

Introduction to Volume II: Language Contact and Areal Features

This volume of the set is devoted to articles discussing language contact in the development of the languages of the family and the existence of areal features.

We now know from genetic and archaeological evidence that migration into Asia was from the southwest, across Asia and then up to the north, over a period from 18,000-60,000 years ago (Chu et al. 1998, Jin & Su 2000, Ke et al. 2001, HUGO Pan-Asian SNP Consortium 2009). Analysis of genetic distributions and other evidence points to there being two genetic populations in the Neolithic age, roughly north vs. south of the Yangtze River (Zhao & Lee 1989, Zhang Haiguo 1988, Zhang Zhenbiao 1988, Weng et al. 1989, Etlar 1992). Cultures developed in different areas of what we now think of as China, but the one we associate with the early Sino-Tibetans is the Neolithic Yangshao culture of the Yellow River valley (see, for example, Chang 1986, Treistman 1972, Pulleyblank 1983, Fairbank, Reischauer & Craig 1989, Xing 1996). From that area, some 6,000 years ago, there were migrations to the east and south,¹ into areas where speakers of Hmong-Mien, Tai-Kadai (Zhuang-Dong, Kra-Dai), and Austro-Asiatic languages, and precursors of the Austronesian languages, lived (Pulleyblank 1983; Bellwood 1992, Tong 1998; Blust 1984/85, 1992, 1994, Thurgood 1994; Kutanan et al. 2015), and others to the west into and down through the Tibetan plateau, and still others southwest along the river valleys to the east of the Tibetan plateau, where there was also contact with Tai-Kadai and Austroasiatic language speakers. And as the migrations were in waves, there was also contact between earlier and later migrants from the Sino-Tibetan homeland. These migrations led to the current differences among linguistic varieties in the family in two ways: due of the split of the speakers and the resulting diverging developments, and also due to contact with other cultures in areas they migrated to (LaPolla 2001, LaPolla, to appear; see also Ge, Wu & Cao 1997 on the history of the migrations).

The serious study of language contact in linguistics is relatively new; although there was Haugen 1950, Weinreich 1953 and Weinreich, Labov, & Herzog 1968, the field didn't really take off until the publication of Thomason & Kaufman 1988. But within Sino-Tibetan

¹ As Henry Serruys (1969: 442ff.) notes, the migrations were generally southward, as these areas were more suitable in terms of climate and terrain to Chinese agricultural practices, whereas the north was only suitable for a nomadic herding existence. The migrations might have also been due at least in part to changes in the climate (see Liu & Chen 2012, Chs. 2, 7).

linguistics there were some pioneers who very early on understood the importance of language contact to the current shape of the language family and the individual varieties. We present a selection of articles by these pioneers here.

We start off with a 1965 general overview of the distribution of certain phonetic² and morphological features by Eugénie Henderson, a pioneer at looking at language contact (see also Henderson 1951). This is an early example of geolinguistics (typo-geography, linguistic geography, geography of languages or features),³ the mapping of features geographically, which was later developed by Mantaro J. Hashimoto (1978) and his students (see Iwata 1995 and the papers from the conferences of the Asian Geolinguistics Society of Japan [<http://agsj.jimdo.com/>] and the ILCAA joint research project “Studies in Asian Geolinguistics” (<http://www.aa.tufs.ac.jp/en/projects/jrp/jrp210>) run by Endo Mitsuaki of Aoyama Gakuin University).⁴ Prof. Hashimoto had a number of papers talking about the distribution of features of all types from north to south in China (1974, 1976a-b, 1984, 1986, 1992⁵, among others). Here we present two of these articles, which make the same basic point, that there is a cline of features in Chinese that are more Altaic-like in the north and more Tai-Kadai or Austro-Asiatic in the south, but use somewhat different data and phenomena to make the point. Prof. Hashimoto’s view is that Sinitic was more like the Tai languages in the past, and came to be as it is due to Altaic influence. See Bennet 1979 for critical comments on the hypothesis, and the suggestion that it was Tai influence in the south, not Altaic influence, that was more important.

² See also Egerod 1971 and Matisoff 2001 on phonation patterns that appear in languages all over China and Southeast Asia. As Egerod says (p. 170), “Phonation types, registers, tones, and split vowel systems offer interesting examples of the diffusion of phonetic phenomena over a very large area, where the single languages because of different structure and different rate of diachronic change utilize these phenomena in totally different ways”. See also Solnit 1992 on glottalized consonants as an areal feature, Clark 1992 on a certain type of topic marker as an areal feature, and Bisang 2006 on Southeast Asia as a linguistic area.

³ See Grootaers 1943 for the history and a bibliography of geolinguistics up to that time and justification for applying it to Chinese, and Grootaers 1946 for a specific example of its application. See also Paul Serruys 1943, Ballard 1992, and de Sousa 2015.

⁴ The influence of Prof. Hashimoto can be seen in the fact that several of the papers in this volume or cited in this introduction were published in either *Computational Analyses of Asian and African Languages*, a journal he founded and edited, or *Genetic relationship, diffusion, and typological similarities of East and Southeast Asian languages*, a book he edited.

⁵ See Volume 3 of this set for Hashimoto 1992.

The next article is by Fang-Kuei Li, a pioneer in Sino-Tibetan studies generally, and a specialist on the Tai languages, as well as on Tibetan, Chinese, and certain North American languages. In this article (1945) Prof. Li assumes Tai and Chinese are genetically related (see the first article in Volume 1, Li 1936-1937), but talks about what he sees as very early loans from Chinese into Tai. In the fifth article (1976) Prof. Li explores the relationship between Chinese and Tai, pointing out that there are regular as well as irregular correspondences, so he suggests there must be both loans and genetically related sets of words, though does not take a strong stand as to the nature of the relationship between the languages. This article has often been cited as showing that Tai and Chinese are in fact related, but Prof. Li himself remained agnostic,⁶ and in his oral history (Li 1988) he said that we don't know enough about Chinese or Tai, and when we do, the answer will be clear. Most linguists now go along with Benedict's view (1942, 1976a—see volume 1) that Chinese and Tai (and Hmong-Mien) are not related but have a deep contact relationship (see also Matisoff 1973, also in Volume 1, Downer 1963, and Egerod 1976), but see Luo 2008 for counter arguments.⁷

The sixth article is Anne O-K. Yue-Hashimoto's well-known but difficult to get 1976 article "Southern Chinese dialects: The Tai connection", in which she talks about the influence going the other way, from Tai (essential Zhuang [Chuang]) to the southern Chinese varieties, Yue and Min. She argues for teasing apart the different historical layers in the languages,⁸

⁶ Chang & Chang (1976) also remain agnostic after showing many parallel forms and features among Miao-Yao, Tibeto-Burman, and Chinese.

⁷ Downer (1963) and Chen & Li (1981) both show parallels between Chinese and Hmong-Mien (Miao-Yao), including initial, tone, and rhyme, and agree that they cannot be due to chance, though differ in terms of whether they see the commonalities as due to borrowing or genetic inheritance, the big question in this controversy. But Downer's position is a bit stronger in that he shows that the similarities are found only in comparison with Ancient Chinese (Middle Chinese), roughly the Chinese of the 4th to 7th centuries, but not with earlier forms of Chinese, and so he argues this is evidence of borrowing at that time. See also Benedict 1976b, Bodman 1980 and Schuessler 2003 on loans into Chinese, even at the Proto-Chinese period, from Tai, Hmong-Mien, and Austroasiatic, and Ballard's work on the Hmong-Mien (Miao-Yao) influence in Wu, Xiang, and Min, and for affinities between these dialects or parts of them with each other (1971, 1985a-b, 1992).

⁸ See also Yue-Hashimoto 1991. Cf. Firth 1948 on multiple phonological systems within a single language due to contact influence, and Ho 2000 on the differences in the work on strata in Indo-European vs. Chinese linguistics, and the use of such analyses in understanding the history of Chinese, using Min dialects as an example. See also Norman 1979, 1991, Mei & Yang 1995, Chappell 2001, and Tu 2013 on phonetic, lexical and

and looking at areal influences. From doing this, she argues that a Tai variety formed the oldest layer of the southern dialects.⁹ Yue-Hashimoto argues that the lexical items that are said to be uniquely Min (using data from Norman 1970), show affinities with Zhuang. While she mentions syntactic and lexical evidence, Yue-Hashimoto focuses mainly on what she sees as a deep connection between Zhuang and the southern varieties of Chinese in terms of the reflexes of historically voiced initials, which are exclusively unaspirated stops and affricates in the *yáng* (historically voiced) tones in Zhuang, and she argues, can be shown to be the same for what she sees as the oldest stratum of the Min and Yue varieties.¹⁰ She also takes issue with Norman's (1973; see volume 3) reconstruction of a three-way distinction in the voiced stops of Proto-Min, arguing that it is not supported by evidence outside Min or in the phonetic compound characters.¹¹

Yue-Hashimoto's view contrasts with that in the following article, Norman & Mei 1976, "The Austroasiatics in ancient South China: Some lexical evidence", which argues for Austroasiatic influence on the Min varieties, using seven words that seem to be of Yue (here understood as Austroasiatic) provenience found in old Chinese texts, and eight words from modern Min dialects that also seem to be related to Austroasiatic words. The article is very well researched and carefully presented with interdisciplinary arguments. Based on facts related to the fact that the word for the Yangtze River in Chinese is a loan from Austroasiatic they even pinpoint the area where Chinese first came into contact with the Austroasiatics to be where the Han and the Yangtze rivers meet, as the Han river, which runs from Shaanxi through Henan and down to the Yangtze in Hubei, is the route the Chinese used in moving south. Given that, and other data from Chinese texts, they argue the ancient Chu kingdom included the Austroasiatics as one of the ethnic groups.

grammatical strata in Min. See LaPolla 2001 for the migrations that led to the different strata, and Mei 2015 for linguistic evidence of one of those migrations.

⁹ See also Xu 1946, Cen 1953, Yuan 1983, Cao 1997 for commonalities between Zhuang and the southern Chinese dialects, and Huang 1990 on the mutual influence of Zhuang, Cantonese, and the local variety of Mandarin in the Wuming area. See also Bauer 1987a for arguments that formative elements in bodypart terms in Yue, Min, and Hakka derive from Tai languages, and Bauer 1987b, 1991 on loanwords from Tai (Kadai) into Yue. Yuan (1983: 167) also concludes that the Yue dialects manifest traces of the Zhuang-Dong languages. See FitzGerald 1972: xvii for an insightful discussion on how a non-Chinese becomes Chinese.

¹⁰ See Yue 2012 for other evidence and her most recent views on the issue.

¹¹ In fact Norman (1986) and his students (e.g. O'Connor 1976) did find evidence for the distinctions outside Min. See the discussion of Norman's paper in Volume 3 of this set.

Both Yue-Hashimoto's and Norman & Mei's articles have been very influential (see for example Schuessler 2007), though recently Sagart (2008), who argues for a connection between Chinese and Austronesian (Sagart 1993, 2005), has argued that the evidence presented by Norman & Mei is not convincing, and in fact might better support an Austronesian connection, though if one accepts Benedict's (1942) Austric (see also Reid 1994) or Benedict's later (1966, 1975) assertion of an Austroasiatic substratum in Austronesian, then the question may be moot.¹²

Another language, spoken far to the west of Chinese, in Sikkim, West Bengal, Nepal and Bhutan, that more clearly manifests substratum or adstratum influence by an Austroasiatic language, is Lepcha (Rong). In our next paper, R. A. D. Forrest (1962) says "It is clear that we have in Rong a very mixed form of speech" (p. 335), and presents five dozen words in Lepcha that seem to have clear Austroasiatic connections, and argues that these and many of the prefixes found, plus what he calls "an antipathy to aspirated initials" and richer vocalisms "all point to an Austroasiatic substratum" (p. 335).¹³ Forrest also teases apart the many Tibetan loans¹⁴ from an older Tibeto-Burman stratum, and, showing that it is quite conservative, argues that the language is important for comparative work.

The next paper, by Nicholas C. Bodman (1988), takes up the position of Lepcha within Tibeto-Burman, but aside from confirming clearly that it is a Tibeto-Burman language, and showing many similarities with Tibeto-Burman languages to the east, such as Adi, Jinghpaw, Rawang, and Ao, does not take a stand on the exact position of Lepcha in the family. This

¹² For an example of more recent and clear interaction and influence between Min, Tai, and Austroasiatic, see Solnit 1982, on Hainan Southern Min, and for a recently created Tai-Chinese contact language in Yunnan see Chen 1996.

¹³ Compare Shafer's (1952, 1965) discussion of what he sees as 161 parallel words between Austroasiatic, particularly Khasi, and Sino-Tibetan. Shafer says he cannot decide which way the loans went, but Diffloth (2008) divides up the 102 Khasi-ST parallel forms into three groups: i) 36 items with widespread Austroasiatic cognates; ii) four that only have cognates in the Northern division of Austroasiatic; iii) 47 with no known cognates in Austroasiatic; iv) 15 forms that "present uncertainties of various kinds" and so aren't discussed (p. 95), and suggests that the first group may be due to borrowing from Austroasiatic to Sino-Tibetan or possibly Austroasiatic substrate influence in Sino-Tibetan, the second set could be local loans from Sino-Tibetan into the Northern division of Austroasiatic, and the third set is most likely loans from Sino-Tibetan into Khasi.

¹⁴ See also Sprigg 1982, 1986.

may be because some of the languages he compares with Lepcha are quite conservative, as is Lepcha itself, and so it is hard to find clear shared innovations. While acknowledging the different strata that Forrest has identified, Bodman questions the nature of the prefixes mentioned by Forrest as being purely Austroasiatic, and points out that some of the examples of Lepcha-Austroasiatic lexical connections are also found in other Tibeto-Burman languages, and even Chinese, so the question is “what direction has the borrowing gone?” (p. 3). He adds another layer to the mix as well, in mentioning “the widespread use of Nepali (even as a first language among many Lepchas)” (p. 3) (see also Nakkeerar, n.d.). Very interesting is Bodman’s discussion of word families in Lepcha, and comparisons with those in Tibetan and Chinese, from which he concludes Lepcha is the most conservative of the three. Lepcha has clear morphological affixes, including an infix *-y-*, and suffixes *-m*, *-n*, and *-t*, plus alternations in the initials and vowels with semantic consequences (see LaPolla 1994 on variable finals in Sino-Tibetan generally, and LaPolla 2017 for an overview of affixes and initial alternations in Sino-Tibetan).

The spread of major languages will generally influence the speech habits of the speakers who adopt that language, initially through bilingualism (superstratum influence), and possibly eventually complete language shift, but at the same time the major language will also be affected by the speech habits of those who adopt the language, if their population is large enough (substratum influence—see LaPolla 2005, 2009 on the nature of substratum and superstratum influence). The next five articles discuss the influence of Burmese on other languages of Myanmar, and also the influence of Mon and Pali on Burmese.¹⁵ The first of this set, from Theodore Stern (1962), talks about the influences of Burmese on Plains Chin, that is, how bilingualism in a genetically related secondary (and dominant) language has caused changes in the primary language. In his introduction he shows the disparity between the hill peoples and the plains peoples in terms of the ratio of the population divided by the number of dialects, with plain peoples’ ratios being ten to eighty times the hill peoples’ ratios, and makes the interesting observation that “Life in the Irrawaddy Plains for many reasons has fostered intercommunication and in all probability the reduction of number of

¹⁵ Here we will cover the situation in Myanmar; for an overview of the linguistic situation in Thailand and the resulting contact, see Matisoff 1983.

dialects” p. 1, showing how geography can influence language development.¹⁶ Another interesting point he makes is that the relative social status of the languages can affect the degree of influence: he says that in Sandoway District, although the Burmese were in the majority compared to the Arakanese, the latter had a greater influence on Plains Chin, and this might be due to the fact that Arakanese was closer to Plains Chin in terms of social status. He also gives a nice overview of the migrations and culture of the Chin and some of the differences between the many Chin varieties, and argues there is a cline of acculturation to Burmese, from the urban areas to the forests in the hills. He then outlines the phonological changes in the local Arakanese Burmese and Colloquial Burmese have gone through compared to Written Burmese, and then compares the forms with the Plains Chin forms. He also gives examples of many grammatical forms, including modals and classifiers, and constructions in Plains Chin that are the result of borrowing/contact influence.

The second article of this set, from Denise Bernot (1975), discusses the influence of Burmese on Singpho, the western variety of Jinghpaw, showing that the loanwords can be distinguished into different historical layers, with some showing more conservative forms than Modern Burmese, and generally fall into different semantic categories.

We then turn to influences on Burmese from Mon and Pali. The Mon have influenced Burmese culture generally since the establishment of the Burmese kingdom in Bagan (Pagan) in the 11th century. As the Mon already had an established court and written language and religion, in setting up their kingdom, the Burmese modelled their court on the Mon court, used Mon as a prestige and literary language, adapted the Mon alphabet to writing Burmese, and learned Theravada Buddhism and Pali from the Mon. At that stage Mon was a superstrate language (Jenny 2013). What we now think of as southern Myanmar was until the mid 18th century a Mon kingdom, and after the Burmese conquered the area, the many Mon speakers there (except for the far south) switched to speaking Burmese, leaving a very strong substratum influence on Burmese. The many loan words from Mon is the subject of Hla Pe’s paper (1967) in this volume. See Jenny 2015 for loans from many other languages. The extensive influence of Mon on the phonological system of Burmese, including the prosodic system and word structure, is the topic of David Bradley’s paper (1980) in the volume. In

¹⁶ See Nichols 2015 and other papers from De Busser & LaPolla 2015 on the influence of geography and other non-linguistic features on the development of languages.

terms of influence on grammatical structure, Jenny (2013) talks about the use of the verb *pè* ‘give’ in preverbal position to mark permissive causatives (Okano 2005) as due to Mon influence, and also discusses other Mon-like features found only in the colloquial Burmese of the southern area, and Bauer (2006) talks about four grammatical markers that were borrowed into Burmese from Mon and two grammatical markers that went the other way (but see Jenny 2015 for critical discussion of Bauer’s paper).

The last paper of this set, by John Okell (1967), is about the influence of Nissaya Burmese, a system of using Burmese to translate Pali texts. Okell argues that the writers felt Pali was a superior language, and so tried to adapt Burmese to be more like Pali, and make the translations more direct. This, Okell argues, influenced the language outside that particular use as well (see also Jenny 2015).

We then turn to Northeast India and Nepal. The first of this set is an overview of the language situation in Northeast India by Dipankar Moral (1997). After introducing some of the main languages out of the 220 or so spoken in the area, Moral presents phonological, grammatical and lexical evidence to show that there are features that are common to Northeast India that are not common the larger linguistic area (*Sprachbund*) of India generally (Emeneau 1956, Masica 1976), and some of the features of the general Indian linguistic area are not present in Northeast India, so Northeast India should be considered a separate linguistic area from the rest of India. See in this regard the spread of Nepali in this area and its influence, documented by Sprigg 1987. See also Post 2015, which while acknowledging the areal convergence noticed by Moral, argues that Northeast India is an ethnolinguistic crossroads: “Lying directly at the intersection of South Asia, Mainland Southeast Asia, and East Asia (specifically, Southwest China), NEI displays geographical, linguistic, and cultural affinities with all of these regions. NEI as a region is best defined by the diversity that results from this dynamic mixture and broad range of affinities” (p. 214). The second paper on this area is a very detailed and rigorous analysis of the subtle influences that seem to have caused similarities in the verbal morphology in Nepali and Newar by Edward H. Bendix (1974). The paper argues not so much for similarity in form, but in the semantics/pragmatics of how the forms are used, which represents what Bhattacharya (1974), Ross (2001), and LaPolla

(2009—see also 2015) have talked about as converging on a common way of construing events in the world.¹⁷

The last two papers in this volume are about the language contact in the northwest of China, a traditional crossroads where speakers of Tibetan varieties, Turkic varieties, Mongolic varieties, and Sinitic varieties have interacted for centuries. The first of the two papers is by Charles N. Li, one of the first to investigate the contact varieties in that area. In this 1983 paper, “Languages in contact in Western China”, he discusses three varieties: i) the Wutun language, a Chinese variety of Qinghai Province heavily influenced by the surrounding Tibetan variety; ii) the variety of Chinese spoken by the Hui people of the Linxia Hui Autonomous District in southwestern Gansu Province (previously called Hezhou, and so the Chinese variety there is often referred to as Hezhou in English or Hezhouhua in Chinese), which is heavily influenced by Altaic languages;¹⁸ and iii) the Baonan language, a Mongolian language, also spoken in the Linxia Hui Autonomous District, heavily influenced by Chinese. Li (p. 35) points out that in that one district, which he says is about the size of a California county, the following ethnic groups live and interact: “the Baonan people, the Santa people, the Han Chinese, Tibetans, and Salars as well as the Hui”, each speaking different linguistic varieties, from four different language families (Mongolian—Santa and Baonan, Amdo Tibetan, Turkic—Salar, and Sinitic—Hui and Han varieties, which are distinct). The paper and others written since then about these languages show how similar the grammatical and phonological structures have become among these languages.¹⁹ This is why Arienne Dwyer (1995), the author of our next article, refers to this area as a Sprachbund.

¹⁷ For the general language situation in Nepal, see Toba 1992, Kansakar 1996, and Eagle 1999, and for other examples of the influence of language contact, see Noonan 1996, 2003, and 2008.

¹⁸ Wurm (1997) argues that Linxia/Hezhou Chinese looks more like a variety that had an Altaic language as its base, with a strong Chinese superstratum influence. This would explain why the structure is mainly Altaic, but the lexical items and phonetics are more Chinese.

¹⁹ For more information about Wutun, see Chen Naixiong 1986, Lee-Smith & Wurm 1996a, Sandman 2016. For more information about Hezhou/Linxia Chinese, see Ma 1984, Dwyer 1992, Lee-Smith & Wurm 1996b, Lanzhou Daxue Zhongwenxi Linxia Diaocha Yanjiuzu 1996, Wurm 1997. For other languages and more general works about the area, see Zhang & Zhu 1987, Dede 2007, Xu 2014, Yixiweisa 2003, Cao, Djamouri & Peyraube 2015, Zhou 2016.

Dwyer's paper in this volume, "Altaic elements in the Linxia dialect: Contact-induced change on the Yellow River Plateau", like Bendix's, discussed above, looks at convergences in the way people in the area have come to profile events in the same way, and make certain distinctions that aren't made in Standard Chinese. She focuses on three aspects of the variety of the Linxia dialect spoken by the Han people (unlike Li's focus on the variety spoken by the Hui): i) how the Linxia and Xining varieties of Chinese, like other non-Sinitic languages of the area, divide up the semantic domain of 'small' with two different lexical items, *ka*⁴⁴ and *çio*⁴⁴, with the former used for the sense of 'small and cute', where the latter just means 'small'; ii) forms used to express instrumental and comitative senses are in one case calques on Mongolian, and in the other case a loan of the Mongolian form; iii) the use of what seems to be the Mandarin copula *ɣ* as a clause-final conditional marker in a pattern similar to that of the neighbouring Altaic languages and Tibetan.

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