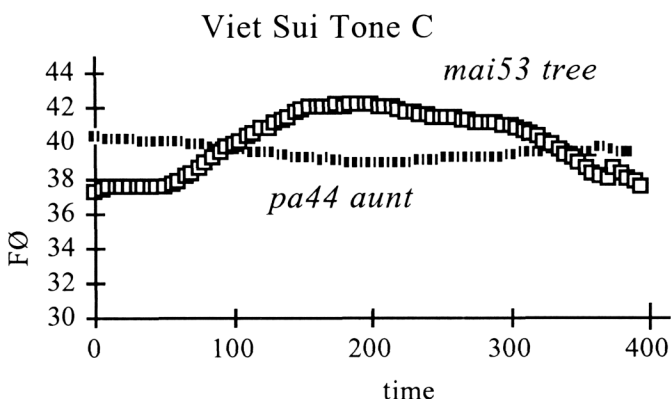


Figure 11: Viet Sui Tone C (> tone 3 and tone 4) illustrated in *pa*³ 'aunt' and *mai*⁴ 'tree'

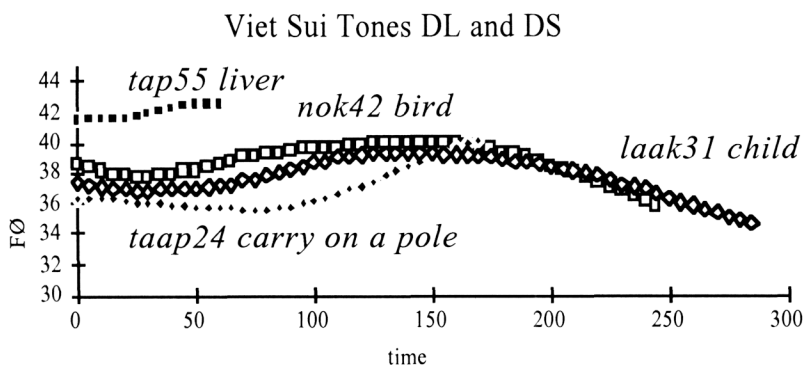


Figure 12: Viet Sui Tone DL & DS (> tone 7L, 7S, 8L, and 8S) illustrated in *tap*^{7S} 'liver', *nok*^{8S} 'bird', *taap*^{7L} 'carry on a pole', and *laak*^{8L} 'child'.

Tone1 has the value (2)12, with values typically 35-34-35 st. Tone 2 is a mid-high to low falling tone (41) with the value 40 st dropping to 34 st. In this example the initial m- provides the lowered locus at onset. The B (open syllable) tones, tone 5 and tone 6 have a profile as follows: Tone 5 is a (falling)-rising ((3)25) tone with value 38-35-43 st and Tone 6 (34) is a mid-high rising tone 37-40 st. The original C tones,

called Tone 3 and 4 have the respective values of 44 (or a mid-high level 39 st) and a high falling tone 53 (42-38 st).

The closed syllable tones have the values: 7S = 55 (at about the 42 st level); 8S = 42 (in the range of 39-35 st); 7L = 24 (35-40 st), and 8L = 31 (38-34 st), being somewhat longer and ending somewhat lower than 8S.

In China there are about 300,000 Sui speakers, with about 85% of the population residing equally in Sandu and Libo Counties and the remainder being scattered over Duyun, Dushan, Pingtang, Danzhai, Rongjiang, as well as Congjiang Counties of Guizhou Province and to the south at Yingdong Village in Rongshui County and at another village in Nandan County both in Guangxi Province. The Shuiyu Diaocha Baogao 1956 studied these groups and concluded that Sui language in China varies only within a relatively constricted range distinguishing three phonologically/lexically distinct areas centered on the villages of Sandong (central area), Pandong (northwest), and Yang'an (far west). Viet Sui falls neatly into this rather invariant pattern of the main groups of the central area. Representative Sui data points have tone values in open syllables which compare as follows:

Viet Sui: 1 = 212; 2 = 42; 3 = 44; 4 = 53;
5 = 325; and 6 = 34

Sandong: 1 = 13; 2 = 31; 3 = 33; 4 = 53;
5 = 35; and 6 = 55

Pandong: 1 = 13; 2 = 31; 3 = 33; 4 = 53;
5 = 35; and 6 = 55

Yang'an 1 = 13; 2 = 31; 3 = 33; 4 = 53;
5 = 35; and 6 = 24/55

3.2. Viet Sui Initials. There are about 70 initials in the Sui of China, including labial, alveolar, prepalatal, velar, and uvular points of articulation. At 三洞 Sandong, for instance, syllables can begin with the following initials. Those in boxes are found only in Han borrowings (cf.

Wang 1984).

<i>p</i>	<i>ph</i>	<i>mb</i>	<i>ʔb</i>	<i>m̥</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>ʔm</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>v</i>	<i>ʔw</i>
<i>t</i>	<i>th</i>	<i>nd</i>	<i>ʔd</i>	<i>n̥</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>ʔn</i>		<i>l</i>	
<i>ts</i>	<i>tsh</i>						<i>s</i>	<i>z</i>	
<i>t̥</i>	<i>t̥h</i>			<i>n̥</i>	<i>n̥</i>	<i>ʔn̥</i>	<i>ɕ</i>	<i>j</i>	<i>ʔj</i>
<i>k</i>	<i>kh</i>			<i>ŋ</i>	<i>ŋ</i>	<i>ʔŋ</i>		<i>ɣ</i>	<i>ʔɣ</i>
<i>q</i>	<i>qh</i>							<i>ɸ</i>	
<i>ʔ</i>							<i>h</i>		
<i>pj</i>	<i>phj</i>	<i>mbj</i>	<i>ʔbj</i>	<i>m̥j</i>	<i>mj</i>		<i>fj</i>	<i>vj</i>	
<i>tj</i>	<i>thj</i>	<i>ndj</i>	<i>ʔdj</i>	<i>n̥j</i>	<i>nj</i>	<i>ʔnj</i>		<i>lj</i>	
<i>tsj</i>	<i>tshj</i>						<i>sj</i>		
<i>tw</i>		<i>ndw</i>	<i>ʔdw</i>						
<i>tsw tshw</i>							<i>sw</i>	<i>lw</i>	
<i>kw</i>	<i>khw</i>								<i>ʔŋw</i>

3.3. Locating the original settlement area of the Viet Sui. Even superficial comparison of Viet Sui and Sui forms from China yields near perfect overlap, with the following differences on the part of Viet Sui as compared with Sandong Sui:

Viet Sui	Sandong	
<i>hj</i> or <i>fj</i>	<i>ɕ</i>	as in <i>laak⁸hja³</i> vs. <i>laak⁸ɕa³</i> 'bride'
		<i>hjoŋ¹tin¹</i> vs. <i>ɕoŋ¹tin¹</i> 'heel'
		<i>hjom¹</i> vs. <i>ɕum¹</i> 'heart'
		<i>fjan¹</i> vs. <i>ɕaan¹</i> 'garden'
<i>l</i>	<i>ɸ</i>	as in <i>li⁴</i> vs. <i>ɸe¹</i> 'saliva'
<i>NG</i>	<i>ɸ</i>	as in <i>NGaay¹</i> vs. <i>ɸaay¹</i> 'chin'
		cf. Maonan <i>ŋgaay¹</i>
<i>ŋg</i> or <i>ʔg</i>	<i>ʔɣ</i>	as in <i>ʔge¹</i> or <i>ŋge¹</i> vs. <i>ʔɣe¹</i> 'husband' but note <i>ʔya¹</i> 'paddy field' in both V and S.
<i>o</i> or <i>ɔ</i>	<i>ə</i>	as in <i>qɔm⁴ʔna³</i> vs. <i>kəm⁴ʔna³</i> 'thunder'
<i>u</i>	<i>o</i>	as in <i>mun¹</i> vs. <i>mon¹</i> 'fog'

		<i>puŋ⁴ vs. poŋ⁴ 'pond'</i>
		<i>mun⁶ vs. mon⁶ 'monkey'</i>
<i>i</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>as in ŋjin² vs. ŋjen² 'mouth'</i>
<i>e</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>after palatalized initials as in</i>
		<i>ʔbjek⁷ vs. ʔbjak⁷ 'girl'</i>
		<i>lam¹ljek⁸ vs. ljak⁸ 'banana'</i>

About 70 examples of vocabulary from these places were compared with the Viet Sui data for initials and rimes, as reported in the Shuiyu Diaocha Baogao 1956. The following chart gives the results of that comparison.

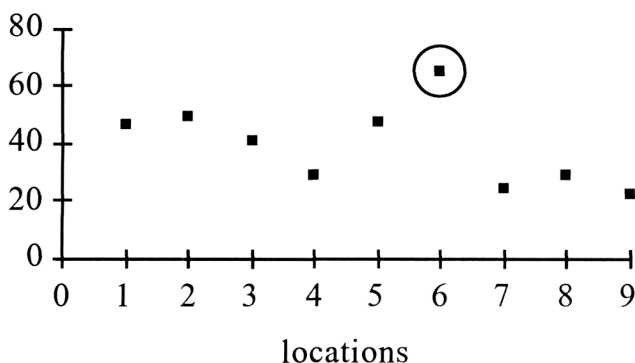


Figure 13: Shared sounds of Viet Sui and nine Guizhou locations.

On the basis of shared features we found that the greatest similarity existed between Viet Sui and the Sui spoken at Shuolong in Guizhou Province, Sandu County, that is, location 6 circled above, with points 2 (Zhonghe) and 5 (Hengfeng) being potential runners-up, all sites in western Sandu County of Guizhou Province. Viet Sui is thus more like any of the central area forms of China Sui (1-6, 8) than it is like Pandong (7) or Yang'an (9).

4. *Pa-hng*. Pa-hng, also called Pà Thén and described early on by Bonifacy 1905 and 1908, is a member of the Miao Branch of Miao-Yao, the Bunu subgroup, cf. Mao et al. 1982.⁷ In 1995 Wang Fushi and Mao Zongwu revised the classification of languages within

the Miao-Yao family and placed Pa-hng as a separate language under Miao-Yao. The kind of Pa-hng studied here is rather different from that in Guangxi Province, China reported on in Edmondson 1992. To our knowledge, there exist only rather limited published linguistic details on Viet Pa-hng presented by Bonifacy. But one should note in addition to Bonifacy the work of Lajonnière 1906 and *Nguyễn Minh Đức* 1972, and for the Pa-hng of China the recent studies by Li Yunbin 1995 and Chen 1996.

The *Pà Thèn* are found in *Hồng Quang* at *Chiêm Hóa District* of *Tuyên Quang Province* and also at *Bắc Quang District* at *Tân Lập* and *Tân Thịnh Townships* in *Hà Giang Province*. The first author conducted a two day elicitation session with Mr. *Phán Văn Đông* (45 years of age) and Mr. *Lý Văn Ming* (46 years of age) both from *Hồng Quang Village*. Mr. *Phán* is a Pa-hng and Mr. *Lý* is a Sui married to a Pa-hng. Each of them speaks several languages including Vietnamese, Pa-hng, Sui, Tày, and some Guan Hua (the kind of officialese Chinese spoken widely in southern China and on the Sino-Vietnam Border). Our Viet Pa-hng analysis is based on examples produced by Mr. *Phán*, although he was occasionally coached by Mr. *Lý*, who is himself also bilingually competent in Pa-hng. They were both agriculturalists and had spent their entire lives in their home village. In this village the Pa-hng are called the *Meò Hoa* or *Flowery Meo*. In October 1996 fieldwork on Pa-hng was carried out with Mr. *Tài Quang Vinh* (32 years of age) from *Bắc Quang, Tân Lập, Minh Thượng Village*. Both kinds of Pa-hng are very similar in phonology and lexicon. Here we mostly report on *Hồng Quang*, as we have had more time to process this data.

4.1. Viet Pa-hng Tones. The eight tones of *Hồng Quang* and *Bắc Quang* Pa-hng from our computer-assisted measurements showed very good correspondences to the Guangxi Laobao Bianlang Pa-hng data in Edmondson 1992 and to the data from southern Pa-hng in Li 1995. We present our findings organized according to their

historical tone sources (*A, *B, *C, *D) as follows:

	A	B	C	D
1	42	43?	55	53?
2	33	21	24	31

Figure 14: Viet Pa-hng tone values according to historical categories

	A	B	C	D
1	24	11	55	53
2	22	11	44	41

Figure 15: Guangxi Sanjiang Laobao tone values according to historical categories

As can be seen in these charts, Viet Pa-hng possesses eight tones, compared to seven in Guangxi Laobao, because the original B tone in Viet Pa-hng splits into 54 and 21 trajectories, whereas this tone in Guangxi Pa-hng did not split. Not indicated in these figures is that Viet Pa-hng also has breathy voice quality as a feature of many vocables in low tones, i.e. 2, 4, 6, and 8, whereas Pa-hng of Laobao does not have this feature.

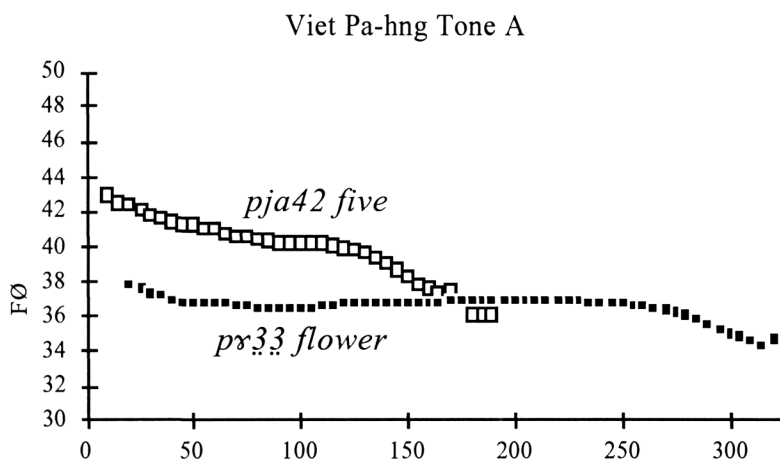


Figure 16: Viet Pa-hng tone A (> tone 1 and 2) illustrated in *pja*¹ 'five' and *pr*² 'flower'.

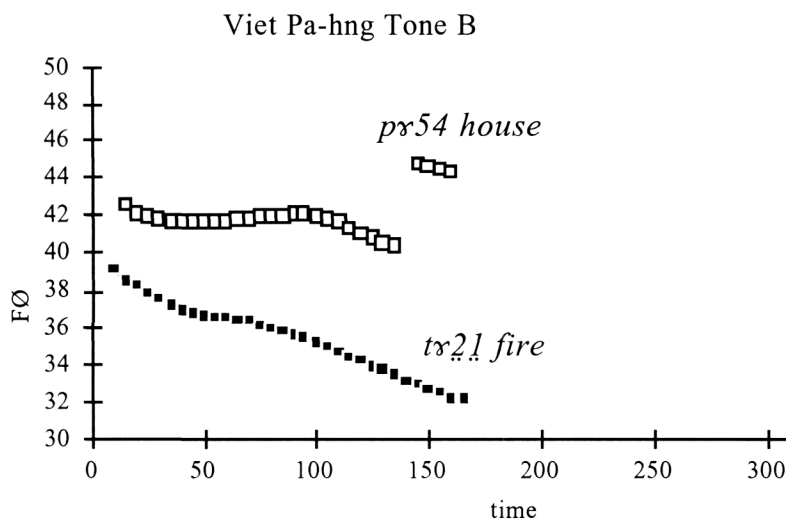


Figure 17: Viet Pa-hng tone B (> tone 3 and 4) illustrated in *pr*³ 'house' and *tx*⁴ 'fire'.

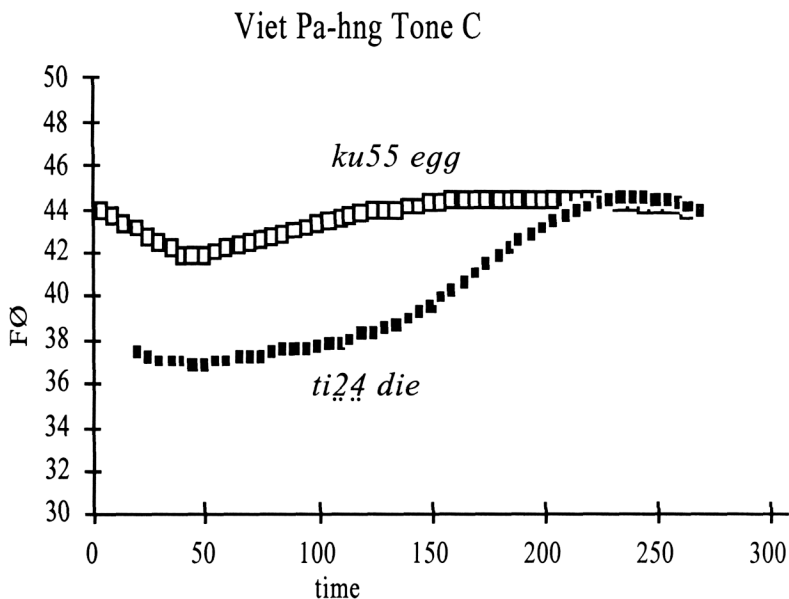


Figure 18: Viet Pa-hng tone C (> tone 5 and 6) illustrated in *ku*⁵ ‘egg’ and *ti*⁶ ‘die’.

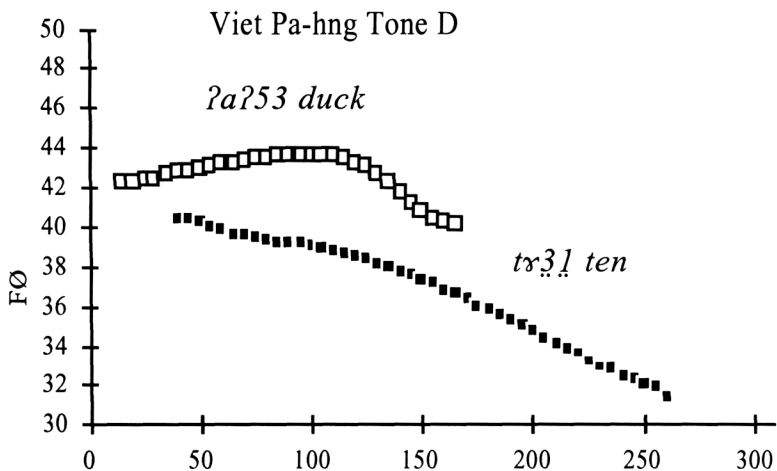


Figure 19: Viet Pa-hng tone D (> tone 7 and 8) illustrated in *ʔaʔ*⁷ ‘duck’ and *tɕʒ*⁸ ‘ten’.

In Viet Pa-hng a glottal stop or constriction occurs at the end of falling tones, i.e. 1, 3, and 7 often followed by a secondary release. This feature is visible in our tone plot, see especially the form for 'house' in tone B with its glottally terminated pitch pattern. Tone 5 and tone 7 have similar pitch contours, but tone 7 has a glottal stop at the end and in fact falls slightly. Tone 3 and 7 are shorter than non-glottalized counterparts, though vowel length is not a feature of this language.

4.2. Viet Pa-hng initial consonants are:

p	ph	mb	m	mh	f	w
pj	phj		mj	mhj		
t	th	nd	n	nh	l	ɬh
tɕ						ɕ
tj					lj	lhj
tɕ	tɕh			h		ɕ j
k	kh		ŋ	ŋh		x
kw	khw					
ʔ						

The corresponding Pa-hng forms from Guangxi Province in China are:

p	ph	m	mh			f	w
pj	phj	mj	mhj				
t	th	ɲ	ɲh	l	lh	ɬ	ɬh
tɕ						ɕ	
tj				lj	lhj		ɬhj
tɕ	tɕh	ɲ	ɲh			ɕ	j
k	kh	ŋ	ŋh			x	
kw	khw						
q	qh						

qw qhw

Viet Pa-hng, just as in many Pa-hng locations in China, preserves no final consonants. Even nasal consonants have been reduced to nasalization on the preceding vowel. Further worth noting, however, is that Pa-hng makes extensive use of spread glottis settings. As is especially evident in Viet Pa-hng but also to some lesser degree in the forms we studied in China, heavy airflow can be found throughout a syllable from the initial to syllable offset, often perceived as a kind of ‘final h’ effect.

4.3. Pa-hng vowels/syllabics. There are basically three rime types in Viet Pa-hng: (1) nine plain vowels; (2) eight nasalized vowels; and (3) four syllabic nasal syllable peaks. There are no diphthongs or consonant codas in Viet Pa-hng. The following rimes result:

i	e	ɛ	a	ɑ	ɔ	o	u	ʏ
ĩ	ẽ	ɛ̃	ã	ã̃	õ	õ̃	ũ	
m̥	n̥	ɲ̥	ŋ̥					

The vowel ʏ occurs very frequently in Viet Pa-hng and also in several locations in Guangxi Province as a product of the collapse of several rime types, e.g. *ai* and *au*.

4.4. Locating the original settlement area of the Viet Pa-hng. Li Juewei 1985 reports on the *pa*³³*h*³⁵ Pa-hng of Shunhua Township in Libo County Guizhou Province and Zhang Jimin, Yu Zhishen, Li Juewei 1985 give details about Gundong Pa Hǒng [Pa-hng] of Liping County, Guizhou Province. Chen 1996 also describes Gundong Pa-hng in his study. Li 1995 compares the Pa-hng of Hunan, Guizhou, and Guangxi Provinces distinguishing northern vs. southern subtypes. Northern locations have the following features: no prenasalized initial stops, no breathy syllable components, final nasal -ŋ, and diphthongs *ei*, *au*, *ai*, *uai*, *ua eu*, whereas the southern types possess the tendencies to have uvular consonants (in Guangxi Sanjiang County Wenjie Township), prenasalized stops, breathy syllable components, nasalized vowels, and no diphthongs. In Edmondson 1992 we

reported on the Pa-hng of Guangxi Province at Sanjiang and Rongshui County. Viet Pa-hng clearly falls into Li's southern grouping, but at a site not reported by Li. Our own fieldwork in Sanjiang County identifies the probable original settlement of the Viet Pa-hng as Sanjiang Gaoji Township, a place that possesses no uvulars, prenasal stops, no final nasals or diphthongs, and most significantly a falling A1 tone.

5. *Giáy*. Finally, we describe the *Giáy*, one of Vietnam's 54 official nationalities. According to the 1989 census there are about 40,000 *Giáy* living in Vietnam. Most of them are found in territory very close to the Vietnam-China border. Information in *Các dân tộc ít người ở Việt Nam (các tỉnh phía bắc)* (1978:234) states that the *Giáy* live in the districts of Bát Xát, Mường Khương and Bảo Yên of Lào Cai Province. We also saw them in the market at Sa Pa in the western part of Lào Cai near the Lai Châu border; they were from the village of Tả Van. The *Giáy* of Mường Khương who call themselves Tudi [thuzi] no longer speak their own language, only Guan Hua (the Chinese koiné of the borderlands.) The *Giáy* also live in the districts of Yên Minh and Đồng Văn of Hà Giang Province, in the districts of Mường Te and Phong Thổ of Lai Châu Province, and in the districts of Bảo Lạc of Cao Bằng Province. The *Giáy* are all relatively new immigrants from China. According to some reports there are also *Giáy* just across the border in Yunnan Province in China. The *Giáy* are not originally from the nearby areas in China, but instead they are believed to be scions from the 2.5 million strong Bouyei 布依, who just like the Kam, Sui, and Pa-hng are found in distant Guizhou Province. From the data found in *Giáy* household registries a number of Bouyei left Guizhou and traveled overland to southern Yunnan and northern Vietnam about 160 years ago, cf. Edmondson and Li 1996.

Linguistic information about the *Giáy* is easier to

obtain than many other groups principally because of the work of Wm. J. Gedney. In 1991 Hudak published *William J. Gedney's the Yay language*, a 500 page glossary from a Mr. Nung To Phang from Mường Hum to the west of Lào Cai City in Bát Xát district. The speech reported in the present study is very similar to that investigated by Gedney. At least some of the cardinal features of Mr. Nung's Giáy were in evidence in the Lào Cai Giáy speaker we interviewed, e.g., identity of initials in *hun*² 'person' and *hun*¹ 'rain'.

Our informant was a young student at the University of Culture in Hanoi, Vietnam studying for a position in the publishing industry. He was a Giáy (Bouyei) speaker from Lào Cai Province who came from a location 70 km east of Lào Cai City and lived within one km of the border with China. He reported that his family had many relatives still living in China near Hekou in Yunnan Province.

5.1. Viet Giáy tones. The three proto-tones have today reversed their values so that an original high tone is now low and vice versa, a phenomenon called *tonal flip flop*. The mechanism for such change is disputed. The A tones in Giáy have the values 33 and 35. The B tones have the values 21 and 42. The C tones have the values 23 and 34. In the dead tone syllables, DL and DS (closed syllable with long vowel, DL, and closed syllable with short vowel, DS) there are three distinct pitch tracks. The values of original low tones in DL and DS have merged to 23, whereas the high DL is 41 and the high DS is 33.

The tone splitting pattern is just as Gedney found it in his study, in which the old preglottalized initial series three forms in C tone go with the low set and not with the high as tone 34 below:⁸

	A	B	C	DL	DS
1	33	21	23	41	33
2					
3				34	
4	35	42			23

Viet Giáy Tone A

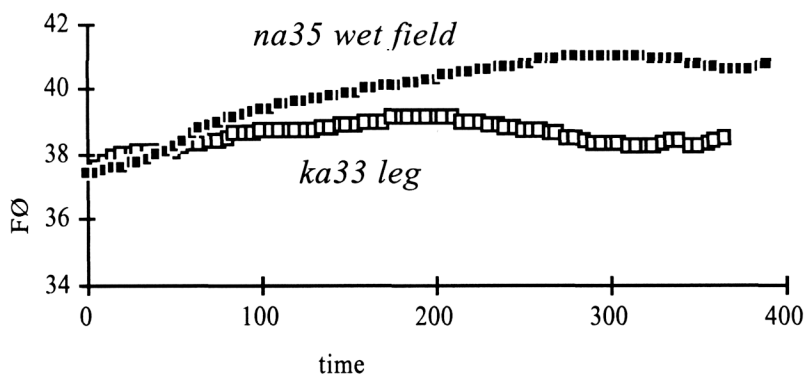


Figure 20: Viet Giáy tone A (> tone 1 and 2) illustrated in *ka*³ 'leg' and *na*³ 'wet field'.

Viet Giay Tone B

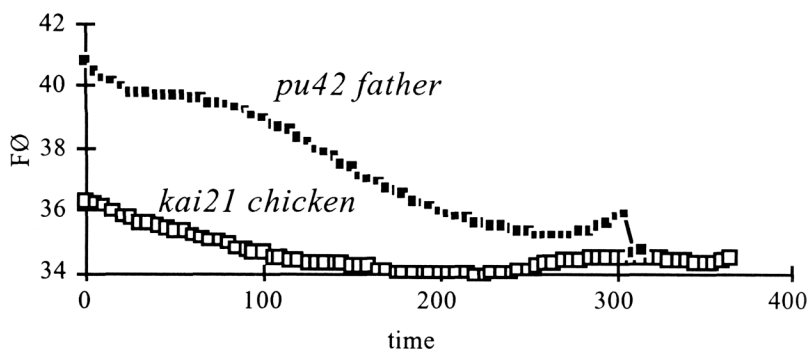


Figure 21: Viet Giáy tone B (> tone 5 and 6) illustrated in *kai*²¹ ‘chicken’ and *pu*⁴² ‘father’.

Viet Giay Tone C

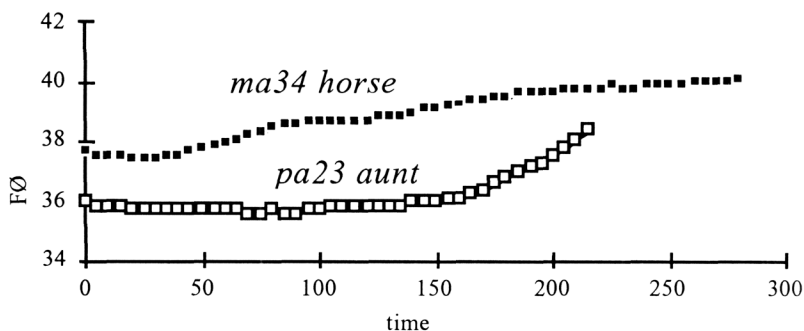


Figure 22: Viet Giáy tone C (> tone 3 and 4) illustrated in *pa*²³ ‘aunt’ and *ma*³⁴ ‘horse’.

Viet Giay Tone DL and DS

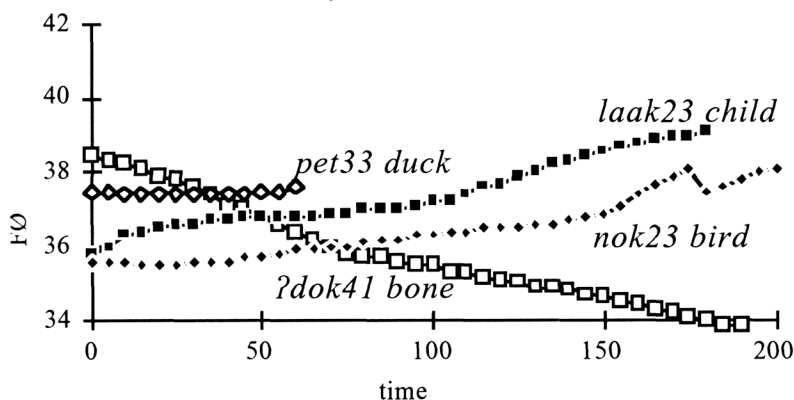


Figure 23: Viet Giáy tone D (> tone 7S, tone 7L, tone 8S, and tone 8L) illustrated in *pet*^{7S} ‘duck’ and *?dok*^{7L} ‘bone’, *nok*^{8S} ‘bird’, and *laak*^{8L} ‘child’.

5.3. Viet Giáy initials. Viet Giáy initials are virtually identical to those in Hudak with a few differences worthy of mention. Notably, Gedney’s /r-/ corresponds to /ð-/ in Giáy, e.g. *ri*⁶ ~ *ði*⁶ ‘dry field’; *rin*¹ ~ *ðin*¹ ‘rock’. The interdental fricative /ð/ appears to come from proto-initials involving r or consonant + r, e.g. **thraap*^{DL} ‘carry on the ends of a pole’ becomes *ðaap*⁹. The voiceless interdental fricative /θ/ comes from **s* or **z*. The alveolar sibilant /s/ is the product of original **tʃ* or **dʒ*. As for /f v/, Viet Giáy has undergone a reversal from the state of the proto language; thus original **f* has become Viet Giáy /v/ and original **v* has become Viet Giáy /f/. As has been reported by Donna Snyder 1995, these features are typical of Bouyei in other places. The glottal fricative /h/ in Viet Giáy comes from velar continuants **h*, **x*, **ɣ*. Note as well that in Gedney’s speaker the initial j- is pronounced as [z]. Gedney suggests (xxiii) that this phenomenon is a probable result of a Vietnamese education with a “Vietnamese-like teaching pronunciation which disappears in normal speech.” The [z] pronunciation of our speaker didn’t disappear in normal speech and z is

conspicuous in some locations in the southwestern area of Bouyei speech in Guizhou Province. Thus, we are disinclined toward dismissing /z-/ as a product of language-contact and suspect instead that /z-/ is a mutated historical inheritance.

5.5. Locating the original settlement area of the Viet Giáy. According to their own accounts the Giáy people of Vietnam came from Guizhou Province about 150 years ago, place unknown. In probing this question we compared our data on Giáy with information on the more than 40 locations in the *Buyi Diaocha Baogao* 1958. In this work there is an assemblage of shibboleth tests of phonology and lexicon that carve out subgroups among the Bouyei of Guizhou. We selected about 25 of these tests and compared them to the Viet Giáy data. We found that the Chinese locations designed 1-7 showed the greatest number of shared elements with Viet Giáy.

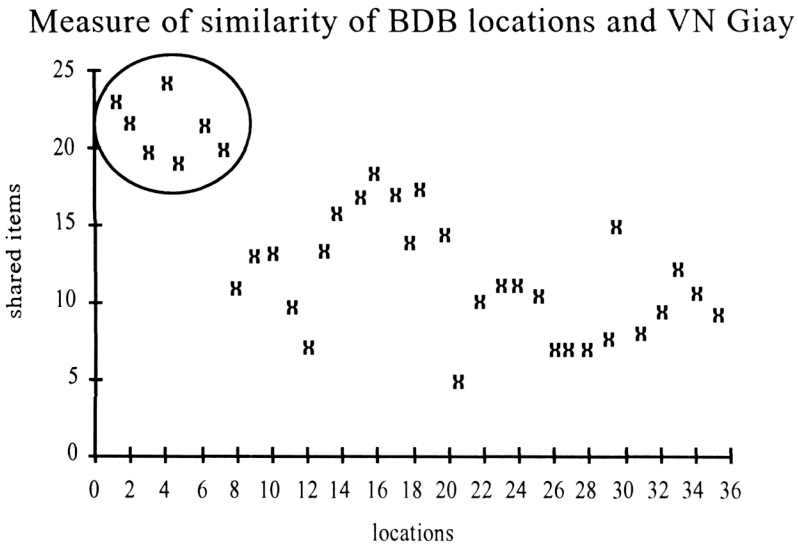


Figure 24: Comparison of the shared sounds and words of Giáy and 36 Guizhou locations in the *Buyi Diaocha Baogao*.

The sites circled in Figure 24 above are: Xingyi Bajie (1), Anlong Bakan (2), Anlong Leju (3), Ceheng Naiyan (4), Zhengfeng Lurong (5), Wangmo Zhexiang (6), and Luodian Poqiu (7). These data suggest then that the Giáy in Vietnam originally came from the SW part of Guizhou, notably these sites. Only further research can determine which location looks most promising. There are other Bouyei related sites in Yunnan that also bear investigation. And of course, the other closely related speech communities in Vietnam called *Bố Y*, *Quy Châu*, and *Nhang* may very well reflect separate original migrations from separate sites into Vietnam from China.

Notes

¹The authors wish to thank the staff of the Linguistics Institute of the National Centre for Human and Social Sciences of Vietnam, specifically, Prof. Dr. Lý Toàn Thắng, Prof. Dr. Nguyễn Văn Lợi, and especially Prof. Dr. Hoàng Văn Hành and Prof. Dr. Hoàng Văn Ma. This research was supported by a grant RT-21754-95 to the authors from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Science Foundation, entitled “Languages of the Vietnam-China Borderlands.” The data we present here are from an expedition undertaken with Professors Hoàng Văn Hành and Hoàng Văn Ma in Oct-Nov 95 to Tuyên Quang Province of Vietnam, with Nguyễn Văn Lợi and Hoàng Văn Ma in October 1996 to Hà Giang Province, and a brief visit to Guangxi Province in China, September 1996.

²Hereinafter referred to as Viet Kam to differentiate the variety of Kam spoken in Vietnam as distinct from related varieties in China. Likewise, we will use Viet Sui, Viet Pa-hng, and Viet Giáy in the same fashion.

³We have given the names of the people in question in Chinese inasmuch as the prominent family names among the Kam in Guizhou, Hunan, and Guangxi are Yang, Wu, and Shi.

⁴We note that the DL tones mirror the pitch trajectories of the C tones and DS tones mirror the trajectory of the A tones.

⁵We follow here the Gedney tradition for representing proto tone categories A, B, C, DL(ong), and DS(hort) even though it

results in some tone number reorderings, nor for Viet Kam are the four term vertical categories well suited, rather a simple two term system (reflecting original voiced vs. original voiceless initials) suffices.

⁶To make these plots we used both direct recording into the computer and tape recordings, which were later played back into the computer. The signal in each case was digitized by means of the CECIL speech analysis system. It consists of a hardware A-D/D-A box and software for a small DOS computer. At a later time three or more pitch plots were composited by means of some software we have developed, which computes the mean values from several repetitions of a syllable.

⁷The Pa-hng are also widely known as the Red Yao and locally as the Eight-Name Yao 八姓瑶.

⁸The 1, 2, 3, and 4 refer to consonant classes in the proto-language, as set out in Gedney 1972. The class 1 included aspirated stops, voiceless sonorants, and fricative; the class 2 referred to plain stops; class 3 to "preglottalized" voiced stops; and the class 4 to original voiced stops.

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