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## Hmong-Mien Languages

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### Introduction

Hmong-Mien is a compact language family of East and Southeast Asia. Its speakers are found primarily in southern China and the northern highlands of Vietnam, Thailand, Laos, and Myanmar (Burma). Most speakers of Hmong-Mien languages belong to the so-called Miao and Yao ethnicities (or nationalities). Due to geopolitical circumstances, many speakers of two Hmong-Mien languages from Laos—Hmong and Lu Mien—emigrated to Western countries (the United States, Canada, Australia, Argentina, France, French Guyana, and Germany) between 1970 and 1998, leading to the current worldwide distribution of this language family. Hmong-Mien has two primary branches: Hmongic and Mienic. Hmongic is larger (in terms of number of speakers) and has greater internal diversity. It has also been the focus of more efforts at documentation. As a result, more literature is available on Hmongic languages than Mienic languages. This bibliography represents an attempt to include as many resources on Mienic as possible but nevertheless reflects this fundamental imbalance in sources.

### General Overviews

There are several useful overviews of Hmong-Mien languages, all of which are either lamentably brief or not available in English. An early overview that still may be useful is given in Strecker 1987. Hmong-Mien studies have developed considerably since this article was published, particularly with regard to the classification of Ho Ne (Ho Nte or She), but Strecker 1987 still provides a useful guide to the terminology used for major language varieties in Hmong-Mien. Another, very brief, overview is given in Ratliff 1994. A more recent overview is found in the first chapter of Ratliff 2010.

**Ratliff, Martha. 1994. Hmong-Mien (Miao-Yao) languages. In *The encyclopedia of language and linguistics*. Vol. 3. Edited by Ronald E. Asher and J. M. Y. Simpson, 1586–1587. New York: Pergamon.**

A useful, brief overview of the Hmong-Mien language family.

**Ratliff, Martha S. 2010. *Hmong-Mien language history*. Canberra, Australia: Pacific Linguistics.**

While this book is primarily about the history of Hmong-Mien, the first chapter (pp. 1–9) provides a useful overview of the Hmong-Mien language family.

**Strecker, David. 1987. The Hmong-Mien languages. *Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area* 10.2: 1–11.**

This somewhat dated introduction is useful as a guide to terminology used for Hmong-Mien language varieties.

## Dictionaries

A substantial number of dictionaries have been produced for different Hmong-Mien languages. These fall into three major categories: English and French dictionaries produced by Christian missionaries to aid in evangelization efforts, dictionaries produced by linguists as a part of efforts to document minority languages, and English and French practical dictionaries produced to aid Hmong and Lu Mien refugees and their descendants living in Western countries.

### Hmong Dictionaries

There are a rich array of dictionaries of Hmong Daw (White Hmong) and Mong Leng (Green Mong), here referred to collectively as "Hmong." These range from scholarly works intended for use by linguists (e.g., Lyman 1974) to practical dictionaries produced for Hmong speakers learning English and English speakers learning Hmong (e.g., Xiong 2005). Two of these were produced by Christian missionaries proselytizing Hmong: Heimbach 1979, which is in English, and Bertrais 1979, which is in French. Until recently, these were the most extensive lexical resources for Hmong. However, they both describe Hmong Daw, as does the obscure Yang 1980. For Mong Leng, the reader is referred to Lyman 1974, a scholarly dictionary, and Xiong, et al. 1983, a practical, bidirectional dictionary intended for Hmong speakers learning English. Xiong 2005 is very extensive and is also available online. Finally, Pan Zhengfeng 1993 is a translation of Heimbach 1979 into Chinese, with some correction and expansion.

**Bertrais, Yves. 1979. *Dictionnaire Hmong–Français*. Bangkok: Sangwan Surasarang.**

An extensive dictionary of Hmong Daw in French.

**Heimbach, Ernest E. 1979. *White Hmong–English dictionary*. Ithaca, NY: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell Univ.**

A still-useful dictionary of Hmong Daw in English.

**Lyman, Thomas Amis. 1974. *Dictionary of Mong Njua: A Miao (Meo) language of Southeast Asia*. Paris: Mouton.**

A Mong Leng dictionary written in English. Useful but sometimes challenging to use because it employs a nonstandard writing system.

**Pan Zhengfeng 潘征峰. 1993. *Miao Han ci dian = Phau ntawv txhais lus Hmoob-Suav* (苗汉词典). Kunming Shi, China: Yunnan renmin chubanshe.**

An expanded translation of Heimbach 1979 into Chinese. Contains many useful examples.

**Xiong, Jay. 2005. *Lus Hmoob Txhais (English–Hmong dictionary)*. 2d ed. Manitowoc, WI: HmongDictionary.com.**

The newest major dictionary of Hmong (Hmong Daw). Produced by a native speaker of Hmong. An online version is available on Hmong Dictionary.com.

**Xiong, Lang, Joua Xiong, and Nao Leng Xiong. 1983. *English–Mong-English dictionary = Phoo txhais lug Aakiv-Moob-Aakiv*. Milwaukee, WI: Xiong Partnership.**

A useful Mong Leng–English and English–Mong Leng dictionary produced by native speakers of Hmong.

**Yang, Dao. 1980. *Dictionnaire Francais–Hmong Blanc = Phau ntawv txhais lus Fab Kis*. Paris: Comité National d'Entraide & Jacques Lemoine.**

A difficult-to-obtain French–Hmong Daw dictionary produced by a well-known Hmong scholar.

## Dictionaries of Other Hmongic Languages

Relatively few dictionaries exist for other Hmongic languages. Those that do are written largely in Chinese. Meng 2008 is a dictionary of the Western Hmongic language Bunu. Taguchi 2008 documents another Western Hmongic variety, A-Hmyo or Luobohe Miao. Xiang 1992 documents the Northern Hmongic language Qo Xiong. The Eastern Hmongic language Hmu is documented in Zhang 1990.

**Meng Chaoji 蒙朝吉. 2008. *Yao Han ci dian: (Bunu yu) (汉瑶词典)*. Beijing Shi: Minzu chubanshe.**

A dictionary of the Bunu language, a Western Hmongic language spoken by a subset of the Yao nationality.

**Taguchi, Yoshihisa. 2008. *A vocabulary of Luobohe Miao*. Tokyo: Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa.**

A vocabulary of the Luobohe dialect of Western Hmongic (A-Hmyo).

**Xiang Rizheng 向日征. 1992. *Han Miao ci dian (Xiang xi fang yan) (汉苗词典 (湘西方言))*. Chengdu, China: Si chuan Minzu chubanshe.**

A Chinese–Qo Xiong (Northern Hmongic) dictionary.

**Zhang Yongxiang 张永祥. 1990. *Hmub-diel cif dieex = Miao han ci dian (苗汉词典)*. Gui yang, China: Gui zhou Minzu chubanshe.**

A Hmu (Eastern Hmongic)–Chinese dictionary.

## Iu Mien Dictionaries

Just as dictionaries for Hmong far outnumber dictionaries for other Hmongic languages, dictionaries of Iu Mien are more numerous than dictionaries of other Mienic languages. Lombard and Purnell 1968 is an early dictionary produced by missionary linguists that may still be useful despite its use of a nonstandard orthography. Mao 1992 is a more compact dictionary produced by a noted Chinese linguist and expert on Mienic languages. Panh 2002 is an extensive, bidirectional dictionary in the standard orthography produced by a native speaker of Mien for Mien speakers learning English. Shintani 2011 provides a classified lexicon rather than a traditional dictionary. Finally, Purnell 2012 is a thoroughly researched and extensive dictionary in the standard orthography produced by a notable expert on Iu Mien.

**Lombard, Sylvia J., and Herbert C. Purnell. 1968. *Yao-English dictionary*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, Southeast Asia Program.**

A useful and comprehensive source. Compiled using a writing system that is no longer in widespread use. Largely superseded in

Purnell 2012.

**Mao Zongwu 毛宗武. 1992. *Han yao jian ming fen lei ci dian: Mian yu* (汉瑶简明分类词典). Chengdu, China: Sichuan Minzu chubanshe.**

A Chinese–lu Mien dictionary.

**Panh, Smith. 2002. *Modern English–Mienh and Mienh–English dictionary*. Victoria, BC: Trafford.**

Extensive bidirectional dictionary written using the contemporary, standardized orthography.

**Purnell, Herbert C. 2012. *An lu-Mienh—English dictionary*. Chiangmai, Thailand: Silkworm.**

The most extensive dictionary of lu Mien, written by a linguist and noted expert on lu Mien language and culture. Uses the contemporary, standardized orthography.

**Shintani, Tadahiko. 2011. *The Mien language of Jinping county: Its classified lexicon*. Tokyo: Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa.**

A vocabulary of Mien as spoken in Jinping County, China, arranged by semantic field.

## Dictionaries of Other Mienic Languages

There are at least two lexical collections, both by Tadahiko Shintani, which describe varieties of Mun, a Mienic language. Both are arranged by semantic field rather than using traditional lexicographic ordering. Shintani 1990 describes Mun as it is spoken on Hainan Island. Shintani 2008 describes the variety of Mun spoken in Fuding county, China.

**Shintani, Tadahiko. 1990. *The Mun language of Hainan Island: Its classified lexicon*. Tokyo: Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa.**

A vocabulary of Mun as spoken on Hainan Island, China, arranged by semantic field.

**Shintani, Tadahiko. 2008. *The Mun language of Funding county: Its classified lexicon*. Tokyo: Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa.**

A vocabulary of Mun as spoken on Fuding county, China, arranged by semantic field.

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## Edited Collections

A couple of useful collections containing content relevant to Hmong-Mien languages have been published. Purnell 1972 concentrates entirely on language and linguistic issues. Tapp, et al. 2004 is the proceedings from a conference on Hmong in Asia and contains a variety of papers on Hmong and Hmongic linguistics.

**Purnell, Herbert C., ed. 1972. *Miao and Yao linguistic studies*. Data Papers 88. Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Southeast Asia Program.**

An early but still useful collection of articles from Chinese academic journals translated into English.

**Tapp, Nicholas, Jean Michaud, Christian Culas, and Gary Yia Lee, eds. 2004. *Hmong/Miao in Asia*. Chiangmai, Thailand: Silkworm.**

A collection of articles relevant to the situation of Hmong in Asia, including a substantial set of important articles on Hmong and Hmongic linguistics.

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## Bibliographies

While it is much more than a bibliography, Niederer 1998 includes the most extensive collection of references on Hmong-Mien languages to date, including all of the substantial literature on Hmong-Mien published in Chinese up to 1997. It also includes a useful appendix that associates all described language varieties with specific bibliographic entries. In addition, there are two online bibliographic databases that are important when looking for research literature on Hmong-Mien languages. These are the Southeast Asian Linguistics Archive and the China Academic Journals Bibliographic Database, part of the China National Knowledge Infrastructure.

### **China Academic Journals Bibliographic Database.**

Very large database of academic literature published in China. Access to full-text articles is available to subscribers and subscribing institutions.

**Niederer, Barbara. 1998. *Les langues Hmong-Mjen (Miáo-Yáo)*. LINCOS Studies in Asian Linguistics 07. Munich: LINCOS Europa.**

A reference work on Hmong-Mien historical phonology that includes a comprehensive bibliography of Hmong-Mien linguistics.

### **Southeast Asian Linguistics Archive.**

Large database of literature published on Southeast Asian languages including many conference proceedings, festschrifts, and minor journals. Provides free access to full text of many articles.

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## Journals

There are no journals dedicated primarily to Hmong-Mien languages or Miao-Yao studies. However, there are a number of journals that frequently publish articles on Hmong-Mien languages. *Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area* specializes in linguistic studies of languages of mainland Southeast Asia and the surrounding area. Over the years, it has published a number of important works on Hmong-Mien languages including a special issue devoted to Hmong-Mien linguistics (1987, 10.2). Likewise, *Mon-Khmer Studies Journal* has published a number of significant articles on Hmong-Mien studies. More recently, some significant work on Hmong-Mien languages has appeared in the *Journal of the Southeast Asian Linguistic Society*. All of these journals are published independently, but much of their historical content is available through the Southeast Asia Linguistics Archive (cited under Bibliographies), an

electronic database of linguistic research on Southeast Asian languages. Additionally, a number of important articles on Hmong-Mien studies have appeared in *Cahiers de Linguistique Asie Orientale*, a journal specializing in both the descriptive and theoretical aspects of East and Southeast Asian languages. However, the greatest volume of journal articles on Hmong-Mien languages has appeared in the Chinese journal *Minzu Yuwen* (*Minority Languages of China*).

***Cahiers de Linguistique Asie Orientale*. 1977–.**

A peer-reviewed journal concentrating on both descriptive and theoretical issues in the languages of East and Southeast Asia. Issues up to 36.2 (2007) are available online without a subscription. More recent articles are available online by subscription.

***Journal of the Southeast Asian Linguistics Society*. 2007–.**

The peer-reviewed journal of the Southeast Asian Linguistics Society (SEALS). A continuation of the SEALS Conference Proceedings series. Available online.

***Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area*. 1974–.**

A journal specializing in the Tibeto-Burman language family that also publishes articles on other Southeast Asian language families, including Hmong-Mien. Issues up to 29.2 (2006) are available online.

***Minzu Yuwen* (*Minority Languages of China*). 1979–.**

A journal about minority languages of China, including many important articles on Hmong-Mien languages. The contents of this journal can be found in the China National Knowledge Infrastructure.

***Mon-Khmer Studies Journal*. 1964–.**

A journal specializing in Mon-Khmer languages that has also published significant work on Hmong-Mien. Volumes up to 38 (2008) are available online.

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## Grammars and Descriptions of Individual Languages

Although Hmong-Mien as a family is still underdescribed, a number of grammatical descriptions of individual languages have appeared. Much of this work has been done by Chinese scholars and is published only in Chinese. This includes the series of sketch grammars (*jianzhi*) that were published by Nationalities Press (*Minzu chubanshe*) during the 1980s and a series of more recent and more extensive descriptions that have appeared from a variety of publishers. However, there are also book-length descriptions of one Hmongic language, Hmong, published in English, French, and German. The descriptions below are categorized according to language (Hmong, Other Hmongic Languages, and Mienic Languages).

### Hmong

As used here, “Hmong” refers to Hmong Daw (White Hmong), Mong Leng (Green Mong), and other dialects of the same language. The most widely cited grammar of Hmong remains Mottin 1978, a description of Hmong Daw. Other useful resources include Lyman 1979, a description of Mong Leng, and Harriehausen 1990, another description of Mong Leng written using computational and corpus-based methods.

**Harriehausen, Bettina. 1990. *Hmong Njua: Syntaktische analyse einer gesprochenen sprache mithilfe datenverarbeitungstechnischer mittel und sprachvergleichende beschreibung des südostasiatischen sprachraumes*. Tübingen, Germany: Max Niemeyer.**

A German-language description of Mong Leng (Green Hmong) produced using corpus-linguistic and computational methods. Sometimes eccentric but useful.

**Lyman, Thomas A. 1979. *Grammar of Mong Njua (Green Miao): A descriptive linguistic study*. Sattley, CA: Blue Oak.**

A brief grammar of Mong Leng (Green Hmong). Uses idiosyncratic terminology and the author's nonstandard orthography.

**Mottin, Jean. 1978. *Éléments de grammaire Hmong Blanc*. Mumbai: Don Bosco.**

A brief grammar in French of Hmong Daw (White Hmong). The most widely cited Hmong grammar.

## Other Hmongic Languages

Until the late 1990s, descriptions of Hmongic languages other than Hmong Daw and Mong Leng were largely limited to the Miao languages that were selected for development by Chinese scholars, Ho Ne (She), and Bunu (Dongnu), a Western Hmongic language spoken by members of the Yao nationality. Wang 1985, for example, presents a description of a single language, Hmu, as well as descriptive details for a number of other Miao languages selected for development. Mao and Meng 1986 is a sketch of Ho Ne (She). Mao, et al. 1982 is a collection of sketches of languages spoken by the Yao nationalities, including one Hmongic language, Bunu (Dongnu). The situation has improved considerably, with a recent surge in publications on "minor" Hmongic languages by Chinese scholars Mao Zongwu and Li Yunbing. Mao and Li 1997 is a comprehensive description of Pa-hng (Baheng). Mao and Li 2002 is a similar work on Kiongnai (Jiongnai). Finally, Mao and Li 2007 is an equivalent volume for the Yunuo language.

**Mao Zongwu 毛宗武, and Li Yunbing 李云兵. 1997. *Baheng yu yan jiu* (巴哼语研究). Shanghai: Shanghai yuandong chubanshe.**

A description of the Pa-hng (Baheng) language.

**Mao Zongwu 毛宗武, and Li Yunbing 李云兵. 2002. *Jiongnai yu yan jiu* (炯奈语研究). Beijing: Zhongyang minzu daxue chubanshe.**

A description of the Jiongnai (Kiongnai) language.

**Mao Zongwu 毛宗武, and Li Yunbing 李云兵. 2007. *Yunuo yu yan jiu* (优诺语研究). Beijing: Minzu chubanshe.**

A description of the Yunuo language.

**Mao Zongwu 毛宗武, and Meng Chaoji 蒙朝吉. 1986. *She yu jian zhi* (畲语简志). Beijing: Minzu chubanshe.**

A sketch grammar of the Ho Ne (She) language.

**Mao Zongwu 毛宗武, Zheng Zongze 郑宗泽, and Meng Chaoji 蒙朝吉. 1982. *Yao zu yu yan jian zhi* (瑶族语言简志). Beijing: Minzu chubanshe.**

An introduction to the languages spoken by the Yao nationality, including a grammatical sketch of Bunu, a Western Hmongic language.

**Wang Fushi 王辅世. 1985. *Miao yu jian zhi* (苗语简志). Beijing: Minzu chubanshe.**

An introduction to the Hmongic language family, including a complete grammatical sketch of one language, Hmu, distributed over the chapters on phonology, lexicon, and grammar.

## Mienic Languages

Descriptions of Mienic languages are largely limited to Lu Mien. The most extensive of these is Court 1985, an unpublished dissertation. The best-rounded description of Lu Mien in a published source can be found in Mao, et al. 1982. Solnit 1985 is a brief description of another Mienic language, Biao Min.

**Court, Christopher Anthony Forbes. 1985. *Fundamentals of lu Mien (Yao) grammar*. PhD diss., Univ. of California, Berkeley.**

Dissertation describing the grammar of Lu Mien.

**Mao Zongwu 毛宗武, Zheng Zongze 郑宗泽, and Meng Chaoji 蒙朝吉. 1982. *Yao zu yu yan jian zhi* (瑶族语言简志). Beijing: Minzu chubanshe.**

A sketch of the languages spoken by the Yao nationality, including Lu Mien.

**Solnit, David B. 1985. *Introduction to the Biao Min Yao language*. *Cahiers de Linguistique Asie Orientale* 14.2: 175–191.**

A grammatical sketch of the Biao Min language.

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## Historical Issues

The best-researched aspect of Hmong-Mien languages is their history. This is due to the work of excellent scholars such as Wang Fushi and Mao Zongwu in China, Gordon Downer in Britain, Herbert Purnell and Martha Ratliff in the United States, and Barbara Niederer in France. However, while some issues in Hmong-Mien historical linguistics have been settled, others remain open. The following discussion is divided into five categories: the still-unsettled question of the relationship of Hmong-Mien to other language families, the more settled but still developing question of how the languages that are classified as Hmong-Mien relate to one another (internal subclassification), the substantial literature on the reconstruction of Proto-Hmong-Mien, the history of grammatical features of Hmong-Mien languages, and the history of lexical borrowing between Hmong-Mien languages and other languages of East and Southeast Asia.

## Relations to Other Families

Although there is little debate regarding which languages belong in Hmong-Mien, there is still no universal consensus regarding



whether Hmong-Mien is best treated as an independent language family or is genetically related to one or more of the other language families in the East and Southeast Asian linguistic area. The dominant position of Chinese scholars has been that Hmong-Mien is part of an expansive Sino-Tibetan family that also includes Tibeto-Burman, Chinese, and Tai-Kadai. Few Western scholars accept this position. Generally, they treat Hmong-Mien as an independent family (Ratliff 2010). On the other hand, various attempts have been made to relate Hmong-Mien to other Asian language families. These include Benedict 1975, an Austro-Thai hypothesis, which groups Hmong-Mien with Austronesian and Tai-Kadai; a related proposal in Kosaka 2002 grouping Hmong-Mien with Tai-Kadai; and the Austric hypothesis that (in some versions) groups Hmong-Mien with Austro-Asiatic (Mon-Khmer and Munda), Austronesian, and possibly Tai-Kadai. In Peiros 1998, a version of Austric, Hmong-Mien is held to be especially close to Austroasiatic, mirroring an earlier claim in Haudricourt 1966. However, none of these proposals has gained widespread acceptance among scholars. A useful review of the best existing lexical evidence for these various proposals can be found in Ratliff 2010 (Section 6.3, pp. 234–238).

**Benedict, Paul K. 1975. *Austro-Thai language and culture, with a glossary of roots*. New Haven, CT: HRAF.**

Proposes that Hmong-Mien is to be included in an Austro-Thai family along with Tai-Kadai and Austronesian. Includes an extensive glossary of proposed etymologies.

**Haudricourt, André G. 1966. The limits and connections of Austroasiatic in the Northeast. In *Studies in comparative Austroasiatic linguistics*. Edited by Norman H. Zide, 44–56. The Hague: Mouton.**

Proposes a relationship between Hmong-Mien and Austroasiatic.

**Kosaka, Ryuichi. 2002. On the affiliation of Miao-Yao and Kadai: Can we posit the Miao-Dai family? *Mon-Khmer Studies Journal* 32:71–100.**

Argues, on the basis of phonological correspondences, for a special relationship between Hmong-Mien (Miao-Yao) and Tai-Kadai.

**Peiros, Ilia. 1998. *Comparative linguistics in Southeast Asia*. Canberra, Australia: Pacific Linguistics.**

This book discusses both the internal and external classification of the major language families of Southeast Asia. Includes a proposal that Hmong-Mien (Miao-Yao) bears a special relationship to Austroasiatic.

**Ratliff, Martha S. 2010. *Hmong-Mien language history*. Canberra, Australia: Pacific Linguistics.**

In addition to presenting a reconstruction of Proto-Hmong-Mien, this work also identifies the strongest cases of lexical resemblances between Hmong-Mien and other Southeast Asian language families.

## Internal Subclassification

There are still a number of open questions regarding the structure of the Hmong-Mien language family. These may be seen in part as competition between Chinese classificatory models, which take into account cultural characteristics and ethnic affiliation, and Western classificatory models, which are based on purely linguistic criteria. Niederer 1998 provides a useful summary of the consensus classification used by Chinese scholars prior to Wang and Mao 1995. Wang and Mao 1995 presents a tripartite classification of Hmong-Mien with a Hmongic (Miao) branch, a Mienic (Yao) branch, and a Ho Ne (She) branch. This tripartite classification has been challenged by subsequent scholars, such as in Ratliff 1998, which argues that Ho Ne belongs in the Hmong branch on the basis of shared innovations. Peiros 1998 arrives at a similar conclusion on the basis of lexicostatistical comparison. Another debated issue concerns the classification of the Hmongic languages spoken by members of the Yao nationality, including

Bunu, Pa-hng, Kiong-nai (Jiong-nai), and Yu-nuo. Niederer 2004, for example, argues that Pa-hng is the most conservative of the Hmongic languages and that it diverged from the Hmongic branch earlier than all the other Hmongic languages. Aside from high-level issues of this nature, there is a developing literature on the internal structure of subgroups within Hmong-Mien, including Aumann and Sidwell 2004 on Mienic and both Castro and Gu 2010 and Castro, et al. 2012 on Hmong.

**Aumann, Greg, and Paul Sidwell. 2004. Subgrouping of Mienic languages: Some observations. In *Papers from the Eleventh Annual Meeting of the Southeast Asian Linguistics Society*. Edited by Somsonge Burusphat, 13–27. Tempe: Arizona State Univ., Program for Southeast Asian Studies.**

Summarizes past attempts to subclassify the Mienic languages and presents a new classification based on shared phonological innovations.

**Castro, Andy, Royce Flaming, and Luo Youliang. 2012. A phonological and lexical comparison of Western Miao dialects in Honghe. SIL Electronic Survey Report 2012–010. Dallas: SIL International.**

A subclassification of the Core Farwestern Hmongic dialects spoken in Honghe prefecture, Yunnan province, China.

**Castro, Andy, and Gu Chaowen. 2010. Phonological innovation among Hmong dialects of Wenshan. *Journal of the Southeast Asian Linguistics Society* 3.1: 1–39.**

A subclassification of the Core Farwestern Hmongic dialects spoken in Wenshan prefecture, Yunnan province, China.

**Niederer, Barbara. 1998. *Les langues Hmong-Mjen (Miáo-Yáo)*. LINCOS Studies in Asian Linguistics 07. Munich: LINCOS Europa.**

Provides a useful summary of the consensus Chinese classification of Hmong-Mien prior to Wang and Mao 1995.

**Niederer, Barbara. 2004. Pa-Hng and the classification of the Hmong-Mien languages. In *Hmong-Miao in Asia*. Edited by Nicholas Tapp, Jean Michaud, Christian Culas, and Gary Yia Lee, 129–146. Chiang Mai, Thailand: Silkworm.**

Argues that Pa-hng is the most conservative of the Hmongic languages and separated from the Hmongic branch earlier than any other Hmongic languages, including Ho Ne.

**Peiros, Ilia. 1998. *Comparative linguistics in Southeast Asia*. Canberra, Australia: Pacific Linguistics.**

A historical treatment of all major language families of Southeast Asia. Includes a subclassification of Hmong-Mien based on lexicostatistical methods.

**Ratliff, Martha. 1998. Ho Ne (She) is Hmongic: One final argument. *Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area* 21.2: 97–109.**

Considers the various proposals for classifying Ho No (She) and argues, on the basis of shared phonological innovations, that Ho Ne is Hmongic.

**Wang Fushi王辅世, and Mao Zongwu毛宗武. 1995. *Miao Yao yu gu yin gou ni* (苗瑶语古音构拟). Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui kexue chubanshe.**

Presents a detailed classification of the Hmong-Mien languages. Though this classification has been challenged on a number of points, it remains a useful reference.

## Comparative Reconstruction

A large proportion of scholarly attention toward Hmong-Mien languages has been devoted to the phonological reconstruction of Proto-Hmongic, Proto-Mienic, and Proto-Hmong-Mien. The first scholar to do serious work in this area was Chang Kun, who reconstructed the Proto-Hmong-Mien tone system in Chang 1953, Chang 1966, and Chang 1972. Chang also addressed the onsets of Proto-Hmongic in Chang 1976. Chang's work was followed in Purnell 1970, a thesis in which the author proposes reconstructions for Proto-Hmongic, Proto-Mienic, and Proto-Hmong-Mien. Another major landmark in comparative Hmong-Mien studies was the publication of Wang and Mao 1995, a reconstruction of Proto-Hmong-Mien incorporating a large amount of previously unavailable data. Niederer 1998 is the most important reference work for Hmong-Mien reconstruction and summarizes the literature on this subject prior to 1995. L-Thongkum 1997 presents a new reconstruction of Proto-Mienic, also based on new data. Peiros 1998 also presents new reconstructions of various proto-languages within the Hmong-Mien family. Johnson 2002 provides a rigorous and highly detailed reconstruction of a principled subset of sounds within a small subgroup of Western Hmongic. Ratliff 2010 presents a state-of-the-art reconstruction of Proto-Hmong-Mien, as well as an examination of various related issues in the histories of Hmong-Mien languages.

**Chang, Kun. 1953. On the tone system of the Miao-Yao languages. *Language* 29.3: 374–378.**

An English translation of a 1947 article in Chinese. Reconstructs the tonal system of Hmong-Mien in terms of abstract historical categories, based primarily on Hmongic data.

**Chang, Kun. 1966. A comparative study of the Yao tone system. *Language* 42.2: 303–310.**

Reconstructs the tone system of Proto-Mienic, based on then newly available Mienic data.

**Chang, Kun. 1972. The reconstruction of Miao-Yao tones. *Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica* 44:541–628.**

Presents further refinements in the reconstruction of the Proto-Hmong-Mien tone system.

**Chang, Kun. 1976. Proto-Miao initials. *Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology* 47.2: 155–218.**

A pioneering attempt to reconstruct the onsets of Proto-Hmongic.

**Johnson, Michael. 2002. The reconstruction of labial stop + sonorant clusters in Proto-Far-Western Hmongic. *Transactions of the Philological Society* 100.1: 25–58.**

A reconstruction of labial stop + sonorant clusters in Proto-Far Western Hmongic, the author's term for the ancestor of a subset of Western Hmongic languages.

**L-Thongkum, Theraphan. 1997. A view on Proto-Mjuenic (Yao). *Mon-Khmer Studies* 22:163–230.**

A widely cited reconstruction of Proto-Mienic based on data collected by the author.

**Niederer, Barbara. 1998. *Les langues Hmong-Mjen (Miáo-Yáo)*. LINCOS Studies in Asian Linguistics 07. Munich: LINCOS Europa.**

An essential reference for research on Hmong-Mien historical comparison. Includes an exhaustive bibliography and guide to language varieties.

**Peiros, Iliá. 1998. *Comparative linguistics in Southeast Asia*. Canberra, Australia: Pacific Linguistics.**

Includes brief reconstructions of Proto-Hmongic (Proto-Miao), Proto-Mienic (Proto-Yao), and Proto-Hmong-Mien (Proto-Miao-Yao).

**Purnell, Herbert C. 1970. *Toward a reconstruction of Proto-Miao-Yao*. PhD diss., Cornell Univ.**

An early reconstruction of Proto-Hmongic, Proto-Mienic, and Proto-Hmong-Mien. Now largely superseded in Ratliff 2010 but still a useful reference.

**Ratliff, Martha S. 2010. *Hmong-Mien language history*. Canberra, Australia: Pacific Linguistics.**

The most recent and up-to-date reconstruction of Proto-Hmong Mien.

**Wang Fushi王辅世, and Mao Zongwu毛宗武. 1995. *Miao Yao yu gu yin gou ni* (苗瑶语古音构拟). Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui kexue chubanshe.**

A reconstruction of Proto-Hmong-Mien by two noted scholars. An essential source of data and cognate sets.

## Historical Grammar

The Hmongic language Ahmao (also known as Shimen Hmong) has developed a number of typologically unusual morphological features. Two studies seek to uncover the historical roots of these patterns. Ratliff 1992 argues that a tonal distinction between nouns and non-nouns arose because of the influence of nominalizing prefixes, which have since been lost. Gerner and Bisang 2010 argues that Ahmao's complex system of classifier inflections marking definiteness, size, and social deixis arose from reanalysis of nominal constructions and that this reanalysis is linked to the speakers' history of gender-asymmetrical oppression by local landlords.

**Gerner, Matthias, and Walter Bisang. 2010. *Inflectional classifiers in Weining Ahmao: Mirror of the history of a people*. *Folia Linguistica Historica* 30.1: 183–218.**

Describes the system of classifier inflections in Weining Ahmao (Weining Miao) and argues that these arose via metanalysis. This change is linked to the social history of the speakers.

**Ratliff, Martha. 1992. *The development of nominal/non-nominal class marking by tone in Shimen Hmong*. In *Proceedings of the 17th Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society*. Edited by Laurel Sutton and Christopher Johnson, 267–282. Berkeley, CA: Berkeley Linguistics Society.**

A conference paper that demonstrates that the tonal marking of nouns and non-nouns in A-Hmao (Weining Miao) developed from an older set of nominalizing prefixes that have since been lost but have left their tonal effects behind.

## Lexical Borrowing

An interesting discussion in the history of Hmong-Mien languages has concerned the source of shared vocabulary between Hmong-Mien and neighboring language families. It is generally agreed that Hmong-Mien languages have borrowed a large amount of vocabulary from Chinese languages, a fact that is explored in Downer 1973 for Lu Mien. However, Haudricourt and Strecker 1991 advances the novel thesis that certain words, including “buy” and “sell,” were borrowed from Hmong-Mien by Chinese. This thesis is countered in Sagart 1995, which argues that the direction of borrowing must have been from Chinese to Hmong. Ratliff 2009a provides a systematic survey of loanwords in Hmong Daw (White Hmong). It is accompanied in Ratliff 2009b, a database of Hmong Daw lexical items categorized according to their likely historical origin. Ratliff 2010 provides a comprehensive overview of early Chinese borrowings in Hmong-Mien, as well as listing lexical resemblances between Hmong-Mien and other area language families.

**Downer, Gordon B. 1973. Strata of Chinese loanwords in the Mien dialect of Yao. *Asia Major* 18.1: 1–33.**

An attempt to divide the Chinese loanwords in Lu Mien into historical strata on the basis of phonological criteria.

**Haudricourt, André-Georges, and David Strecker. 1991. Hmong-Mien (Miao-Yao) loans in Chinese. *International Journal of Chinese Studies* 77 (4/5): 335–341.**

Presents an interesting argument that certain Hmong-Mien terms for commerce and agriculture were borrowed into Chinese.

**Ratliff, Martha. 2009a. Loanwords in White Hmong. In *Loanwords in the world's languages: A comparative handbook*. Edited by Martin Haspelmath and Uri Tadmor, 638–658. Berlin: de Gruyter.**

A study that categorizes the loanwords in Hmong Daw (White Hmong) according to origin.

**Ratliff, Martha. 2009b. White Hmong vocabulary. In *World Loanword Database*. Edited by Martin Haspelmath and Uri Tadmor. Munich: Max Planck Digital Library.**

A database of lexical items in Hmong Daw (White Hmong) categorized according to their origin (whether there is evidence for borrowing and what the likely source is).

**Ratliff, Martha S. 2010. *Hmong-Mien language history*. Canberra, Australia: Pacific Linguistics.**

A reconstruction of Proto-Hmong-Mien, innovative in that it makes a systematic attempt to separate native vocabulary from Chinese loans.

**Sagart, Laurent. 1995. Chinese “buy” and “sell” and the direction of borrowings between Chinese and Hmong-Mien. *T'oung Pao* 81.4–5: 328–342.**

A response to Haudricourt and Strecker 1991 arguing that the direction of borrowing for terms such as “buy” and “sell” was from Chinese to Hmong-Mien and not the reverse.

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## Hmong-Mien Languages in Areal Context

A few interesting studies have been conducted that examine Hmong-Mien languages from the standpoint of the linguistic area in

which they reside. These studies compare the grammatical and other features of Hmong-Mien languages (usually Hmong) to those of other languages of Southeast Asia, including Thai, Khmer, and Vietnamese as well as to Chinese. For example, Clark 1985 compares question-formation strategies in Hmong to those of other Southeast Asian languages. Clark 1989 takes a more general look at Hmong syntax as it relates to that of other languages in the area. Bisang 1992 focuses on serial verb constructions and finds both similarities and differences between these constructions in Hmong, Chinese, Vietnamese, Thai, and Khmer. Bisang 1999 analyzes the function of noun classifiers in East and Southeast Asian languages from an areal perspective.

**Bisang, Walter. 1992. *Das verb im Chinesischen, Hmong, Vietnamesischen, Thai und Khmer: Vergleichende grammatik im rahmen der verbserialisierung, der grammatikalisierung und der attraktorpositionen*. Vol. 7. Language Universals Series. Tübingen, Germany: Gunter Narr.**

A book-length study of verb serialization and related phenomenon in the Sinosphere.

**Bisang, Walter. 1999. Classifiers in East and Southeast Asian languages: Counting and beyond. In *Numeral types and changes worldwide*. Edited by Jadranka Gvozdanović, 113–185. Berlin: de Gruyter.**

A study of noun classifiers in East and Southeast Asian languages, including Hmong.

**Clark, Marybeth. 1985. Asking questions in Hmong and other Southeast Asian languages. *Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area* 8.2: 60–67.**

An area-oriented look at question formation in Hmong and other languages of Southeast Asia.

**Clark, Marybeth. 1989. Hmong and Areal South-East Asia. In *South-East Asian Syntax. Papers in South-East Asian Linguistics* 11. Edited by David Bradley, 175–230. Canberra, Australia: Australian National Univ.**

An examination of typological characteristics that Hmong shares with other languages of Southeast Asia.

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## Phonetics

Experimental studies on Hmong-Mien phonetics have tended to focus on the issue of phonation type, particularly phonation type differences in Hmong Daw (White Hmong). Both Hmong Daw and Mong Leng (Green Mong) feature phonation type differences among tones, a subject that is explored experimentally (for Hmong Daw) in Huffman 1985 and Huffman 1987 and (for Mong Leng) in Andruski and Ratliff 2000. In addition, Hmong Daw shows an interested phonation-type difference between the consonants represented orthographically as <d> and <dh>. The first acoustic investigation of this contrast was reported in Jarkey 1987. Later investigations of the relationship between this phonatory distinction between consonants and the breathy voicing of vowels bearing the orthographic <-g> tone include Fulop and Golston 2008 and Esposito and Khan 2012. Writing on other phonetic topics includes Sands 2003, a study of the tone system of an Eastern Hmongic language.

**Andruski, Jean E., and Martha Ratliff. 2000. Phonation types in production of phonological tone: The case of Green Mong. *Journal of the International Phonetic Association* 30.1–2: 37–61.**

A study reporting both acoustic measures and discriminant analyses of the relative roles of F0 and phonation type in distinguishing tonal categories in Mong Leng (Green Mong).

**Esposito, Christina M., and Sameer ud Dowla Khan. 2012. Contrastive breathiness across consonants and vowels: A comparative study of Gujarati and White Hmong. *Journal of the International Phonetic Association* 42.02: 123–143.**

A study examining how vocalic breathiness is differentiated from breathiness associated with consonants in Hmong Daw (White Hmong) and Gujarati using both acoustic and electroglottographic data.

**Fulop, Sean, and Chris Golston. 2008. Breathy and whispery voicing in White Hmong. *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America* 123.5: 3883–3883.**

A conference paper arguing that Hmong Daw (White Hmong) displays a three-way distinction between breathy, whispery, and modal voicing.

**Huffman, Marie King. 1985. *Measures of phonation type in Hmong*. MA thesis, Univ. of California, Los Angeles.**

A master's thesis exploring various measures of phonation type, including acoustic parameters (spectral tilt) and airflow measures.

**Huffman, Marie K. 1987. Measures of phonation type in Hmong. *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America* 81.2: 495.**

Study of phonation type differences in Hmong Daw (White Hmong) employing both airflow and acoustic measurements.

**Jarkey, Nerida. 1987. An investigation of two alveolar stop consonants in White Hmong. *Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area* 10.2: 57–70.**

An early acoustic investigation of the voicing properties of the Hmong Daw (White Hmong) consonants that are represented orthographically as <d> and <dh>.

**Sands, Kathy L. 2003. An acoustic analysis of Hmong (“Kaijue Miao”) tone. In *Papers from the Seventh Annual Meeting of the Southeast Asian Linguistics Society*. Edited by Karen L. Adams, Thomas John Hudak, and F. K. Lehman, 167–182. Tempe: Arizona State Univ., Program for Southeast Asian Studies.**

An acoustic analysis of tones of an Eastern Hmongic (Qiandong) dialect.

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## Phonology

Hmong-Mien synchronic phonology (as opposed to historical comparison) is an underdeveloped field. Phonological descriptions of languages (in English) are limited to Downer 1961, and outlines of phonological structure found in general descriptions (see Grammars and Descriptions of Individual Languages). Despite these limitations, a number of interesting issues in Hmong-Mien phonology have been raised. Downer 1967 pioneered research on tone sandhi in Hmong. Ratliff 1987 and Ratliff 1992 argue persuasively for a relationship between tone sandhi and other tonal phenomena on the one hand and morphology on the other. Strecker 1990 describes the tonal inventory of Mun. Macken 2002 raises interesting representational issues with regard to Hmong complex initials. Ratliff 2003 explores the phonological properties of language games in Hmong. Finally, the issue of tone-segment interactions is addressed descriptively in Xian 1990 and more theoretically in Mortensen 2013.

**Downer, Gordon B. 1961. Phonology of the word in Highland Yao. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies***

**24.3: 531–541.**

A phonological description of Lu Mien.

**Downer, Gordon B. 1967. Tone-change and tone-shift in White Miao. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 30.3: 589–599.**

A description of tonal processes in Hmong Daw (White Hmong).

**Macken, Marlys A. 2002. Hmong complex initials. In *Papers from the Tenth Annual Meeting of the Southeast Asian Linguistics Society*. Edited by Marlys Macken, 199–214. Tempe: Arizona State Univ., Program for Southeast Asian Studies.**

A study of the laryngeal features of complex onsets in Hmong. Argues on the basis of phonetic data that only the nasal portion of prenasalized onsets are [+voice].

**Mortensen, David R. 2013. Tonally conditioned vowel raising in Shuijingping Mang. *Journal of East Asian Linguistics* 22.3: 189–216.**

Argues that phonation type acted as a historical mediating factor between vowel quality and tone in Shuijingping Hmong tone-vowel interactions.

**Ratliff, Martha S. 1987. Tone Sandhi compounding in White Hmong. *Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area* 10.2: 71–105.**

Argues that tone sandhi acts as a marker of the compounding construction in Hmong.

**Ratliff, Martha S. 1992. *Meaningful tone: A study of tonal morphology in compounds, form classes, and expressive phrases in White Hmong*. Monograph Series on Southeast Asia 27. DeKalb: Northern Illinois Univ. Center for Southeast Asian Studies.**

The standard reference on Hmong Daw (White Hmong) tonal phonology and its relationship to morphology.

**Ratliff, Martha S. 2003. Hmong secret languages: Themes and variations. In *Language variation: Papers on variation and change in the Sinosphere and in the Indosphere in honour of James A. Matisoff*. Edited by David Bradley, Randy J. LaPolla, and Boyd Michailovsky, 21–33. Canberra, Australia: Pacific Linguistics.**

A study of “secret languages” (i.e., language games) employed by Hmong speakers and their phonological significance.

**Strecker, David. 1990. The tones of the Houei Sai dialect of the Mun language. *Cahiers de Linguistique Asie Orientale* 19.1: 5–33.**

Shows that the tones in the Houei Sai dialect of Mun (Kim Mun) are distinguished by phonation type as well as by pitch.

**Xian Songkui 鲜松奎. 1990. Guizhou ziyun shuijingping miaoyu he wangmo xinzhai miaoyu de liandu biandiao (贵州紫云水井坪苗语和望谟新寨苗语的连接变调). *Minzu Yuwen* 3: 71–77.**

Report describing tone-segment interactions related to the tone sandhi of two Western Hmongic dialects (the Miao Speech of



Shuijiping, Ziyun and the Miao Speech of Xinzhai, Wangmo in Guizhou). Shuijiping dialect displays a tone-vowel height interaction while Xinzhai displays a tone-consonant interaction.

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## Morphology

Hmong-Mien languages are typically highly isolating, with relatively little affixation. Most morphologically complex words are transparent compounds. The few affixes that exist are typically derivational. This is not to say, however, that Hmong-Mien languages lack interesting morphological properties. Hmong Daw (White Hmong), for example, displays interesting patterns of tonal morphology, which are summarized in Ratliff 1992 and also discussed in a series of articles. These include Ratliff 1986, on tonal derivation; Ratliff 1987, on the interaction between tone sandhi and compounding, and Ratliff 1997, on the tonal marking of demonstratives. A more typologically unusual set of morphological phenomena is discussed by Gerner and Bisang, who describe and seek to explain the inflection of classifiers in Weining Ahmao. In Gerner and Bisang 2008, the authors describe the use of classifier inflections to encode speaker-roles (relative to age and gender) in Ahmao. In Gerner and Bisang 2010a, they give a detailed description of the formal properties of classifier inflection in Ahmao. Finally, in Gerner and Bisang 2010b, the authors seek to give a historical account of the development of this pattern, both in formal and social terms.

**Gerner, Matthias, and Walter Bisang. 2008. Inflectional speaker-role classifiers in Weining Ahmao. *Journal of Pragmatics* 40.4: 719–732.**

A discussion of the pragmatic significance of the speaker-role classifier inflections of Weining Ahmao.

**Gerner, Matthias, and Walter Bisang. 2010a. Classifier declinations in an isolating language: On a rarity in Weining Ahmao. *Language and Linguistics* 11.3: 579–623.**

A more form-oriented discussion of Ahmao classifier inflection.

**Gerner, Matthias, and Walter Bisang. 2010b. Inflectional classifiers in Weining Ahmao: Mirror of the history of a people. *Folia Linguistica Historica* 30.1: 183–218.**

A historical account of the development of classifier inflection in Weining Ahmao.

**Ratliff, Martha. 1986. An analysis of some tonally differentiated doublets in White Hmong (Miao). *Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area* 9.2: 1–35.**

An examination of morphologically related words that differ only in tone in Hmong Daw (White Hmong).

**Ratliff, Martha. 1987. Tone Sandhi compounding in White Hmong. *Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area* 10.2: 71–105.**

Examines the use of tone to mark lexicalized compounds in Hmong Daw (White Hmong).

**Ratliff, Martha. 1992. *Meaningful tone: A study of tonal morphology in compounds, form classes, and expressive phrases in White Hmong*. Monograph Series on Southeast Asia 27. DeKalb: Northern Illinois Univ. Center for Southeast Asian Studies.**

A comprehensive study of the morphological role of tone in Hmong Daw (White Hmong).

**Ratliff, Martha. 1997. Hmong-Mien demonstratives and pattern persistence. *Mon-Khmer Studies Journal* 27:317–328.**

Describes the extension by analogy of a patterned tonal relationship between prepositions and demonstratives in Hmong Daw (White Hmong).

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## Syntax

Most syntactic work on Hmong-Mien languages has focused on Hmong and has been carried out either from a descriptivist or functionalist point of view. The following discussion is divided by topic, highlighting areas that have attracted some interest in the literature on Hmong-Mien syntax. First, the reader is referred to several useful overviews of the syntax of Hmong-Mien languages. Then, parataxis and serial verb constructions are discussed. The literature on topicalization and topic-prominence is then introduced, followed by a discussion of complementation. Other subjects, including the structure of question constructions and relative clauses and the general issue of syntactic flexibility in Hmong are discussed in the final section.

## Syntactic Overviews

For overviews of the syntax of Hmong-Mien languages, the best sources are general grammars that have been produced describing the various languages. Mottin 1978 is the standard reference for Hmong Daw (White Hmong) syntax, though it is dated and difficult to obtain. Court 1985 is a doctoral dissertation that describes the syntax of Lu Mien from a functionalist perspective. Harriehausen 1990, likewise, is a doctoral dissertation published as a book, which describes Mong Leng (Green Mong) syntax from a relatively theory-neutral perspective.

**Court, Christopher Anthony Forbes. 1985. *Fundamentals of Lu Mien (Yao) grammar*. PhD diss., Univ. of California, Berkeley.**

Description of the grammar of Lu Mien from a functionalist point of view, concentrating largely on syntax.

**Harriehausen, Bettina. 1990. *Hmong Njua: Syntaktische analyse einer gesprochenen sprache mithilfe datenverarbeitungstechnischer mittel und sprachvergleichende beschreibung des südostasiatischen sprachraumes*. Tübingen, Germany: Max Niemeyer.**

Syntactic description of Mong Leng (Green Mong) produced using computational methods.

**Mottin, Jean. 1978. *Éléments de grammaire Hmong Blanc*. Bangkok: Don Bosco.**

Descriptive grammar of Hmong Daw (White Hmong) concentrating primarily on syntax.

## Parataxis and Serial Verb Constructions

One salient aspect of Hmong-Mien syntax is the pervasive use of parataxis, verb serialization, and other related structures wherein constituents are juxtaposed without any overt marker of coordination or subordination. A number of contributions have been made to the description and analysis of these structures. Riddle 1989 investigates the question of whether serial verb constructions in Hmong are interpreted as a single proposition or as multiple propositions and arrives at the conclusion that either state of affairs may hold, depending on pragmatic factors. Riddle 1990 is a general investigation of paratactic constructions in Hmong. Jarkey 1991 is a doctoral dissertation describing serial verb constructions in depth. Harriehausen-Muhlbauer 1992 looks specifically at “verb concatenation,” which the author distinguishes from serial verb constructions and examines from the point of view of natural language processing.

**Harriehausen-Muhlbauer, Bettina. 1992. *Verb concatenation in Hmong Njua: A syntactic description and its treatment in natural language processing*. In *The Third International Symposium on Language and Linguistics*, 398–420. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn Univ.**

Draws a distinction between verb concatenation and serial verb constructions. Introduces a computation method for describing verb concatenation.

**Jarkey, Nerida. 1991. *Serial verb constructions in White Hmong: A functional approach*. PhD diss., Univ. of Sidney.**

A doctoral dissertation that attempts to account for serial verb constructions in Hmong Daw (White Hmong).

**Riddle, Elizabeth M. 1989. *Serial verbs and propositions in White Hmong*. *Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area* 12.2: 1–13.**

An article arguing that lexical and pragmatic factors determine whether a serial verb construction in Hmong Daw (White Hmong) is interpreted as a single proposition or a series of related propositions.

**Riddle, Elizabeth M. 1990. *Parataxis in White Hmong*. In *When verbs collide: Papers from the 1990 Ohio State Mini-Conference on Serial Verbs*. Edited by Brian D. Joseph and Arnold M. Zwicky, 65–76. Columbus: Department of Linguistics, Ohio State Univ.**

A description of paratactic constructions (constructions in which elements are juxtaposed with no overt marker of conjunction or subordination) in Hmong Daw (White Hmong).

## Topic Prominence and Topicalization

Hmong is one of a group of languages that some functional linguists have argued to be “topic prominent” as opposed to “subject prominent.” That is to say, their structure is better described in terms of a topic–comment relationship than a subject–predicate relationship. Fuller 1987 identifies a set of particles in Hmong Daw (White Hmong) as topic markers. Fuller 1988 is a doctoral dissertation that explores in depth the implications of treating Hmong as topic-prominent. Ratliff 1992, on the other hand, looks at a specific and problematic construction as an instance of topicalization.

**Fuller, Judith Wheaton. 1987. *Topic markers in Hmong*. *Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area* 10.2: 113–127.**

Describes the particles used to mark topics in Hmong Daw (White Hmong).

**Fuller, Judith Wheaton. 1988. *Topic and comment in Hmong*. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Linguistics Club.**

A dissertation arguing that Hmong syntax is best viewed as topic-prominent rather than subject-prominent.

**Ratliff, Martha. 1992. Topicalized NPs with expansion pronouns in Hmong. In *Papers from the Second Annual Meeting of the Southeast Asian Linguistics Society, 1992*. Edited by Karen L. Adams and Thomas John Hudak, 251–261. Tempe: Arizona State Univ., Program for Southeast Asian Studies.**

Conference paper examining a problematic structure in which a topicalized noun phrase is followed by pronoun that expands its referent.

## Complementation

The structure of complement clauses in Hmong has also attracted some scholarly attention. These studies include Jaisser 1984, a master's thesis on complementation in Hmong, and Jarkey 2006, a relatively recent book chapter exploring strategies of complementation in Hmong Daw (White Hmong).

**Jaisser, Annie C. 1984. Complementation in Hmong. MA thesis, San Diego State Univ.**

A master's thesis exploring the structure of complement clauses in Hmong.

**Jarkey, Nerida. 2006. Complement clause types and complementation strategy in White Hmong. In *Complementation: A cross-linguistic typology*. Edited by R. M. W. Dixon and Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald, 115–136. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.**

A paper exploring complementation in Hmong from a typological point of view.

## Other Syntactic Topics

Other topics in the syntax of Hmong-Mien languages (primarily Hmong) have also been discussed in the scholarly literature. Clark 1985 explores the syntactic structure of questions in Hmong. Li 1989 examines the use and development of switch reference in Mong Leng (Green Mong). Ratliff 1991 shows an interesting case of syntactic flexibility in Hmong: Classifiers can apparently function either as classifiers per se or as the first member of noun compounds (in which case they can co-occur with another classifier). Riddle 1992 and Riddle 1993 look at relative clause structure in Hmong. Bisang 1993 examines the syntax and semantics of classifier constructions in Hmong and compares this with related constructions. Creswell and Snyder 2000 examines two passive-like constructions in Hmong and uses them to argue for a particular view of the syntax-semantic interface. Most recently, Sposato 2012 studies the diversity of relative clauses found in Xong (Qo Xiong), a Northern Hmongic language.

**Bisang, Walter. 1993. Classifiers, quantifiers and class nouns in Hmong. *Studies in Language* 17.1: 1–51.**

A discussion of the syntactic and semantic properties of noun classifiers and related lexical items in Hmong.

**Clark, Marybeth. 1985. Asking questions in Hmong and other Southeast Asian languages. *Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area* 8.2: 60–67.**

An examination of the syntax of questions in Hmong and in languages of Southeast Asia generally.

**Creswell, Cassandre, and Kieran Snyder. 2000. Passive and passive-like constructions in Hmong. *West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics (WCCFL)* 19:71–82.**

An analysis of two passive-like constructions in Hmong.

**Li, Charles N. 1989. The origin and function of switch reference in Green Mong. In *Language change: Contributions to the study of its causes*. Edited by Leiv Egil Breivik and Ernst Håkon Jahr, 115–129. Berlin: de Gruyter.**

A historical and synchronic look at switch-reference in Mong Leng (Green Mong).

**Ratliff, Martha. 1991. *Cov*, the underspecified noun, and syntactic flexibility in Hmong. *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 111.4: 694–703.**

An article arguing that the Hmong Daw (White Hmong) plural classifier *cov* can co-occur with another classifier when the noun in the noun phrase is semantically underspecified. These cases, where the second classifier acts as the first member of a noun compound, are argued to show one instance of a more general pattern of syntactic flexibility in Hmong.

**Riddle, Elizabeth M. 1992. Relativization, parataxis and underspecification in White Hmong. In *Papers from the Second Annual Meeting of the Southeast Asian Linguistics Society, 1992*. Edited by Karen L. Adams and Thomas John Hudak, 263–278. Tempe: Arizona State Univ., Program for Southeast Asian Studies.**

A paper arguing that certain relative clause-like constructions are underspecified in their structure and that this paratactic underspecification is characteristic of Hmong syntax generally.

**Riddle, Elizabeth M. 1993. The relative marker *uas* in Hmong. *Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area* 16.2: 57–68.**

An examination of the syntactic behavior of the primary relative clause marker in Hmong Daw (White Hmong).

**Sposato, Adam. 2012. Relative clauses in Xong (Miao-Yao). *Journal of the Southeast Asian Linguistics Society* 5.1: 49–66.**

A journal article showing that Xong a Northern Hmongic language, displays an unusually wide range of relative clause types.

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## Semantics

While a few studies have brushed the surface of Hmong semantics, this field remains largely unexplored. Exceptions include Li 1991, a careful and insightful examination of the aspectual system of Mong Leng (Green Mong); Riddle 1999, on metaphor in Hmong Daw (White Hmong); Clark 2000, on the possible prelinguistic basis of certain categories in Hmong and Vietnamese diexis; and Jarkey 2004, on the telic-atelic distinction in Hmong Daw.

**Clark, Marybeth. 2000. Deixis and anaphora and prelinguistic universals. In *Grammatical analysis : Morphology, syntax, and semantics : Studies in honor of Stanley Starosta*. Edited by Videa P. de Guzman and Byron W. Bender, 46–61. Honolulu: Univ. of Hawai'i Press.**

An examination of the three-way proximal-medial-distal deictic contrast in Hmong and Vietnamese coupled with an argument that this same deictic contrast is “prelinguistic” and is found in wolf and chimpanzee behavior.

**Jarkey, Nerida. 2004. Process and goal in White Hmong. *The Hmong of Australia: Culture and Diaspora*. Edited by Nicholas Tapp and Gary Yia Lee, 175–189. Canberra, Australia: Pandanus.**

Compares the expression of telic and atelic propositions in Hmong Daw (White Hmong) and English.

**Li, Charles N. 1991. The aspectual system of Hmong. *Studies in Language* 15.1: 25–58.**

Examines the aspectual system of Mong Leng (Green Mong).

**Riddle, Elizabeth M. 1999. Metaphorically speaking in White Hmong. In *Papers from the Ninth Annual Meeting of the Southeast Asian Linguistics Society*. Edited by Graham W. Thurgood, 377–392. Tempe: Arizona State Univ., Program for Southeast Asia Studies.**

An exploration of metaphorical language in Hmong Daw (White Hmong).

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## Discourse Analysis and Sociolinguistics

A number of recent studies have examined discourse and sociolinguistic factors in Hmong-Mien languages. These range from traditional to highly innovative. Mao 2004 looks at dialect variation in the Mien language within China. Somruedee 2004 presents a fairly traditional discourse analysis of the function of the Mong Leng (Green Mong) particle *tes*. James N. Stanford, by contrast, has produced two studies that combine variationist and discourse-analytic methodologies in novel ways. Stanford 2010a is an experimental study that uses sociophonetic methods to analyze the response of various Hmong-speaking persons to a young female Hmong interviewer. It finds that there are generational as well as gender differences in the use of an acoustically recognizable “authoritative voice.” Stanford 2010b explores how Hmong couples in cross-dialectal marriages negotiate linguistic differences. Burt 2010 is likewise innovative in applying both politeness theory and language contact theories to the linguistic situation of the Hmong-speaking community in Wisconsin.

**Burt, Susan. 2010. *The Hmong language in Wisconsin: Language shift and pragmatic change*. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen.**

Examines changing conventions regarding politeness in the discourse of Hmong residing in Wisconsin.

**Mao Zongwu. 2004. *Yao zu Mian yu fang yan yan jiu*. Beijing: Minzu chubanshe.**

A comprehensive examination of regional dialect variation in Mien.

**Somruedee Dej-Amorn. 2004. Discourse functions of particle *tes* in Green Hmong. In *Papers from the Eleventh Annual Meeting of the Southeast Asian Linguistics Society*. Edited by Somsong Burusphat, 199–214. Tempe, Arizona: Arizona**

**State Univ., Program for Southeast Asian Studies.**

Describes ways in which the Mong Leng (Green Mong) particle *tes* serves to connect discourse using primary data from a recorded narrative.

**Stanford, James N. 2010a. Gender, generations, and nations: An experiment in Hmong American discourse and sociophonetics. *Language & Communication* 30.4: 285–296.**

An experimental discourse study in which the responses of thirty-three Hmong Americans to a young female Hmong interviewer are examined. Generational as well as gender differences are found in the use of “authoritative voice.”

**Stanford, James N. 2010b. The role of marriage in linguistic contact and variation: Two Hmong dialects in Texas. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 14.1: 89–115.**

Examines language use and dialect variation in marriages between speakers of Hmong Daw (White Hmong) and Mong Leng (Green Mong).

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## Writing Systems

Prior to the beginning of the 20th century, practical orthographies did not exist for any Hmong-Mien language, although Lu Mien literary language was written using Chinese characters. Since that time, a great variety of writing systems have been developed, some by Chinese scholars working in an official capacity, some by Christian missionaries, and some by indigenous messianic movements. An early missionary orthography for the Western Hmongic language Ahmao and its history are described in Enwall 1995 and Enwall 1997. Smalley 1976 describes the problems that motivated design features of a later missionary orthography for Hmong, the Romanized Popular Alphabet (RPA). This orthography was very successful and is the most popular orthography for writing Hmong today. Purnell 1987 describes the less-successful attempts of Protestant missionaries to develop and promote an orthography for Lu Mien. Smalley, et al. 1990 concentrates on a Hmong orthography developed by an illiterate peasant as part of a messianic movement. A less well-known orthography produced in a similar cultural milieu is described in Smalley and Wimuttikosol 1998.

**Enwall, Joakim. 1995. *A myth become reality: History and development of the Miao written language*. Vol. 1. Stockholm: Institute of Oriental Languages, Stockholm Univ.**

A history of the development of the Pollard Script, an abugida developed by a Methodist missionary, Samuel Pollard, for Ahmao.

**Enwall, Joakim. 1997. *A myth become reality: History and development of the Miao written language*. Vol. 2. Stockholm: Institute of Oriental Languages, Stockholm Univ.**

The later history of the Pollard Script, an abugida developed by Samuel Pollard for Ahmao.

**Purnell, Herbert C. 1987. Developing practical orthographies for the Lu Mien (Yao), 1932–1986: A case study. *Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area* 10.2: 128–141.**

A survey of efforts to develop a practical roman orthography for Lu Mien, an endeavor in which the author was personally involved.

**Smalley, William A. 1976. The problems of consonants and tone: Hmong (Meo, Miao). In *Phonemes and orthography: Language planning in ten minority languages of Thailand*. Edited by William A. Smalley, 85–123. Canberra, Australia: Department of Linguistics, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National Univ.**

A book chapter addressing the challenges involved in constructing a practical roman orthography for Hmong. The author was one of the developers of the RPA script, now the de facto standard for writing Hmong Daw and Mong Leng.

**Smalley, William A., Chia Koua Vang, and Gnia Yee Yang. 1990. *Mother of writing: The origin and development of a Hmong messianic script*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press.**

Describes both the history and the structure of Pahawh Hmong, a semi-syllabic script developed by a previously nonliterate Hmong messianic leader named Shong Lue Yang.

**Smalley, William, and Nina Wimuttikosol. 1998. Another Hmong messianic script and its texts. *Written Language & Literacy* 1.1: 103–128.**

Describes a second Hmong script associated with a messianic movement.

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## Traditional Literature

Various aspects of the traditional literatures of Hmong-Mien speaking cultures have been examined from a linguistic perspective. Ruey and Kuan 1962 is an anthropological study of the marriage and funeral customs of Hmong but includes a large body of the traditional texts that are used in these rites. Purnell 1997 and Purnell 1998 look at the lyrical structure of Lu Mien (Yiu Mienh) secular songs from a linguistic standpoint.

**Purnell, Herbert C. 1997. Putting it all together : Components of a secular song in Lu Mien. In *Papers from the Fifth Annual Meeting of the Southeast Asian Linguistics Society 1995*. Edited by Shobhana L. Chelliah and Willem J. de Reuse, 277–302. Tempe, Arizona: Arizona State Univ., Program for Southeast Asian Studies.**

A linguistic analysis of the structure of Lu Mien traditional songs.

**Purnell, Herbert C. 1998. The metrical structure of Yiu Mienh secular songs. In *The Yao of South China: Recent international studies*. Edited by Jacques Lemoine and Jiao Jian, 369–398. Paris: Pangu, Editions de l'A.F.E.Y.**

A metrical analysis of the structure of Lu Mien traditional songs.

**Ruey Yih-fu, and Kuan Tung-kuei. 1962. *Marriage and mortuary customs of the Magpie Miao, Southern Szechuan, China*. Institute of History and Philology Monographs, Series A 23. Taipei: Academia Sinica.**

A report on both wedding and funeral ceremonies of a group of Hmong from Sichuan, China, including extensive texts used in these rites.

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