

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 first 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 *m* 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 /mak^hh^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 *m*. 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 *m* 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 **g*l **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
ṃ				
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'	khin ²
k	'chicken'	kay ³	'pair'	ku: ⁴	'middle'	ka:ŋ ¹		
ʔ	'to bathe'	ʔa:p ³						
f	'sky'	fa: ⁶						
s	'left'	sa:y ⁶						
h	'fragrant'	hɔ:m ¹	'fence'	ho: ²				
ṃ	'mango'	ṃ mo:ŋ ⁴						
m	'pig'	mu: ¹						
n	'sit'	naŋ ⁴						
ñ	'mosquito'	ñuŋ ²	'big'	ñay ³	'to want'	ñə: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						

Consonant Finals: 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' cha², 'early morning' cha:w⁶, and 'to tear' chi:k³. Another BS informant had c for all forms except 'to tear' and 'to like' for which he had s, si:k³ and sɔ:p⁴ 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:y² 'buffalo', kwan² 'smoke'.

The vowel inventory:

i	ĩ	u
e	ə	o
ɛ	a	ɔ

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

'ox' ɲo:²

'beard' no:t³

'bored' bæ:³

'earthworm' də:n²

'wife' me:²

'to stretch' MJ ñe:t³

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

Examples:

Smooth Syllables:

1. rising 'ear' hu:¹ 'eye' ta:¹
2. mid level 'leaf' bay² 'to sleep' nɔ:n²
3. low level 'egg' khay³ 'to awake' tɪ:n³ 'young man' ba:w³
4. mid rising 'pair' ku:⁴
5. low falling 'pot' mɔ:⁵ 'cheek' kɛ:m⁵ 'to carry' ?u:m⁵
6. high falling 'sky' fa:⁶

Checked Syllables:

Short Vowel

7. high level 'wrong' phit⁷ 'frog' kop⁷ 'raw' dip⁷
- (like 5) low falling 'deep' lɪk⁵

Long Vowel

- (like 3) low level 'fog' mɔ:k³ 'lung' pɔ:t³ 'sunshine' dɛ:t³
- (like 4) mid rising 'knife' mi:t⁴

Lampoon Yoong shares vocabulary items with Northern dialects:

- | | |
|----------------|---------------------|
| 'below' | lum ⁶ |
| 'torn' | put ⁷ |
| 'twenty' | sa:w ² |
| 'narrow' | ki:t ³ |
| 'evening meal' | ɱ lɛ:ŋ ² |

Lampoon Yoong shares consonant correspondences with Northern dialects:

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| 'millet' | pa:ŋ ⁶ BS-sa:ŋ ⁶ |
| 'tomorrow' | ɱ phuk ⁷ |
| 'sweat' | hə: ³ |
| 'to grope for' | sam ² |
| 'to snore' | khon ¹ |

Lampoon Yoong shares vowel correspondences with Northern dialects:

'give'	hi: ⁶
'all'	tiŋ ⁶
'straw'	fə:ŋ ²
'to be'	pin ¹
'to see'	han ¹

Length correspondences:

'rice'	khaw ⁵
'water'	nam ⁶
'younger sibling'	nɔŋ ⁶

o-u correspondences:

'shade'	hum ⁶
'boil'	tum ⁵
'bitter'	khum ¹

Two distinctive features of Yoong I have found to date as compared to surrounding Northern dialects are the "prohibition" form and the use of syllabic *m*. Yoong uses pay² instead of the Northern form bɔ di: corresponding to Siamese yà: . Examples are as follows:

'Don't hit him'	pay ² ti: ¹ man ² or pay ² ye? ⁷ man ²
'Don't talk to Daeng'	pay ² ʔu: ⁵ ka dɛ:ŋ ²
'Don't come'	pay ² ma: ² nə? ⁷
'Don't go'	pay ² pay ¹ nə? ⁷

Here again there is a problem of dialect mixture. For although my informants say that the Yoong form is pay² for Siamese yà: and that bɔ di: is the Northern form, Northern Thai speakers from Nan and Chiang Rai use the pay form as well as the bɔ di: form.

The most striking feature of this dialect is the occurrence of syllabic *m* giving the dialect what has been referred to as a mumbling effect. The occurrence of syllabic *m* in Thai has been previously noted in Northern Thai and Shan. Hope and Purnell (1962) note syllabic *m* as used as a fruit marker in Northern Thai. Cushing (1914) and Egerod (1957) mark the presence of syllabic *m* as a negative marker in Shan. More recently syllabic *m* has been studied by Hartmann in his analysis of syllabic *m* in Tai Lue (1975). There are four lexical items rendered as syllabic *m* in this dialect:

1. Negation

'Daeng has never been there.'	dɛ:ŋ ² ɱ kə:y ² pay ¹
'Daeng isn't my brother.'	dɛ:ŋ ² ɱ cay ⁴ nɔŋ ⁶ phom ¹
'I didn't talk with Daeng.'	phom ¹ ɱ ʔu: ⁵ kan ¹ ka dɛ:ŋ ²
'I didn't go.'	phom ¹ ɱ pay ¹
'I didn't hit him.'	phom ² ɱ ti: ¹ man ²

2. Fruit Marker

'mango'	ɱ mo:ŋ ⁴
'cucumber'	ɱ tɛ:ŋ ¹
'lime'	ɱ na:w ²
'coconut'	ɱ pa:w ⁶

3. Vocative

'Father'	ɱ pɔ: ⁴
'Mother'	ɱ mɛ: ⁴
'Elder Sibling'	ɱ pi: ⁴
'Girl'	ɱ na:ŋ ²
'Boy'	ɱ miŋ ²

4. Temporal

'yesterday'	ɱ wa: ²
'day before yesterday'	ɱ si:n ²
'evening time'	ɱ lɛ:ŋ ⁴
'tomorrow'	ɱ phuk ⁷

Hartmann (1975) proposes that syllabic ɱ is the result of a simplification process. That is, the negative marker is seen as a simplification of bɔ: or ba:, the fruit marker as derived from mɔ:k, the temporal marker derived from mɛ:, and the vocative marker as derived from ʔi: with a suffixed labial resulting from progressive assimilation to the labial initial as in phɔ: mɛ: phɛ: and generalized to other forms. If syllabic ɱ is a result of a simplification process it must also be noted that the unreduced forms are reappearing in the speech of younger people, the appearance of the full forms most likely being the result of bidialectalism.

NOTES

- ¹ The terms Northern Thai and Northern dialects are used in this paper to refer to dialects located geographically in the northern part of Thailand.
- ² Tones are charted in reference to their Proto-Tai source according to the system used by Gedney. Data collection is based on Gedney's short and long word list.

REFERENCES

- Cushing, J. N. 1914. *A Shan and English Dictionary*. Rangoon: American Baptist Mission Press.
- Egerod, Søren. 1957. "Essentials of Shan phonology and script." *Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology*. Academia Sinica: 29. 121-9.
- Gedney, William J. 1972. "A checklist for determining tones in Tai dialects." *Studies in Linguistics in Honor of George L. Trager*. ed. by M. Estellie Smith. 423-37.
- Hartmann, John S. 1975. "Syllabic m in Tai-Lue and neighboring Tai dialects." *A Tai Festschrift for William J. Gedney*, ed. by Thomas W. Gething. Southeast Asian Studies: Working Paper 8, 112-27.
- Hope, E. R. and H. C. Purnell. 1962. *A Colorful Colloquial: Spoken Northern Thai*. Chiangmai.