

Chapter 6

Effects of language contact on Muak Sa-aak

Muka Sa-aak has been in contact with Tai Lue for a long time, as discussed in Section 1.4.1. The influences of this contact may be seen at various levels in Muak Sa-aak, including phonological effects and lexical effects.

6.1 Phonological effects

The phonological influences of borrowing on Muak Sa-aak may be examined in regards to vowels, consonants, and tones.

6.1.1 Effects on vowels

The numbers given in Table 46 below are borrowed from Tai Lue; they are also good examples of the correlation between the Muak Sa-aak diphthongs /ia/ and /ua/ and the Tai Lue vowels /ɔ:/ and /ɛ:/.

**Table 46. Numeral comparison, Muak Sa-aak and Tai Lue
(Tai Lue from Hudak 1996)**

	Muak Sa-aak	Tai Lue
2	/sɔ:ŋ ³ /	/sɔŋ ¹ / ⁶⁷
8	/piat ¹ /	/pɛɛt ² /
12	/sip ² suaŋ ³ /	/sip ¹ sɔŋ ¹ /

The number “two” was not pronounced consistently. In the number “two” Speaker A pronounced it with the Lue vowel [ɔ], but in “twelve” he pronounced it with the diphthong [ua].

⁶⁷ Tai Lue does possess a vowel length contrast, but before nasal or approximant finals, there is no short/ long vowel length contrast, except with the vowel /a/, and Gedney does not write one in his dictionary (Hudak 1996). See Section 2.3.2.

The diphthongs /ia/ and /ua/ appear to have developed from the long vowels /ɛ:/ and /ɔ:/. Since Tai Lue does not have these two diphthongs, their appearance in borrowed words which in Tai Lue contain /ɛ:/ or /ɔ:/ suggests that the Muak Sa-aak diphthongs actually come from prior long vowels /ɛ:/ and /ɔ:/ (which still exist in Wan Saw Muak Sa-aak, a variety which does not have these diphthongs). There are other examples of this replacement of /ɛ:/ or /ɔ:/ in Tai Lue with /ia/ or /ua/ in Muak Sa-aak outside of the number system as well. Some of these are shown in Table 47, below.

Table 47. Tai Lue borrowed words realized with diphthongs in Muak Sa-aak (Tai Lue from Hudak 1996)

	Muak Sa-aak	Tai Lue	Gloss
1122	/miaŋ ³ sa:p ¹ /	/mɛŋ ⁴ saap ² /	“cockroach” ⁶⁸
1539	/liam ¹ /	/lɛm ¹ /	“sharp-pointed”
53	/suak ¹ tɔ ² /	/sɔɔk ² /	“elbow”
1552	/ruan ² /	/hɔn ⁶ /	“hot”

6.1.2 Effects on consonants

There are several consonants which differ between Muak Sa-aak and Tai Lue phonology. One group of these are the final consonants which do not occur as finals in Tai Lue: /c, ɲ, l/. Another is the group of /h, r/. In Tai Lue, both of these occur in writing; only /h/ occurs in spoken Tai Lue. However, in Muak Sa-aak, both occur, and /r/ is the more common.

Another important group of consonants to consider is the voiced stops /b, d/, which are a point of similarity between Tai Lue and Muak Sa-aak. According to Svantesson’s statements about the historical Germanic shifts in Angkic languages (1991: 68), by which the voicing contrast was replaced with an aspiration contrast (see Section 2.2.2.2 for discussion), these should not exist. The existence of voiced stops in Muak Sa-aak today may therefore be the result of contact with Tai Lue, which also has these consonants. It is possible that Muak Sa-aak may have either developed them (after previously losing them) or retained them due to the influence

⁶⁸ See Footnote 67, page 81.

of Tai Lue. The fact that a large proportion of the words in the data with these initials (about half) appear to be borrowed supports this conclusion.

6.1.3 Effects on tones

The observations on tonogenesis in the previous chapter do not account for all of the data. In particular, final nasal consonants are a problem. There are a number of Muak Sa-aak words ending with final nasals that occur with low Tone 1 or checked Tone 2. However, most of the words ending in nasals which matched up to Svantesson's (1988) Lamet list occurred with falling Tone 3. One possible explanation is that these words ending in nasals and taking the low or checked tones are largely borrowed words, since Muak Sa-aak has a large number of borrowed words, primarily from Tai Lue. One piece of evidence supporting this is the fact that of the data in the wordlist, all words ending in a palatal nasal /-ɲ/ occur with falling Tone 3; none occur with low Tone 1 or checked Tone 2. Nearly all of those ending in a lateral approximant /-l/ occur with Tone 3 as well; there are only a handful of exceptions which occur with Tone 1. Examples are given in Table 48, below.

Table 48. Words with final lateral approximant /-l/ and Tone 1

1633	/pal ¹ k.tit ² /	“(be) equal”
744	/mu:l ¹ /	“boundary”
1457b	/ɲul ¹ ɲil ³ /	“crush to powder”
1411	/pɤl ¹ /	“fall”

These few words are most likely native words, not borrowings from Tai Lue. However, since Tai Lue which is the source of most of the borrowed words does not have final palatal nasals or lateral approximants, it is not surprising to find that there are no words with final palatal nasals occurring with low Tone 1, and only a handful of words with final lateral approximants. Another remaining item to account for is the group of words occurring with checked Tone 2, which are open syllables with long vowels followed by a final glottal stop. Since this is not a large group of words, it is very likely that many of them are also borrowed words from Tai Lue. A few examples are given in Table 49.

Table 49. Checked Tone 2 in open syllables

	Muak Sa-aak	Tai Lue	Tai Lue tone (phonetic)	Gloss
5	/na: ² ɲa:j ³ / (1 st syllable)	/naa ³ /	[11]	“face”
877a	/k ^h a: ² /	/xaa ³ /	[11]	“slave”
1238	/t.ɲa: ² /	/ɲaa ⁴ /	[21]/[342] ⁶⁹	“sesame seed”
1436	/ɲu: ² /	/yuu ⁶ /	[31]	“push”

All four of these examples are probably Tai Lue borrowings. There are Tai Lue borrowed words in Muak Sa-aak which do not occur with this tone. However, some of those with this tone come from words that carry one of the checked tones in Tai Lue, Tones 3 and 6. This does not account for everything; /t.ɲa:²/, “sesame seed,” is not pronounced with a checked tone in Tai Lue. There appears, however, to be a correlation between tone of borrowed words from Tai Lue and tone in Muak Sa-aak, so that borrowed words with a checked tone in Tai Lue tend to occur with checked Tone 2 in Muak Sa-aak.

The falling allotone of Tone 2 also includes a number of words with final nasals. About half of those in the data at least were recognizable as borrowed from Tai Lue. All of this suggests that Tai Lue has had a particularly large influence on this tone, Tone 2, and in particular, the falling allotone. An area for further research is whether this allotone itself could have originated through borrowing.

Given the extensive amount of vocabulary borrowed from Tai Lue- even the numeral system has been borrowed essentially intact- and the length of contact between the languages, it is worth asking to what extent this has affected the tones seen today.

If it were not for the borrowed vocabulary, tones on nasal-final syllables would actually be predictable, based upon vowel length and final consonant. These tones may also be compared to the pitches described by Narumol Charoenma for Lampang Lamet (see Section 2.2.2.3), despite the fact that the Lamet variety was described as having a register contrast and its pitches as being non-phonemic. The pitches of that variety of Lamet appear to be related to a combination of vowel length and final consonant, with the important distinction in the final consonants being that between

⁶⁹ The pronunciation of the tones varies according to dialect. The first one given is for Chieng Hung; the second is for Muong Yong.

dead and live syllables (Narumol 1982: 40). This is what Svantesson describes for U (see Section 2.2.2.4) as being the important distinction between final consonant types (1988: 86). A similar distinction may be what has happened here in this variety of Muak Sa-aak, except that some of the final consonants have been lost, making the tone no longer predictable. Extensive borrowing has perhaps contributed to this.

6.1.3.1 Contrast of tonal behavior in dead and live syllables

In Section 5.2, and Table 35, a pattern was demonstrated between tone and syllable type, in particular, final consonants. This section will revisit final consonant contrasts, to compare final stops against their corresponding nasals. This is a contrast between what are sometimes termed dead syllables (stop final) and live syllables (sonorant final). Indeed, some contrasts are found, as seen in the following examples.

final /-p/, /-m/

777	/ru:p ¹ /	“chase”	CAE
802	/rɤp ² /	“fishing net”	
1493	/rɤ:m ¹ /	“fade”	

final /-t/, /-n/

607	/mut ² /	“smoked” (not meat)	CAE
188	/mun ¹ /	“pimple”	

final /-k/, /-ŋ/

997	/s.ra:k ¹ /	“buffalo”	CAE
1193	/s.ra:ŋ ³ /	“thorn”	

Examples like these show a contrast in the final consonants between final stops and nasals, even after discounting borrowed words. However, it does not represent the overall pattern. After borrowed words are eliminated, almost all words with nasal

finals occur with falling Tone 3, so underneath the borrowed words, there is actually a complementary distribution. The overall pattern, outside of borrowed words, is one where dead syllables, those ending in stops, take low Tone 1 or checked Tone 2, and live syllables, those ending in sonorants (nasals or lateral approximants), take the falling Tone 3. Final stops and their corresponding nasals in native words do not contrast within the same tone. In terms of tonogenesis, this suggests that final consonants have played an important role.

However, partly as a result of borrowing from Tai Lue, there are words with final nasals occurring with all three distinctive tones (See Table 36, Section 5.2 for examples).

6.2 Lexical effects

Borrowing from Tai Lue has had an impact on the use of numerals. The behavior of borrowed words may also be seen in grammatical prefixes, which will be discussed in the following two sections.

6.2.1 Numerals

Muak Sa-aak appears to have lost its native numerals. The numbers are very similar to those in Tai Lue, as shown in Table 50.

Table 50. Numeral comparison, Muak Sa-aak and Tai Lue (Tai Lue from Hudak 1996)

	Muak Sa-aak	Tai Lue		Muak Sa-aak	Tai Lue
1	/ʔak ² /	/nuŋ ⁵ /	8	/piat ¹ /	/pɛt ² /
2	/sɔŋ ³ /	/sɔŋ ¹ / ⁷⁰	9	/ka:w ² /	/kaw ³ /
3	/sa:m ³ /	/saam ¹ /	10	/sip ² /	/sip ¹ /
4	/si: ¹ /	/sii ² /	11	/sip ² ʔɛt ² /	/sip ¹ ʔɛt ¹ /
5	/ha: ² /	/haa ³ /	12	/sip ² suaŋ ³ /	/sip ¹ sɔŋ ¹ /
6	/rɔk ² /	/hok ¹ /	20	/sa:w ³ /	/saaw ⁴ /
7	/cɛt ² /	/cɛt ¹ /	100	/ruaj ² nɔŋ ¹ /	/hɔy ⁶ /

⁷⁰ See Footnote 67, page 81.

The numbers for “six” and “one hundred” are interesting because the initial consonants in Muak Sa-aak replace the Lue /h/ with /r/, which does not occur in spoken Tai Lue. However, there are Tai Lue words in which the spoken form has /h/ but which are written with /r/, an older form. Gedeney lists /hɔy⁶/ or /rɔy⁶/ “hundred” as one of these, but not /hok¹/ “six” (Hudak 1996). It is interesting that the Muak Sa-aak pronounce both of these equally with /r/ in their own language.

6.2.2 Nasal initial presyllables

There is only one nasal which can occur in presyllables, the voiced bilabial nasal m. However, presyllables with the nasal may be divided into groups: the first is a presyllable occurring frequently in borrowed sesquisyllables; and the second appears to be a derivational prefix.

There were several examples of /m/ as a presyllable-initial consonant. The vowel transition here was frequently pronounced as the open central vowel [a], not the usual mid back vowel, and was seen in two groups of words. The first is in a group of words borrowed from Tai Lue for various kinds of fruit, where it is probably a reduced form of a longer word which meant “fruit.”

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|-------|-------|------------------------|-----------|
| (163) | 1211 | /m.cuk ² / | “orange” |
| (164) | 1217c | /m.paw ² / | “coconut” |
| (165) | 1217a | /m.mo:ŋ ¹ / | “mango” |

In the second group, which includes some words borrowed from Tai Lue (Examples (166), (167), and (172)), the presyllable most likely has an independent grammatical function, as a nominalizer which is applied to either native or borrowed words. In Example (171), /m.tek²/ “fellow-wife”, /tek²/ appears to be the /tek²/ which means “little”. With the addition of /m./ it becomes a noun, “co-wife.” Example (172) involves the Tai Lue word for “sew,” /yep¹/, but it appears that the addition of /m./ allows it to become the noun “thread.”

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|-------|------|------------------------|---------------|
| (166) | 645 | /m.mat ² / | “bundle” (n) |
| (167) | 646 | /m.kuaŋ ² / | “heap” (n) |
| (168) | 755 | /m.kep ² / | “machete” |
| (169) | 1185 | /m.sen ² / | “stem, stalk” |

(170)	1386	/m.kɾt ² /	“piece of wood”
(171)	364	/m.tɛk ² /	“fellow-wife/ co-wife”
(172)	727	/m.ɲɛp ² /	“thread”

This phenomenon is different from what is seen in the Tai Lue borrowed words in Examples (163) to (165). This second /m./ appears to be a derivational affix which attaches both to native words and to foreign words. However, a further analysis of it is beyond the scope of this thesis

6.2.3 Behavior of fricatives in initial syllables

The only fricative occurring in this position is the voiceless alveolar sibilant /s/. Presyllables beginning with the consonant /s/ may reduce to a syllabic consonant in fast speech. Example (173) shows this reduction; it was pronounced in both ways.

(173)	1351	/s.wɛk ² /	[su ¹ βɛk ²], [sβɛk ²]	“darkness”
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There are at least two different initial syllables beginning with the voiceless alveolar sibilant /s/, which at first appear to be the same. An example of each is given, Examples (174) and (175).

(174)	689	/s.ta:j ³ /	“plaster”
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(175)	631	/su ² ɲap ² /	“handle” (horizontal)
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The initial syllables of these two words, especially in fast speech, may sound alike, especially since the glottal stop tends to disappear and the vowel also tends to collapse. They are, however, identified by native speakers as being different. Example (174) is a likely borrowed word: Tai Lue /sa taaj⁴/ “plaster.” The initial syllable /su²/ in Example (175) is probably actually a grammatical affix, like /m./ (Section 6.2.2), another nominalizer, as it attaches to many verbs to produce nouns. As seen in Examples (176) to (183), it can attach to native words or to borrowed words.

(176)	430	/su ² nɾn ³ /	“language”	/nɾn ³ /	“speak”
(177)	566	/su ² k ^h u:t ¹ /	“razor”	/k ^h u:t ¹ /	“shave” (v) (Tai Lue)
(178)	569	/su ² k ^h a:j ³ /	“food”	/k ^h a:j ³ /	“eat”

(179)	695	/su ² t ^h a:j ³ /	“wickerwork”	/t ^h a:j ³ /	“weave” wicker (Tai Lue /tɔɔ ⁴ /) ⁷¹
(180)	703	/su ² ci ² /	“work” (n)	/ci ² /	“work” (v)
(181)	829	/su ² tuan ² /	“gift”	/tuan ² /	“give” (Tai Lue /tɔn ³ /)
(182)	852	/su ² fa:j ¹ rɣ: ³ /	“paddle”	/fa:j ¹ rɣ: ³ /	“paddle” (v) (Tai Lue /faaj ⁴ /)
(183)	901	/su ² sɛp ² /	“game”	/sɛp ² /	“play”

Example (174), however, does not display such a neat grammatical pattern, and is probably a true presyllable.

6.3 Summary

In comparison to Tai Lue, the Tai Kadai language from which Muak Sa-aak has borrowed heavily, there is a great amount of similarity in phonemes; differences include the retention of /r/, which has been lost in spoken Tai Lue; final /l/, and final palatal consonants. In consonant clusters, Tai Lue has many with /w/, while Muak Sa-aak has only a few of these; Muak Sa-aak however, has many with /r/, and only a few with /w/. In the vowels, this variety of Muak Sa-aak has two diphthongs /ia/ and /ua/, which Tai Lue does not have.

The effects of lexical borrowing on Muak Sa-aak can be seen at several levels. Muak Sa-aak has many borrowed words from Tai Lue. However, phonologically, the borrowed words are modified to fit the patterns of Muak Sa-aak phonology; this is especially visible in terms of the initial consonants /h/ and /r/ and in diphthongs. Furthermore, the language shows the evidence of some word-formation patterns which have applied equally to both native and borrowed words. The borrowings appear in turn to have influenced the tonal patterns of Muak Sa-aak.

⁷¹ Examples (177), (179), (181), and (182) incorporate words from Tai Lue; the Tai Lue given in the right-hand column for Examples (179), (181), and (182) comes from Hudak 1996.