# MORE ON SEDANG ETHNODIALECTS

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## 0. INTRODUCTION

Five Sedang ethnodialects were discovered in 1966 and subsequently analyzed and reported by this author.[1] More recent field work has uncovered many more such Sedang ethnodialects and has revealed the misidentification of one of the ethnodialects previously reported. The purpose of this paper is to analyze and identify the Sedang ethnodialects discovered to date.

The ethnodialect terminology used by the Sedang consists of the word *roteang*[2] 'Sedang, montagnard' modified in the basic Central Sedang form, by the word *kolai* 'what' or *ti lai* 'how, why'. As these latter two words are variously pronounced in the different Sedang villages and areas as well as in neighboring language areas, so the Sedang mimic the peculiar pronunciation and thus isolate one or more phonological idiosyncrasies of each area. Seventeen distinctions have been found to date as listed below.

 1. *roteang koleq*
 2. *roteang kolêi*
 3. *roteang kikle*
 4. *roteang koklai*
 5. *roteang kokli yau*
 6. *roteang kokli*
 7. *roteang kia kiklêi*
 8. *roteang kiaq kli*
 9. *roteang ti lai*
10. *roteang ti lại*
11. *roteang ti loi*
12. *roteang tea lêi*
13. *roteang chu lị* (sometimes *li*)
14. *roteang chu lei*
15. *roteang chu laiq*
16. *roteang nam lai*
17. *roteang koqnân*

In the analysis below the various phonological features will be identified by the author using linguistic data gathered before the ethnodialect data was available. These dialect areas include compasspoint divisions of Central Sedang (CenSdg) and Greater Sedang (GrSdg), Kon Hring Sedang, DakSut Sedang, and neighboring languages. See Map 1.

The modifier which varies for each ethnodialect consists of two parts: the principal diagnostic word and the supplementary diagnostic word. See the accompanyin chart of Sedang ethnodialect terminology parts and phonological units.

# 1. THE PRINCIPAL DIAGNOSTIC WORD

The principal dignostic word 'what' and 'why, how' may consist of two syllables, a preliminary syllable and a main syllable. The synonymous term for dialect #17 is discussed in Section 1.3 below.

## 1.1. THE PRELIMINARY SYLLABLE

(a) The unstressed presyllable *kə-* occurs in the terms for dialects numbered 1, 2, 4, to 6 above. Because of the reduplicative consonant pattern sometimes the vowel is *i*; thus *ki* occurs in dialects 3 and 7. Though the presyllable helps to distinguish *kəlai* 'what', for example, from *lai* 'which' or *ti lai* 'how, why' of dialects 9-16, it is low in the diagnostic value of identifying Sedang dialects. Furthermore this presyllable is frequently omitted in speech, cancelling any function it otherwise might have in distinguishing dialects.

The occurrence of *kə-* in the term for dialect 17 is coincidental, inasmuch as that form *kəqnân* is a synonym and not phonologically related to any of the others.

(b) The semantic shift from *ki klai* and *kəklai* 'what' to *ti lai* 'how, why' is also utilized for ethnodialect descriptions. Note that the question marker *lai* is retained. (In CenSdg *lai* alone means 'which'; also note *u lai* 'where', *to lai* 'how many'.) Four such forms are employed in the Sedang ethnodialect terminology.

(b-1) *ti* distinguishes two or three NGrSed areas, dialects 9 to 11, excepting only the northern portion of NGrSdg. Dialect 9, *ti lai*, is presumed to overlap extensively with dialect 4, *kəlai*, both distinctively CenSdg terms. The former, as a dialect designation, predominates to the north of the latter.
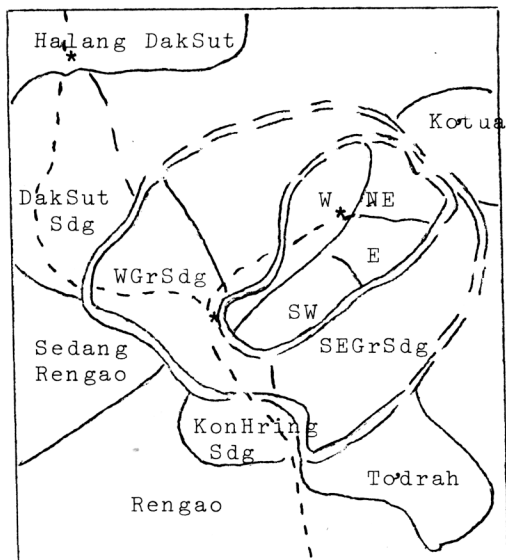
Map 1. Sedang, dialect areas

Inner circle is Central Sedang; outer
circle is Greater Sedang. The three
stars represent, from left to right,
DakSut, DakTo, and Toumorong.

(b-2) *tea*, undoubtedly phonologically related to *ti*
(and not to CenSdg *tea* 'water'), distinguishes only
dialect 12, the northern portion of NGrSdg.

(b-3) *chu* distinguishes dialects 13 to 15, three
WGrSdg areas.

(b-4) *nam* distinguishes only dialect 16, the Sedang-
Rengao--that portion of the Rengao language area contiguous
to the Sedang in the southwest and which resembles Sedang
in many respects.

## 1.2. THE MAIN SYLLABLE

The main syllable *klai* occurs in some form in the
names for all dialects except 17 where a synonymous word
is used to identify the Kotua language group, eastern
neighbors to the Sedang.

(a) The initial consonant *k* occurs in dialects 3-8
as part of an initial consonant cluster *kl*. As part of
the basic CenSdg *kŏklai*, this identifies Cen- and GrSdg,
DakSut Sedang and Todrah.

(b) The only element of the main syllable which
remains constant throughout all Sedang dialect areas is
the *l*, in dialects 1, 2, 9 to 16, the *l* is the sole initial
main syllable consonant. In dialects 1 and 2 it is
preceded by the presyllable *kŏ-*, which combination identi-
fies the NECenSgd. In dialects 9 to 16, the *l* is preceded
by *ti*, *tea*,etc. forms with the resultant 'why,how' gloss.
These combinations identify N- and WGrSdg and the Sedang-
Rengao, who are contiguous with the WGrSdg.

(c) The main syllable vowel, typical of Viet Nam
languages, is the least stable part of the word. In this
case it is seen to shift from *ê* and *e* to *a* and *o*. The *ê*
and *o* are both found in widely scattered areas and are
nondiagnostic. The *a* is restricted to Gr- and CenSdg and
Sedang-Rengao. The *o* occurs only in dialect II, a north-
east area of NGrSdg.

(d) The second most constant unit of the main sylla-
ble is the final semi-vowel *i*, lacking in only dialects 1
and 3 which are non-contiguous area of NECenSdg and SWCenSdg
respectively.[3]

(e) Final glottal stop, $q_4$ occurs in the terms for
the two widely separated dialects 1 and 15[5].

(f) In contrast to the normally clear Lax Register

Supplementary diagnostic words

| | | Principal diagnostic word | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pre-position | Presyllable | Main syllable | | Post-position | No. villages | Dialect areas |
| kia q | kơ, etc. | k | l a/e/ê/o i q ˋ /ʔ | yau | | |
| 1. | kơ | k | l e q | yau | 6 | (E) ⎫ NECenSdg |
| 2. | kơ | k | l e ê i | | 17 | (W) ⎭ |
| 3. | ki | k | l e | | 1 | SWCenSdg |
| *4. | kơ | k | l a i | | 25 | Gr- & CenSdg |
| 5. | kơ | k | l a i | yau | 0 | DakSut Sdg |
| 6. | kơ | k | l i | | 12 | (S) ⎫ |
| 7. kia | ki | k | l ê i | | 1 | (Cent) ⎬ Tođrah |
| 8. kia q | | k | l i | | 13 | (NW) ⎭ |
| *9. | ti | k | l a i | | - | (S) ⎫ |
| 10. | ti | | l a i | ˊ | 3 | (Cent) ⎬ NGrSdg |
| 11. | ti | | l o i | ˋ | 1 | (NE) ⎪ |
| 12. | tea | | l ê i | ˊ | 1 | (N) ⎭ |
| 13. | chu | | l a i | (ˋ) | 6 | (N) ⎫ |
| 14. | chu | | l a i | ˀ | 1 | KonHring Sdg ⎬ WGrSdg |
| 15. | chu | | l a i q | | 2 | (Cent) ⎭ |
| 16. | nam | | l a i | | 8 | Sedang-Rengao |
| 17. | kơ | | qnǎn | | 2 | Kơtua |

Sedang ethnodialect terminology parts and phonological units.
(Asterisks indicate principal Sedang dialects. Numbers indicate number of village
presently associated with each dialect. Parentheses are used to indicate portions

vowels of Sedang (unmarked), as in *koklai*, breathy vowels
( ̤) occur in the terms for dialects 10-12, sometimes
dialect 13. This phenomenon thereby identifies NGrSdg
and the northern part of WGrSdg[6]. Perhaps related to this
is an unusual Vietnamese *hoi* tone-like intonation given
to the term for dialect 14 apparently identifying Kon
Hring Sedang.

## 1.3. SYNONYMOUS FORMS

A synonymous form is used to distinguish an area
in which the principal focus words *koklai* or *ti lai* do not
occur. The only instance of this is the word *kɔqnân*
'what' identifying the Kotua language. The Kotua area is
contiguous to the Sedang on the east and Sedang people
presently converge at Mang Buk, a provincial border
outpost.[7]

## 2. SUPPLEMENTARY DIAGNOSTIC WORDS

Supplementary diagnostic words, used in conjunction
with the principal diagnostic word, enable finer distinc-
tions to be made between dialects. The Supplementary
diagnostic words occur both before and after the focus
word.

## 2.1. PREPOSITIONED SUPPLEMENTARY DIAGNOSTIC WORD

*kia* and *kiaq* 'ghost' are used in the terms for
dialects 7 and 8 to identify portions of the Todrah
language group. The final glottal stop in *kiaq*, dialect
8, identifies the northwest portion of the Todrah, whereas
its absence in *kia*, dialect 7, identifies the central
portion of the Todrah. Dialect 7 is thereby more distinct-
ly contrasted with dialect 2: *kia kiklêi* versus *kɔlêi*
Dialect 8 is thereby more distinctly contrasted with
dialect 6: *kiaq kli* versus *kokli*.

In CenSdg this word occurs as *kia* but is not needed
to distinguish the various CenSdg dialects.

## 2.2. POSTPOSITIONED SUPPLEMENTARY DIAGNOSTIC WORD

*yau* 'no more' is used in the term for dialect 5 to
identify DakSut Sedang. This dialect is thereby distinc-
tly contrasted with dialects 6 and 8: *kokli yau* versus
*kokli* and *kiaq kli*.

In CenSdg this word occurs as *seô*.[8]

## 3. CONCLUSION

The above 17 Sedang ethnodialects are located on Map 2.

The Sedang ethnodialect terminology indicates the awareness of the Sedang to linguistic differences among themselves and validates the numerous Sedang dialect areas established independently using linguistic data. It also emphasizes the only slightly exaggerated Sedang truism: *polê ê topui ti ê* 'every village speaks differently.'

## FOOTNOTES

1. "Sedang ethnodialects",*Anthropological Linguistics*
   11:5:143-47 (May 1969).

2. The orthography used in this paper is basically equiva-
   lent to the Vietnamese *quôc-ngũ* with the following
   exceptions: _ indicates Sedang laryngealized tense
   register, ` indicates a breathy lax register vowel
   which is atypical of Sedang. *q* represents glottal stop.

3. The author's "Sedang dialects", an M.A. thesis, Universi-
   ty of North Dakota ( a revision of "Sedang dialects",
   *Bulletin de la Société des Etudes Indochinoises* 42:195-
   255 (1967)). The vowel and semi-vowel shifts notes here
   correspond to Rule 16, Màp 15: "CenSdg *ai* and *e* become
   *êi* and *i* in the border and surrounding languages."

4. This infrequent glottal stop is explained in 'Sedang
   dialects' footnote 16: "(4) for CenSdg second register
   (clear) open syllable: ...(b) If some border area has
   a breathy vowel, then the other border languages may
   or may not have -*q*."

5. *kɑleq*, for dialect 1, was previously misidentified by
   this author as Hrêi. Though the Hrêi word *leq* 'what'
   closely resembles this, it is questionable that the
   Sedang would be familiar with Hrêi speech inasmuch as
   the two groups are noncontiguous. The subsequent
   meeting of *kɑleq* speakers by the author at Mang Buk
   (refugees from Mang Buk first introduced this terminolo-
   gy to me) has clarified this matter. The *kɑleq* dialect
   may be further characterized as having no discernable
   vowel register contrast, initial *y* instead of CenSdg
   *s*, and retention of all final stops and *h* where CenSdg
   loses them (i.e. in Proto-North-Bahnaric Tense Register
   syllables), and various vocabulary differences.

6. Though not recognized as occurring in the Sedang language
   area, this phenomenon was described in 'Sedang dialects'
   as Rule 24: "Where the border languages have an open
   syllable with either register, CenSdg always has an open
   syllable with either register (not necessarily the same)...
   except that for a border breathy vowel CenSdg never has
   a laryngealized vowel."

7. See 'Eastern North Bahnaric: Cua and Kɑtua', elsewhere
   in this volume.

8. There are three unrelated phonological shifts involved

in the derivation of *seə́* from *yau* (the latter more
closely resembles the historical form of the word).

(1) There is the main syllable initial consonant
shift: non-Sedang *y* becomes *s* in CenSdg ('Sedang
dialects' Rule 9, Map 9). The other two shifts
pertain to the main syllable back-glided vowel.
(2) The main vowels of CenSdg back glides are lower in
the west and south; i.e. CenSdg *i* and *ê* are *ê* and *a*
respectively, in the west and south (Rule 17, Map 16).
(3) The three-point glides *(Vou)* of Sedang-Rengao
are realized in all other areas by two-point glides
in which one of the latter two points is lost: *Vu*
in the southern area, *Vo* throughout CenSdg and GrSdg,
except that *Va* (a central glide) occurs in a few
CenSdg villages (Rule 18, Maps 17 and 19).