

## Chapter 6

### **Sociolinguistics Analysis III: the suitable variety for language development and extensibility of Meung Yum to Savaiq**

This chapter lays out sociolinguistic data and lexical analysis to answer the research questions related to Goal 3 and Goal 4. Sections 6.1 to 6.4 lay out data analysis for each of the research questions relating to Goal 3: which is to determine the most suitable variety for Meung Yum language development.

Section 6.1.1 presents a summary of phonetic features and lexicostatistics of each of the Meung Yum varieties, Section 6.2 presents sociolinguistic data related to the prestige or central dialect within Meung Yum varieties, Section 6.3 presents data about the interactions of speakers of different Meung Yum varieties and section 6.4 presents a lexicostatistical comparison of Meung Yum with other Palaungic languages.

Sections 6.5 to 6.7 contain the data to answer the research questions for Goal 4: whether Savaiq can be incorporated in a Meung Yum language development program. Section 6.5 presents a lexicostatistical comparison of Meung Yum and Savaiq varieties, Section 6.6 presents sociolinguistic data about the attitudes of Savaiq speakers towards Meung Yum and section 6.7 presents the nature and interaction between Meung Yum and Savaiq speakers. Sections 6.8 and 6.9 present the findings and conclusions relating to Goal 3 and Goal 4.

#### **6.1 Mutual intelligibility of Meung Yum varieties**

This section provides the data to answer the following research question.

Research Question 3.1: What Meung Yum varieties are understandable to the speakers of other Meung Yum varieties?

The following subsections provide data to answer this question by viewing their phonetic features, lexicostatistics and RTT results.

### 6.1.1 Phonetic features

The phonetic features found in the Meung Yum varieties selected for the survey are presented in this section. Data from every survey site is included in this summary. The analysis is only intended to see a brief overview of Meung Yum varieties but detailed phonological analysis is not the focus of this research. The Meung Yum and Savaïq wordlist data used for the lexical comparisons are listed in Appendix A. The initial consonant phones are presented in Table 49.

Table 49: Meung Yum initial consonant phones

Initial Consonant		Bilabial		Labiodental		Alveolar		Palatal		Velar		Glottal	
Stop	voiceless	p <sup>h</sup>	p			t <sup>h</sup>	t	c	c <sup>h</sup>	k <sup>h</sup>	k	ʔ	
	voiced		b				d				g		
Nasal	voiceless	ɱ				ɲ							
	voiced	m				n		ɲ		ŋ			
Fricative	voiceless					s						h	
	Voiced				v								
Approximants	voiced	w						j					
Liquid	lateral					l	l̥						
	trill					r							

Twenty-six consonantal sounds and nine vowel segments were found through the wordlist data. The consonant phones found in final position are presented in Table 50.

Table 50: Meung Yum final consonant phones

Final consonants		Bilabial		Alveolar		Palatal		Velar		Glottal	
Stop	Voiceless	p		t		c		k		ʔ	
	Voiced							g			
Fricative	Voiceless									h	
Nasal	Voiced		m		n		ɲ		ŋ		

Table 50 shows eleven consonants found in final position. In this research, the phones /u/ and /i/ occur frequently in the coda of a syllable. It is possible that phonological analysis would decide that these phones should be interpreted as the semi vowel /w/ and /j/ respectively, and would therefore be added to the inventory in Table 50. Nine vowels were found in all Meung Yum varieties. These are displayed in Table 51.

Table 51: Meung Yum vowel phones

Vowels	Front	Central	Back	Back
	Unrounded			Rounded
Close	i		u	u
Close-mid	e	ɔ		o
Open-mid	ɛ			ɔ
Open		a		

There are slight variations in pronunciation from village to village, but overall the phonetic features of the eight varieties are very similar.

### 6.1.2 Lexical comparison

This subsection describes lexical comparison of the eight Meung Yum varieties. The details of the method used in this analysis are laid out in section 3.5.2. The 454-item wordlists were entered into Excel and double-checked using the recordings. The first step of the comparison is deciding words which are common for all the lists. A standard wordlist must be chosen. These words are ‘core vocabulary’ which is considered to be central to the speech variety and they are more resistant to changes over time than other items in the lexicon. In this comparison the most commonly used 105 words are chosen which are proposed in Mann (2004). The computed similarity percentages are shown in Figure 8.

Kaung Sar	01	100							
Pan Tan	02	98	100						
Man Kyu	03	97	96	100					
Man Phan	04	96	97	96	100				
Namt Yoke	05	96	96	98	97	100			
Man Pein	06	96	96	99	97	98	100		
Kaung Sang	07	97	97	98	99	100	99	100	
Man Kan	08	97	97	99	97	99	99	100	100
		01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08
		Kaung	Pan	Man	Man	Namt	Man	Kaung	Man
		Sar	Tan	Kyu	Phan	Yoke	Pein	Sang	Kan

Figure 8: Lexical similarity for 8 Meung Yum varieties

All Meung Yum varieties share 96% to 100% lexical similarity. This evidence shows that there is no substantial variation among the selected Meung Yum villages. This means that from a lexical point of view, vocabulary is not a barrier to

comprehension among the Meung Yum varieties. Namt Yoke is reported to be an important village for the people and Namt Yoke is a possible prestige variety. Every variety shares at least 96% lexical similarity with Namt Yoke. This figure shows that if other villages consider Namt Yoke to be the prestige variety, lexical similarity would not prevent it from being selected as the variety for development.

### 6.1.3 RTT results

Namt Yoke village was chosen to be recorded for the recorded text test since it was suggested by local knowledgeable people that this village is a prestigious village among the Meung Yum. The survey team collected a story from Namt Yoke and tested it in four Meung Yum villages in order to test how well those villages could understand the Namt Yoke variety of Meung Yum.

To interpret RTT results, three types of information are necessary. The first is the average percentage, as shown in Table 52, which is the average (mean) of the percentage of questions answered correctly by each subject. Thus, on average, the Namt Yoke subjects answered 94% of the questions correctly. The second important type of information is the standard deviation, which measures how many individual score vary from the community average. The third important piece of data is the number of subjects tested. Table 52 shows the results from the Namt Yoke RTT tested in the Meung Yum villages.

Table 52: Meung Yum village RTT scores

Variety Tested	Village	Conclusion	Average Score	Standard Deviation	No. of Subjects
Meung Yum (Namt Yoke)	Namt Yoke	understand	94%	9%	12
	Man Pein	understand	92%	8%	12
	Kaung Sang	understand	97%	6%	11
	Man Kan	understand	94%	6%	12

According to Table 52, the subjects from all the Meung Yum villages scored well on the Meung Yum RTT story. The average score in each of these four villages is at least 92%, with a standard deviation no more than 9%. Thus, it can be concluded that all the Meung Yum people from these villages adequately understand the Namt Yoke variety of Meung Yum. It should be noted that the average score in Namt Yoke was about the same as the other three villages. Since the results of dialect intelligibility

testing show that intelligibility is over 80%, then the four Meung Yum varieties may be referred to as 'similar dialects'. In other words, there is no dialect variation among these four Meung Yum villages.

In addition to the RTT itself, each subject was asked several 'post-RTT' questions, testing their knowledge of and attitude to variety of the speaker in the story. These responses were then analysed.

48/48 [100%] of the Meung Yum subjects reported that they understood everything from the Meung Yum RTT story. All the subjects could tell that the storyteller was Meung Yum and 20/36 [55.5%] subjects, (non-Namt Yoke villagers) could recognise that the storyteller came from Namt Yoke.

48/48 [100%] of the Meung Yum subjects thought that the storyteller's speech was the same as their speech. 34/36 [94.4%] of the subjects said that the Meung Yum children in their village would also be able to understand the story.

**When you speak with Meung Yum people there (from other Meung Yum villages), what language do you use with each other? (11-ISQ32e)**

This question was asked to 36 subjects in three villages on the 2011 trip, except in Namt Yoke and the responses are displayed in Table 53. However, 15/36 [41.6%] reported that they had never met with Meung Yum people from other villages so this question is only applicable for 21 subjects.

Table 53: Ways of communicating with other Meung Yum villagers

Ways of communicating with other Meung Yum villagers	No. of subjects
We both use our own varieties	18
We both switch our own varieties slightly	2
I switch to his variety	1
Total	21

18/21 [85.7%] of the subjects reported that they use their own variety when they speak with people from other Meung Yum villages. 2/21 [9.5%] of the subjects switch their variety slightly and 1/21 [4.76%] or one subject switches to use other variety when they speak with other Meung Yum people. Since most of the subjects use their own variety and only a few people switch slightly or speak other variety, it

can be assumed that there is no barrier among the people because of their speech variation.

#### **6.1.4 Summary of findings for mutual intelligibility of Meung Yum varieties**

The previous subsections present three different kinds of evidence concerning the mutual intelligibility of Meung Yum varieties. The phones of the eight varieties are almost completely identical giving no problems in understanding the pronunciation of speakers of other varieties. The varieties all share lexical similarity percentages of 96% or above which means that differences in vocabulary would present few problems in comprehending speakers of other varieties. Finally a deeper level of intelligibility testing, namely RTT, showed that the Namt Yoke variety is well understood in other villages about as well as it was understood in Namt Yoke.

### **6.2 Prestige dialect**

This section seeks to answer the following research question.

Research Question 3.2: What varieties are prestigious and important to the Meung Yum?

Data to answer this question was obtained from the ISLQ and KIQ responses.

**Out of all the Meung Yum villages/towns, which village is the most important? (09-ISQ49)**

The question above is asked to individual subjects in four Meung Yum villages: Kaung Sar, Pan Tan, Man Kyu and Man Phan which were visited in 2009.

Table 54 shows the answers people gave.

Table 54: The most important Meung Yum village

Opinions about the most important village	Kaung Sar	Pan Tang	Man Phan	Man Kyu	Total No. of subjects
No village is more important than the others	3	5	2	2	12
Namt Yoke	1	3	3	5	12
My own village	3	3	4	1	11
No answer	1	1	3	2	7
Man Pein	3				3
Man Phan				1	1
Kaung Sang	1				1
Meung Yum (village name)				1	1
Total	12	12	12	12	48

12/48 [25%] of the subjects reported that none of the Meung Yum villages is more important than the others. However, another 12/48 [25%] reported that Namt Yoke village is the most important village; the subjects who said so are not from Namt Yoke. Reason they gave included: because there are more educated villagers; it is the first village of the Meung Yum; they are pure Meung Yum people; they maintain their traditions and customs; the villagers have hospitality; subjects' relatives live there, they are good in relating with others; and it is a good place to live where most Meung Yum Buddhists live.

11/48 [23 %] of the subjects, from each of the four villages reported that their own village is the most important villages. One subject reported that Man Phan is important since it is a Meung Yum Christian village and there is a teacher in the village so she can teach their children. A few subjects reported that their own village, Pan Tan, is important because the villagers speak their language well and the villagers are in unity.

A few subjects reported that Man Pein village is the most important because it is the very first village of the Meung Yum people, their grandparents lived there, it is a big Meung Yum village and there is a monastery in the village. One subject reported that Kaung Sang village is the most important because it is a big Meung Yum village. A village name also called Meung Yum, located in Wa-SAR is also reported as the most important village but no reason is given.

The same question was included in the KIQ used in 2011, in the four villages: Namt Yoke, Man Pein, Kaung Sang and Man Kan. It is observed that most subjects seemed that they do not know how to answer this question; this kind of question is abstract for them.

**Table 55: The most important Meung Yum village**

Village	Answer	Reason
Namt Yoke	Pang Wan, Pang Khaw, Kaung Sang, Pa Paw	Speak more polite and sweet, easy to understand
Man Pein	No village is important than the other	
Kaung Sang	No answer	
Man Kan	Our own village	

Namt Yoke village leader mentioned that Pang Wan, Pang Khaw, Kaung Sang and Pa Paw are the most important villages, since they speak politely; sweetly and it is easy to understand. But Man Pein village chief reported that one village is not more important or more pure than another. Kaung Sang village leader gave no answer. Man Kan's village chief reported that their own village is the most important village.

**Among the Meung Yum, which speech variety seems purer than others? (11-KIQ65)**

When asking about the purest variety/ village spoken among the people, Namt Yoke village leader reported that people from every village speak pure Meung Yum language. There is no village that speaks the purest Meung Yum. The subjects from the three other villages also did not say any village as the purest Meung Yum variety. To summarize all the data about a prestige variety among the people, Namt Yoke village is most frequently name given by 12/48 [25%] people. This evidence is nonbiased since the subjects who said this are not from Namt Yoke itself. However, the Namt Yoke village leader did not name his own village as an important village.

12/48 [25%] of subjects mentioned that no village is more prestigious than the other. A few people mentioned some villages' names: Kaung Sang, Meung Yum, Pang Wan, Pang Khaw, and Pa Paw. So, it can be summarized that Namt Yoke is the leading candidate for most prestigious village. Likewise, other big villages: Kaung Sang, Meung Yum, Pang Wan, Pang Khaw, and Pa Paw are suitable varieties for language development.

### 6.3 Interaction between Meung Yum varieties

This section describes sociolinguistic data concerning the following research question.

Research Question 3.3: What are the types, natures, and extent of interaction between and within the Meung Yum varieties?

In the 2009 KIQ results, the Kaung Sar village leader reported that a few adults from their village travel to Man Pein, Namt Yoke and Pan Tan to visit people there about once a year. The Man Kyu village leader reported that a few young people from their village travel to Namt Yoke and Pang Wan for visiting and for festivals about 3-4 times a year. The Man Phan village leader reported that almost everyone from their village goes to Man Kyu, Pan Tan, Ong Tong and other Meung Yum places for visiting almost every week. A few villagers from the villages where they go to visit also come to their villages about 3-4 times a year. They come to visit and for seasonal religious festivals. When those people come, they speak Meung Yum.

The Namt Yoke village leader reported that they do not have to change the way they speak in communicating with Meung Yum from Wa-SAR. They can understand one another well. However, the village headmen from three other villages said they do not meet Meung Yum people from the Wa-SAR.

According to the 2011 KIQ results, Namt Yoke village leader reported that Meung Yum people from the Wa-SAR, especially from Meung Yum village, Man Hawng, Man Kyu, and Noat Awng, frequently come to their village everyday or once a week for trading, festivals and weddings. They both use their own varieties when they meet with each other and they completely understand each other. The Kaung Sang village leader reported that Meung Yum people from Ho Loi and Pa Paw always come to their village. However, Meung Yum people from Wa-SAR do not come to the other three villages because there is no official entry point between Kunlong and the Wa-SAR not to mention the difficulty of travel.

#### **Which Meung Yum villages do you visit most often? (11-ISQ32)**

This question was asked to 36 subjects from Man Pein, Kaung Sang and Man Kan. The responses are displayed in Table 56. Note that some subjects mentioned that they have traveled to many different villages.

**Table 56: Other Meung Yum villages the subjects travel to**

Villages that the subjects travelled to	Interview Location			Total
	Man Pein	Kaung Sang	Man Kan	
Pang Wan	7	2	1	10
Kaung Sang	3		4	7
Pang Khaw	4	2	1	7
Namt Yoke	6			6
Man Pein		2	3	5
Pa Paw	1	2	1	4
Man Gyat	1	1	1	3
Man Kaung	2			2
Kaung Sar		1		1
Pan Tan		1		1
Meung Yum, Wa-SAR			1	1
Man Hawng, Wa-SAR			1	1
NA (never travelled)	2	6	7	15
Total	26	17	20	63

A little less than half of the subjects 15/36 [41.6%] reported that they have never visited other Meung Yum villages. The remaining 21/36 [58.3%] subjects have traveled to a total of 12 other Meung Yum villages as listed in Table 56. All villages listed above are located in Kunlong Township except Meung Yum and Man Hawng. The 21 subjects who travel, the frequency of traveling is shown in Table 57.

**Table 57: How often the subjects travel to other Meung Yum villages**

How often the 21 subjects travel to other Meung Yum villages	No. of subjects
everyday	2
one or two times a month	2
once in a month	4
once or twice a year	6
only once in their life so far	2
only twice in their life so far	2
three or four times in their life so far	3
Total	21

Among the 21 subjects who traveled, 6/21 [28.57%] of them have frequent contact with people from other villages, such as every day, once or twice a month. However, 13/21 [61.9%] subjects rarely travel to other villages; they have only gone there up to or once or twice a year, 1-3 times in their life so far.

Table 58 shows the reasons why the 21 subjects travel to other Meung Yum villages.

**Table 58: Reasons subjects travel to other Meung Yum villages**

Reasons the subjects travel to other Meung Yum villages	No. of subjects
To visit	11
Religious ceremonies, festivals	3
Weddings	3
To fetch firewood	1
To buy things	1
To get soybeans	1
To go farm	1
Total	21

According to the report, 11 subjects mentioned that they travel go traveling to the other Meung Yum villages for visiting, 3 subjects go for religious ceremonies and festivals, and 3 subjects go there for weddings. One subject each goes there to work fetching firewoods, buying things and getting soybeans and farming.

Table 59 shows how long the subjects stay in other Meung Yum villages.

**Table 59: Length of time visiting other Meung Yum villages**

How long the subjects stay in other Meung Yum villages	No. of subjects
a few hours	1
1 day	7
2 days	6
3 days	4
10 days	1
no time given	2
Total	21

Most of the subjects who travel stay one to three days in other Meung Yum villages. A few subjects go traveling for a few hours and come back again. One subject stayed ten days there.

To sum up all the answers, there is regular contact between Meung Yum people in different villages in Kunlong Township. Some have frequent contact with one another. The Meung Yum people in Kunlong Township generally have little contact with the people in the Wa-SAR.

## 6.4 Linguistic relationship with other Palaungic varieties

This section presents data about the linguistic relationship of Meung Yum with Wa varieties and other Palaungic varieties. Section 6.4.1 presents phonetic comparisons with Diffloth's Proto Wa and Watkins' Standard Wa and Section 6.4.2 presents a lexical comparison of Meung Yum with the selected Wa varieties and Palaungic varieties.

Research Question 3.4: What are the linguistic relationships between Meung Yum and other Palaungic varieties?

### 6.4.1 Phonetic comparisons

This section provides phonetic features of Meung Yum in comparison with Proto Wa<sup>10</sup> (Diffloth 1979) and Standard Wa (Watkins 2002).

Table 60: Consonant segments of Proto-Wa, Meung Yum and Standard Wa

Phonetics Segments			Examples					
Proto Wa	Meung Yum	Standard Wa	Proto Wa	English gloss	Meung Yum	WL Ref.	Standard Wa	Page No.
*ph	p <sup>h</sup>	p <sup>h</sup>	*phon	five	p <sup>h</sup> uan	354	p <sup>h</sup> uan	37
*p	p	p	*pon	four	pon	353	pon	36
*b	p <sup>h</sup>	p	*bry	person	(ʔɛʔ) p <sup>h</sup> i	190	pui	43
*th			*thək	to spit out	p <sup>h</sup> ec mia	263	peh	
*t	t	t	*teʔ	hand	teʔ	167	taiʔ	40
*d	t <sup>h</sup>	t	*dəm	short, low	t <sup>h</sup> iam	373	ɰiam	40
*k <sup>h</sup>	c <sup>h</sup>	k <sup>h</sup>	*k <sup>h</sup> iʔ	moon	c <sup>h</sup> iʔ	3	k <sup>h</sup> iʔ	37
*k	k	k	*kiŋ	father	kəŋ	191	kuŋ	43
*g	k <sup>h</sup>	k	*griŋ	clothes, tools	k <sup>h</sup> ruŋ	222	krəuŋ	40
*ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	*ʔɛt	a few	ʔiat	369	ʔiak	40
*s	s	s	*səʔ	dog	soʔ	92	soʔ	35
*j	c	c	*joŋ [*coŋ]	foot/leg	cəŋ	170	cəuŋ	36
*s-j	c <sup>h</sup>		*s-jen	heavy	c <sup>h</sup> ian			
*h	h	h	*hik	hair	hak	139	hauk	40

<sup>10</sup> Note that Diffloth did not always use the IPA standard transcription. In particular, the use of j, y, and c are different. In this table where the transcription differs from IPA, the IPA is given in square brackets following the original text.

Phonetics Segments			Examples					
Proto Wa	Meung Yum	Standard Wa	Proto Wa	English gloss	Meung Yum	WL Ref.	Standard Wa	Page No.
*m	m	m	*ma?	mother	ma?	192	mɛ?	36
*hm	m	m <sup>h</sup>	*hmac	sand	mac	33	m <sup>h</sup> ac	42
*ʔn	n	<sup>h</sup> g	*ʔn- (na?)	sour	na?	403	<sup>h</sup> ge?	
*hn	ŋ		*hnam	blood	ŋam	183		
*ɲ	ɲ	ɲ	*ɲa?	house	ɲa?	213	ɲɛ?	36
*ŋ	ŋ	ŋ	*ŋək	neck	ŋək	156	ŋək	36
*l	l	l	*ləŋ	black	ləŋ	391	ləŋ	36
*hl	l	l <sup>h</sup>	*hla?	leaf	la?	46	l <sup>h</sup> a?	37
*ʔr	r	r	*ʔri?	deep	rau?	380	rau?	33
*w	v	v	*wac	sword, knife	vac	247	vac	42
*hw	v	v <sup>h</sup>	*hwek	dark	vec	399	v <sup>h</sup> ac	42
*y	j	y	*yo? [jo?]	To see	jo?	252	yau?	36
*s.t	s.t	<sup>h</sup> d	*snte?	eight	sate?	357	<sup>h</sup> dai?	34
*s.ʔ	s.ʔ	s.ʔ	*sʔaŋ	bone	saʔaŋ	176	s.ʔaŋ	35
*s.m	s.m	s.m	*smal/r	seed	səma	49	s.mɛ	39

The entries in Table 60 display phone correspondences of Meung Yum varieties and Standard Wa with Diffloth's reconstruction of proto Wa forms. 26 consonant phones are found in the Meung Yum variety. Every consonant phone found in Meung Yum variety is found in proto Wa, except the phone, /v/. However, [v] and [w] are very similar segments, and the two sounds could be transcribed differently. Many cognates are found across the three sources.

#### 6.4.2 Lexical comparisons

This section presents lexical comparison with the varieties of other subbranches of the Palaungic language family. Twelve varieties are used for the comparison: Namt Yoke, was chosen to represent Meung Yum, and Thein Tan to represent Savaiq. Six Waic varieties from different places in Shan State of Myanmar; Yaong Shuai, the Standard variety of Wa. One Lawa dialect from Thailand and Sava' from China are also included. Outside of Wa varieties, Pangpung Plang and Muak Sa-ak data are also included in the analysis. The sources and formats are listed in Table 61.

Table 61: Sources data for lexical comparisons

Ref.	Variety Name	LRP's hometown	Format	Data Source	Year
01	Siver	Pang Phak, Kengtung Twp	Wa 229 wordlist	Tutu (p.c.)	2006
02	En	Nam Lin Mai, Kengtung Twp	Wa 229 wordlist	Tutu	2006
03	Lawa	Ban La-up, Maehongson, Thailand	Diffloth (1980)	Diffloth (1980) fieldnotes of Schlatter	1980
04	Sava'	Chaho village, Monglian, China	326 wordlist	Hopple (p.c)	2005
05	Savaiq	Thein Tan, Kunlong Twp	454 wordlist	Author	February 2011
06	Meung Yum	Namt Yoke, Kunlong Twp	454 wordlist	Author	February 2011
07	Mongmao	Mongmao Town, Wa-SAR		Hopple (p.c)	2006
08	Yaong Shuai	Man Hawng, Tant Yan Twp	454 wordlist	Author	June 2011
09	Mantong	Kyo Phyu, Kengtung Twp	Wa 229 wordlist	Tutu (p.c)	February, March 2006
10	Kawng Meung	Pangseng, Kengtung Twp	Wa 229 wordlist	Tutu (p.c)	February, March 2006
11	Pangpung Plang		451 wordlist?	Suknaphasawat (p.c)	2007
12	MuakSa'aak	Wan Fai, MongYawngTwp	1700 wordlist	Hall (p.c)	2008

Using the procedure described in section 3.5.2, basic, everyday vocabulary from each of the varieties was compared to see how many of the words are similar. The percentages of similar words out of about up to 105 are shown in Figure 9. The numbers 80% and below are shown in white; the numbers between 81 and 100% are shown in grey.

Sivet	01	100												
En	02	75	100											
LW	03	78	90	100										
Sava	04	90	80	92	100									
Svq	05	79	86	89	95	100								
MY	06	74	81	81	88	90	100							
MM	07	73	86	86	88	92	91	100						
YS	08	72	84	81	83	85	84	94	100					
MT	09	74	80	82	78	83	82	91	89	100				
KM	10	75	82	83	85	85	81	89	88	92	100			
P Plg	11	65	72	82	68	73	70	79	71	69	65	100		
Msk	12	32	40	51	39	40	39	48	40	40	41	47	100	
		01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	
		Sivet	En	LW	Sava	Svq	MY	MM	YS	MT	KM	P Plg	M Sk	

Figure 9: Lexical similarity for Meung Yum and related Palaungic varieties<sup>11</sup>

Based on the lexical similarity percentages, it is possible to draw some initial conclusions about how similar the Meung Yum variety and the Savaïq variety, to other Wa varieties and to other Palaungic varieties.

Meung Yum and Yong Shuai (Ai-Shuai) share high lexical similarity, i.e., 84%. Likewise Meung Yum shares high (81-91%) lexical similarity with the other Waic varieties, namely En, Lawa, Sava, Savaïq, Mongmaw, Mantong or Kawng Meung. However, Meung Yum and Sivēt, one of the Waic varieties shares low (74%) lexical similarity. Therefore, Meung Yum and Sivēt are not likely to understand each other. Meung Yum and Waic varieties that are not from the Wa node share low lexical similarity, and is evidence that they belong to different branches of language family. Meung Yum shares only 70% lexical similarity with Pangpung Plang and 39% with Muak Sa'aak. They are not likely to understand each other because they have low lexical similarity.

<sup>11</sup> The numbering for Figure 9 is as follows: 01 Sivēt (Kengtung Twp), 02 En (Nam Lin Mai, Kengtung Twp), 03 Lawa (Ban La-up, Machongson, Thailand) 04 Sava' (Chaho village, Monglian, China), 05 Savaïq (Thein Tan, Kunlong Twp) 06 Meung Yum (Namt Yoke, Kunlong Twp), 07 Mongmaw (Mongmaw Town), 08 Yaong Shuai (Man Hawng, Tant Yan Twp), 09 Man Tong (Kyo Phyu, Kengtung Twp), 10 Kawng Meung (Pangseng, Kengtung Twp), 11 Pangpung Plang, 12 Muak Sa'aak, Mong Yawng Twp

### **6.4.3 Summary of findings for linguistic relationship of Meung Yum with other varieties**

Phonetic comparison shows that Meung Yum is highly similar phonetically with the proto Wa and Standard Wa. Meung Yum shares high lexical percentage with the Standard Wa variety Yong Shuai, and as well as some other Waic varieties (En, Lawa, Sava, Savaiq, Mongmaw, Mantong or Kawng Meung). The evidence suggests that Meung Yum belongs to the Wa node of the Waic branch of Palaungic language family.

### **6.5 Summary of findings and conclusion relating to Goal 3: the most suitable variety for Meung Yum language development.**

Significant dialect variation is not found at the phonetic segment and lexical level. Each Meung Yum variety shares 96-100% lexical similarity to one another. Therefore, lexical similarity would not prevent it from being selected as the variety for development. Likewise, RTT results indicate that every selected village understands the Namt Yoke variety well.

Through sociolinguistic data it has been found that one Meung Yum village is not more prestigious than the other, Namt Yoke is the most given name as the most prestigious variety among the people. So it can be concluded that Namt Yoke can be taken to be the most prestigious variety among the people. Namt Yoke dialect should be chosen for language development.

There is regular contact between Meung Yum people in different villages in Kunlong Township but less contact with the people in the Wa-SAR. Meung Yum shares high lexical similarity with the Standard Wa variety high enough to suggest that Meung Yum belongs to Wa node of Waic branch of Palaungic language family.

The following sections present evidence relating to Goal 4, i.e., assessing whether Savaiq speakers could benefit from a language development program for Meung Yum.

## 6.6 Intelligibility of Meung Yum for Sava iq

This section presents sociolinguistic and linguistic data of two selected Sava iq villages-Man Gyat and Thein Tan, aimed at answering the following research question.

Research Question 4.1: Can Sava iq speakers understand Meung Yum?

Three sub-sections are included: lexical comparison, RTT results and the last subsection will present the summary of the answers and findings found in previous subsections for research question 4.1.

### 6.6.1 Lexical comparison

The computed lexical similarity percentages of eight Meung Yum villages and two Sava iq varieties are shown in Figure 10 . The similarity percentages for Meung Yum varieties with two Sava iq varieties are shown in the shaded rows.

Kaung Sar	01	100									
Pan Tan	02	98	100								
Man Kyu	03	97	96	100							
Man Phan	04	96	97	96	100						
Namt Yoke	05	96	96	98	97	100					
Man Pein	06	96	96	99	97	98	100				
Kaung Sang	07	97	97	98	99	100	99	100			
Man Kan	08	97	97	99	97	99	99	100	100		
Man Kyat	09	88	90	90	90	91	93	93	91	100	
Thein Tan	10	88	90	93	90	91	92	91	93	100	100
		01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10
		Kaung	Pan	Man	Man	Namt	Man	Kaung	Man	Man	Thein
		Sar	Tan	Kyu	Phan	Yoke	Pein	Sang	Kan	Kyat	Tan

Figure 10: Lexical similarity percentages for 8 Meung Yum and 2 Sava iq varieties

Two Sava iq villages share 100% lexical similarity with each other although this might be expected because the two villages are quite close together. Sava iq and Meung Yum share 88% to 93% lexical similarity. The village with the lowest similarity, Kaung Sar is the furthest from the main concentration of Sava iq villages. From a lexical point of view, Meung Yum and Sava iq are closely related.

### 6.6.2 RTT results

The Namt Yoke RTT was conducted in the two Savaiq villages to research how well the Savaiq speakers could understand the Namt Yoke variety of Meung Yum. The average (mean) scores for each village as well as standard deviation are presented in Table 62.

Table 62: Savaiq Villages' Meung Yum RTT scores

Variety Tested	Village Tested	Conclusion	Average Score	Standard Deviation	No. of Subjects
Meung Yum: Namt Yoke	Man Gyat	understand	88%	11%	11
	Thein Tan	most understand	83%	18%	13

As shown in Table 62, the subjects from both the Savaiq villages also scored well on the Meung Yum RTT story. The average score for each of these two villages is at least 83%. Man Gyat village had a standard deviation of 11%, so using Blair's criteria in Table 6, Man Gyat villagers understand Namt Yoke Meung Yum well. Thein Tan's standard deviation was 18%. So it can be concluded that most subjects from Thein Tan understand the Namt Yoke variety of Meung Yum well, but some are less familiar with Meung Yum speech, perhaps not surprising because they live further away from Meung Yum people than villagers from Man Gyat. In general, it can be concluded that most of the Savaiq people from these villages understand the Namt Yoke variety of Meung Yum well.

A few questions were asked after each RTT session and Table 63 shows how much the Savaiq people from both villages thought they could understand the Meung Yum RTT. Since the results of dialect intelligibility testing show that intelligibility is over 80%, then Meung Yum and Savaiq varieties may be referred to as 'similar dialects'.

Table 63: Savaiq subjects' self-reported comprehension on Meung Yum RTT

Level of understanding	Interview Location		
	Man Gyat	Thein Tan	No. of subjects
Everything	9	5	14
Most	0	5	5
Half	1	2	3
Some	1	1	2
Total	11	13	24

14/24 [58.3%] of the Savaiq subjects thought they understand everything from the Meung Yum story. 5/24 [20.8%] of them thought they understand most, 3/24 [12.5%] of them understand half and 2 subjects reported that they understand only some of the story. Most of the Savaiq subjects reported that the Meung Yum variety was 'a little different' or 'different' from their variety. However, a few of them from Thein Tan reported that both varieties are the same.

Table 64 shows whether the subjects think that the Savaiq children in their village can or cannot understand the storyteller's variety.

Table 64: Children's reported understanding of storyteller's variety

Can the children understand that variety?	No. of subjects
No	10
Yes	9
Yes, but not all	4
No answer	1
Total	24

10/24 [41.6%] of the subjects reported that the Savaiq children from their village might not understand Meung Yum. However, 13/24 [54.1%] of the subjects said the Savaiq can understand everything in the story or most of the story.

The village leaders from both Savaiq villages reported that they use their own varieties when they talk with Meung Yum people. All ISQ subjects, 24/24 [100%] reported that when they hear Meung Yum they can understand it very well. However, they reported that the Meung Yum and Savaiq languages are not the same. The people dress differently and they also speak differently and according to the subjects Meung Yum and Savaiq are different in the usage of words, tones, pitch and accent.

### 6.6.3 Summary of findings for Savaiq's intelligibility of Meung Yum

The lexical similarity results of Savaiq with Meung Yum varieties were fairly high, i.e. 88% to 93%. Also, most of the Savaiq adults understand the Meung Yum RTT well. However, the adults' opinions about children could comprehend the Meung Yum story from Namt Yoke were mixed since about whether half of them said 'yes',

but the other said 'No'. This suggests that inherent intelligibility between Meung Yum and Savaiq could be high due to high result for the RTT score with 11-18% of standard deviation. Village leaders from both Savaiq villages reported that Meung Yum and Savaiq people both use their own varieties when they meet each other. Taking the evidence together, it can be concluded that Savaiq speakers understand Meung Yum well.

## 6.7 Language attitude of Savaiq speakers towards Meung Yum

This section presents sociolinguistic data to answer the following research question. Research Question 4.2: Do Savaiq speakers have negative attitudes to Meung Yum?

Attitudes toward the Namt Yoke variety of Meung Yum are observed through Post-RTT questions, shown in Table 65.

Table 65: Attitudes of Savaiq people toward the Namt Yoke Meung Yum variety

Subjects' attitudes	Interview Location		
	Man Gyat	Thein Tan	No. of subjects
Like	2	12	14
Dislike	9	1	10
Total	11	13	24

When asked the question, "Do you like the way this person speaks?" 14/24 [58.3%] of subjects answered, 'Yes'. So it can be assumed that most Savaiq people have positive attitudes toward the storyteller's Meung Yum variety.

However, 10/24 [41.6%] of the subjects, especially from Man Gyat village, reported that they do not like the storyteller's Meung Yum variety. However, the survey team feels that the answers given in Man Gyat village may be biased. In Man Gyat village, the survey team had mentioned about orthography development during the participatory tools for Dialect Mapping before the SLQ interviews were conducted. It was observed that a village chief in Man Gyat encouraged all his villagers to answer negatively, maybe because the survey team members belong to a different religion or they were afraid of being forced to use a new orthography. Because of these factors, most people from Man Gyat village answered that they do not like the

Meung Yum speech. But in Their Tan village, there is no reason to suspect the interviews to be biased.

Table 66 shows the reasons why the 10 Savaiq subjects disliked the storyteller's Meung Yum speech.

**Table 66: Reasons why 10 subjects disliked the storyteller's speech**

Reasons	No. of subjects
This is not my language, I like only Savaiq language	4
They are not our people	3
He speaks not sweet or rough	2
We do not take Meung Yum language seriously	1
Total	10

10 subjects reported that they disliked the Meung Yum variety, because the Meung Yum language is not their language, the Meung Yum people are not their people, the storyteller speaks not sweet, or he speaks rough, and they do not take Meung Yum seriously.

Table 67 shows the reasons why the 14 subjects liked the storyteller's Meung Yum variety.

**Table 67: Reasons why 14 subjects liked the storyteller's speech**

Reasons	No. of subjects
We all are from the same Wa people	3
He speaks politely, fluently and clearly	3
I can understand well	2
This is my own language	2
He speaks almost the same like us	1
He speaks like he is preaching	1
I do not know	1
Total	14

14/24 [58.3%] liked the way the storyteller spoke because they all are the same Wa people, he speaks politely, fluently and clearly, they can understand the story well, he used their own language, the storyteller speaks almost the same like they do, and he speaks like preaching. One subject did not give a reason.

Table 68 shows how the subjects would feel if their child or relative wanted to marry someone who spoke like the storyteller.

**Table 68: Feelings about intermarriage with Meung Yum**

How would you feel if your child or relative wanted to marry someone from that variety?	No. of subjects	Man Gyat	Thein Tan
Like it	13	2	11
Dislike it	5	4	1
Neutral (Feel nothing)	5	4	1
No answer	1	1	0
Total	24	13	11

In summary, 13/24 [54.16%] of the subjects felt good about intermarriage with a Meung Yum person. 11 of them are from Thein Tan and only 2 subjects who agree Meung Yum intermarried are from Man Gyat. 5/24 [20.8%] of them thought intermarriage was not good: 4 from Man Gyat and 1 from Thein Tan. 5/24 [20.8%] felt neutral about intermarriage. It can be summarized that Thein Tan villagers have positive attitude toward Meung Yum however Man Gyat villagers' attitude on Meung Yum is not positive.

Table 69 shows the reasons why the 13 Savaiq subjects felt positive and agreed about intermarriage with Meung Yum.

**Table 69: Reasons why subjects would agree to intermarriage**

Reasons for approving intermarriage	No. of subjects
They are our people	5
We speak the same language, not very different	5
We believe in the same religion	1
They have freedom to choose their own partner	1
I do not know	1
Total	13

Most of the subjects who agreed with intermarriage said that because they feel that they are the same tribe and speak the same language. A few subjects said they believe in the same religion and they have freedom to choose their own partners.

Table 70 shows the reasons why the 5 Savaiq subjects felt negative about intermarriage with Meung Yum.

**Table 70: Reasons why subjects do not agree to intermarriage**

Reasons for not approving about intermarriage	No. of subjects
We are not the same people group	3
We speak differently	1
We have different cultures and behaviors	1
Total	5

5/24[20.8%] of the subjects reported that they do not agree with intermarriage with Meung Yum people because they are not the same people group, they speak different, and they have different cultures and behaviors than Meung Yum people. In summary, more than half of the Savaiq subjects reported that they like the way the storyteller speaks because they can understand the story well, the storyteller speaks almost the same as them and they are all the same Wa people. So it can be assumed that most Savaiq people have positive attitudes toward the storyteller's Meung Yum variety.

A little more than half of the Savaiq subjects felt good about intermarriage with a Meung Yum person because they feel that they are the same tribe and speak the same language, but some of them thought intermarriage was not good because they are not the same people group, they speak different, and they have different cultures.

If there will be a writing system based on Meung Yum-Namt Yoke variety, how interested would you be in learning to read and write it? (a) Very interested, (b) rather interested, (c) a little interested, (d) not at all. (11-ISQ31)

The responses to this question are displayed in Table 71.

**Table 71: Savaiqs who want to read and write Meung Yum-Namt Yoke**

Level of interest	Man Gyat	Thein Tan	Total No. of subjects
Not at all	9	0	9
Very interested	2	11	13
Rather interested	0	1	1
A little interested	0	1	1
Total	11	13	24

9/24 subjects reported that they are not interested in learning Meung Yum Namt Yoke variety. All 9 of these subjects are from, Man Gyat village. The reasons they gave are: they do not like Meung Yum language, Savaiq (our language) is used wider, Meung Yum are not our people, we are not mutually intelligible to one another.

13/24 of subjects reported that they are very interested in learning the variety. 2 subjects are from Man Kyat and 11 are from Thein Tan. The reasons are: the language is good, we speak the same, none of us is literate, I like this way of speaking, and we are the same people group.

One subject reported he is rather interested in learning the variety and the reason is We (Savaiq and Meung Yum people) understand each other's language. One subject is a little interested in learning the Meung Yum variety.

To summarize the findings for research question 4.2, strong evidence for positive attitudes of Savaiq toward Meung Yum is not found. Positive attitudes for the Meung Yum intermarriage is not found among all subjects but only found among Thein Tan. It is also true with the Savaiq attitude toward a writing system in Meung Yum variety. Since attitudes seem to depend strongly on the village, more Savaiq villages need to be surveyed before firm conclusions can be drawn about the attitudes of the people group in general.

## **6.8 Interactions between Meung Yum and Savaiq**

This section seeks to answer the following research question.

Research Question 4.3: What are the types, natures and extent of interaction between the Meung Yum and Savaiq?

The village leaders from both Savaiq villages reported that Meung Yum people from Man Hawng, Kaung Sang, and Pang Kham frequently come to their village at least once a week to visit and to work in the rice fields together. In summary to the answer for Research Question 4.3, Savaiq people and Meung Yum people in the area have a close relationship with one another.

## **6.9 Summary of findings and conclusion relating to Goal 4: extensibility of Meung Yum to Savaiq**

In summary of the findings concerning to Goal 4: it has been shown that Savaiq speakers understand simple narrative texts in Meung Yum well. Likewise, Savaiq

shares high lexical similarity with Meung Yum, i.e. 88% to 93%. The two people groups have regular contact with one another. Positive attitudes toward the Meung Yum writing system of Savaiq people is not found very strong in the data, since out of 13 people who positive attitude toward Meung Yum writing, 11 Of them are Thein Tan villagers but only 2 of them are from Man Gyat. Likewise the report shows that none of the Man Gyat subject is interested in a Meung Yum writing system, one reason given that Savaiq is spoken more widely than Meung Yum. So it can be observed that there are some Savaiq villagers who see themselves as more prestigious and developed than the Meung Yum people.

Despite high lexical similarity, high intelligibility and regular contact between Savaiq and Meung Yum, language attitude indicates that it is unlikely for Savaiq to join in the Meung Yum language development program. Further survey is needed before a firm conclusion is drawn about the best approach for Savaiq language development.