
**Abstract:** This short investigation of languages referred to as Tai Loi shows that at least seven different languages from three Palaungic subgroups are referred to by this exonym. Simply meaning ‘mountaineers’, Tai Loi appears to denote Buddhist speakers as a sociopolitical identity rather than a linguistic one. As a linguistic designation, it may lead to confusion and should therefore be avoided. Since ISO 639 forms a part of the language tags distinguishing dialectal, regional and script variation in languages, there is the potential for even broader confusion.


**Abstract:** The Khmuic languages represent a branch in the north-central region of the Austroasiatic family. While there are several existing Khmuic bibliographies, namely, Smalley (1973), Proschan (1987), Preisig and Simana (n.d.), Renard (2015), and Lund University (2015), this paper seeks to combine, update and organize these materials into a more readily accessible
online resource. A brief overview of Khmuic languages and their linguistic features is given. References are organized according to linguistic domain, with some annotations. An updated language index of a dozen Khmuic languages is also included.

2016


Abstract: Three experiments were performed to compare people reading word-spaced texts and syllable-spaced texts in Hmong Daw, using the Latin-script orthography known as RPA. The results showed no overall difference in reading speed between the two spacing styles when reading naturally connected stories, but did show advantages to syllable spacing when words were presented in isolation, and for sentences with polysyllabic words that had not appeared previously in the test. The results are contrary to the common untested assumption among linguists involved in orthography development that word spacing is the optimal spacing choice for all languages, and suggest that syllable spacing is a valid option for certain languages in the right sociolinguistic situations. The results also underline the importance of the syllable level for cognitive processing during reading.

2015

Cheeseman, Nathaniel; Elizabeth Hall and Darren Gordon. 2015. Palaungic linguistic bibliography with selected annotations.
Forward: This bibliography is an expansion of the earlier work by Darren C. Gordon (2013). It includes a brief description of Palaungic linguistic features and a discussion of classification. References are first organized by linguistic domain, then historically by author. Many unpublished Palaungic data, including many by the late Dr. Paulette Hopple, are referenced, including when possible a location to gain access to them. The paper concludes with a Palaungic language index. Where appropriate, some items have been included under more than one linguistic domain. Some difficult to locate items have been identified as being available at the David Thomas library (DTL), Linguistics Institute, Payap University (http://msealing.info/dt-library/). Whereas some conference presentations are included, this is by no means an exhaustive listing.


Abstract: Katuic languages are spoken in Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam. The internal phonological diversity of the Katuic branch is not as great as that of neighboring Austroasiatic branches such as Bahnaric or Vietic but there are nevertheless some noteworthy differences of phonological typology to be found within the family. This article aims to provide an overview of Katuic phonological typology by reviewing previous synchronic and diachronic phonological studies and presenting some of our own research. In doing so, we will highlight some of the important issues that remain to be explored in the study of Katuic comparative phonology.

**Abstract:** The Austroasiatic language Muak Sa-aak belongs to the Angkuic branch of the Paluṅgic subgroup. Speakers live primarily in eastern Shan State of Myanmar. This analysis is based on the variety of Wan Fai village. Although Burmese and Chinese are influential, their primary contact language is the Tai Kadai language Tai Lue. Borrowing from this language is extensive, even to the extent of replacing their numerals with Tai Lue. Although Muak Sa-aak underwent the Germanic shift typical of Angkuic languages, replacing proto-voiced initials with voiceless ones, it still retains some voiced initials. There is some evidence that language contact may have resulted in a three-tone system, where pitch would otherwise have been largely predictable. For the majority of rhotic-initial loan words, borrowing shows a direct correspondence of Muak Sa-aak /r/ with initial /h/ in Tai Lue. Some evidence from Assamese Tai languages suggests that rather than being a replacement, this might reflect a time when Tai Lue possibly still had a rhotic.


**Abstract:** Muak Sa-aak is a tonal Angkuic language spoken in Eastern Shan state of Myanmar, belonging to the Austroasiatic family. It has three contrastive tones: a falling tone, a low tone, and a constricted tone with two allotones. Syllable structure and tone are closely linked, seen by restrictions on the occurrence of tones with certain syllable structures. Angkuic languages do not appear to develop tone through the loss of an initial consonant voicing distinction, as they instead underwent a shift where proto-voiceless initial tenuis stops became aspirated and proto-voiced consonants were devoiced (Svantesson 1988); it instead is connected with vowel length contrast (Svantesson 1988, Diffloth 1991). None the less, Muak Sa-aak preserves vowel length contrast despite the development of tone. It is argued that Muak Sa-aak tonogenesis is motivated by both vowel length and final consonants.

**Abstract:** Standard Lao, the official language in the Lao PDR, is spoken in and around the capital Vientiane. Lexicon, vowels and especially tone inventories of the many Lao dialects in the nation differ tremendously. A new orthography to replace the traditional Pali-based orthography which was hard to teach and learn was established during the Lao language reform in 1975. This study investigates the grapheme-phoneme correspondences of Lao orthography and its applicability to other languages in the multilingual nation. After a short introduction to the Lao language and the linguistic situation in the country, the Lao phoneme inventory and a description of the nature and historical development of Lao script are presented, including some taxonomic considerations discussing the segmental, suprasegmental and syllabic features of this script. This is followed by a linguistic evaluation of the orthography and a summary in the light of how to apply Lao script to other languages spoken in the country. Three minority orthographies based on Lao script illustrate that the almost entirely direct phonemic correspondences, consistency in the formation of multigraphs, the rich grapheme inventory, and the both segmental and syllabic characteristics of this semi-alphabetic script support a direct application to other, even unrelated languages with contrastive suprasegmental features like tone or voice quality. No orthography testing or studies on literacy acquisition have been done on these or any other Lao-script based minority scripts yet, so that firm recommendations regarding the creation of new Lao-script based orthographies cannot be given.

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Abstract: This paper describes a series of workshops in which speakers of two minority languages in southeast Asia without a written tradition developed orthographies for their languages. Sociolinguistic factors affecting orthography design and acceptability are explained, particularly those motivating script choice, followed by linguistic considerations for orthography development. A discussion of the necessity for community participation in orthography development includes methods for facilitating a participatory orthography development process. Next, a case study of participatory orthography development where two language communities developed their initial orthography proposals with the author’s involvement is presented. As a result of various sociolinguistic factors, both groups of workshop attendants developed an orthography in a script previously unknown to the majority of their language communities. The paper outlines the process used for this, as well as specific strategies for involving language committee members in orthography development. An evaluation of the case study in the light of previous research is given in the conclusion, followed by a discussion of how participatory orthography processes can be applied when working with other language communities, in order to develop orthography proposals that are sociolinguistically acceptable.


Abstract: The purpose of this bibliography is to assist Bahnaric linguists, translators, and scholars by indexing and cataloguing Bahnaric reference materials. References are organized by linguistic domain. An index of Bahnaric languages is presented at the end of this article. This work also includes an updated Bahnaric map and a brief description of Bahnaric linguistic features. Readers will be drawn into the debate on Bahnaric classification and the question of which languages need to be deleted or added to the Bahnaric family.

**Abstract:** The Austroasiatic language Muak Sa-aak, belonging to the Angkuic branch of Eastern Palaungic, is a tonal language spoken in Eastern Shan State of Myanmar and in China. This paper provides a phonological description of a variety spoken in Eastern Shan State. Like other Angkuic languages, Muak Saaak has undergone a shift whereby proto voiced stops have become voiceless and voiceless stops have become aspirated. However, the language does have the voiced stops /b, d/, due to borrowing. Despite the development of tone, Muak Sa-aak retains contrastive vowel length. Another surprising feature of this language is the phenomenon of final sonorant lengthening for short vowels.


**Abstract:** Kmhmu’ is a language of the Mon-Khmer language family. Extensive linguistic research and analysis of the varieties of Kmhmu’ spoken in Southeast Asia has led to the grouping of Kmhmu’ into three dialect categories, generally referred to as Northern, Western and Southern (Svantesson 1989). The orthography described in this paper was developed for the Southern dialect and utilizes a Lao-based script. Suksavang and Preisig (Suksavanget al 1994) were instrumental in refining this orthography. This description of the Southern Kmhmu’ orthography explains how the Lao script is used and/or adapted to represent the Kmhmu’ phonemes, presents orthographic conventions for writing words of various structural types and summarizes teaching/learning experiences observed in mother-tongue Kmhmu’ speakers.  
**Keywords:** Austroasiatic, orthography, sesquisyllables
**Abstract:** This paper provides a phonological analysis for a Western Bru variety spoken in Northeast Thailand labelled Bru Sakon Nakhorn (Bru SN). Previous descriptions of Western Bru varieties differ in the amount of distinctive vowel qualities, the presence of onglides linked to phonation and vowel height, the contrastive status of the feature nasalisation, and vowel contrast in reduced syllables. The present analysis identifies contrastive onglides, lack of contrastive nasalization, and predictable vowel qualities in reduced syllables. It further argues that the consonants often described as palatal plosives or alveolo-palatal affricates in Mon-Khmer languages are alveolo-palatal plosives. The vowel system indicates that diphthongs are phonologically short vowels. Ongliding related to vowel height and phonation type is not present. Furthermore, this variety appears to differ from closely related So in distinguishing onglides and offglides. Spectrograms and minimal pairs reveal that they are contrasting phonemes, not allophones, indicating that Bru SN clearly retains this vowel contrast, in line with other Bru varieties.


**Abstract:** This paper provides a review on the linguistic and cultural background of the Ta’oi people in Laos and Vietnam from the available literature. Starting with an overview of the geographic location, historical and cultural context and linguistic nature, the paper pays special attention to the confusing amount of ethnonyms and glossonyms referring to these people and their language.