

The classification of Na Meo, a Hmong-Mien language of Vietnam

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Names and ISO codes

Languages and ISO 639-3 codes

Ná-Meo [ISO 639-3: neo]

Southern Qiandong Miao [ISO 639-3: hms]

Eastern Qiandong Miao [ISO 639-3: hmq]

Northern Qiandong Miao [ISO 639-3: hea]

Western Qiandong Miao [no ISO 639-3]

Names (Na Meo)

Ethnologue / ISO name: Ná-Meo (1 of 62 “Unclassified” languages)

Vietnamese name: Na Miêu

Ethnologue: “Unclassified”

Ná-Meo

[LANGUAGE](#)[FEEDBACK](#)

A language of Viet Nam

ISO 639-3[neo](#)**Population**

1,200 (2002).

Location

Northwest Lang Son Province, Trang Dinh district, Cao Minh and Khuoi Phu Dao villages, Khanh Long hamlet; Cao Bang Province, Thach An district, Ca Liec village.

Language Maps[Northern Viet Nam](#)**Language Status**

6a (Vigorous). Language of recognized ethnic group: Hmong.

Classification[Unclassified](#)**Language Resources**[OLAC resources in and about Ná-Meo](#)**Other Comments**

Possible immigrants from Guangxi Province in China.

Location

- Khuân Hẻ, Kim Quan commune, Yên Sơn district, Tuyên Quang province, Vietnam
- Only “Black H'Mong” village in the entire province of Tuyên Quang







Background

- Location: **Khuân Hẻ**, Kim Quan commune, Tuyên Quang province, Việt Nam
- **80 households** in the village, all Na Meo
- Autonym: na⁵⁵mjau³⁵ɬa⁵³ = na⁵⁵ ‘human being’; mjau ‘Miao’; ɬa⁵³ ‘black’
- Informant: Sầm Thị Niềm (female; born 1972)
- Date of data collection: January 28, **2014**
- WAV audio recordings made of approximately **300 lexical items** (available upon request)



GUIZHOU

Huaihua
怀化市

Guiyang
贵阳市

Anshun
安顺市

Qiannan
黔南布依族
苗族自治州

Guilin
桂林市

Hechi
河池市

Laibin
来宾市

GUANGXI

Guigang
贵港市

Nanning
南宁市

Cao Bang

Qinzhou
钦州市

Chongzuo
崇左市

Beihai
北海市

Maomii
茂名市

Thái Nguyên

Tuyen Quang

tp. Cẩm Phá

Zhanjiang
湛江市

Hai Phong

Haikou
海口市

tp. Hòa Bình

Zhaotong
昭通市

Bijie
毕节市

Qujing
曲靖市

Kunming
昆明市

Yuxi
玉溪市

Wenshan
文山壮族
苗族自治州

Honghe
红河哈尼族
彝族自治州

tp. Lào Cai

Langshan
凉山彝族自治州

Huayuan
华元市

Yunnan

Yunnan

Hubei

Wuyang

Guangdong

Guangdong

Qiandong Miao locations (China)



Na Meo: closest to Zhenmin & Guncen

Gloss	Na Meo (Tuyen Q.)	Na Meo (Cao Bang)	Zhenmin	Guncen	Yaogao	Datu	Yangpai
eye	t̚ɕei ⁵⁵ ma ³³	ts̚ɕi ⁴⁵³ ma ²²	ma ²¹ /4	ts̚ɕi3ma6	ŋju ¹³ mo ² 2	mu ²¹ /4	mi ²² /4
tooth	maŋ ³³	mãŋ ⁴⁵³	maŋ ³⁵ /3	ts̚ɕi3ma6	kwe ⁴⁴	m̚ei ³³ /3	mei ⁴⁴ /3
sun	thau ³³ na ³³	la ³³ na ³³	na ³³ /1	la1na1	no ¹³	noŋ ²⁴ /1	ne ³³ /1
star	ta ⁵⁵ qa ³³	ta ³³ qa ³³	qa ³³ /1	ta1qa1	to ³¹ qo ¹³	qen ²⁴ /1	qe ³³ /1
field	t̚ɕaŋ ³³ ljaŋ ⁵ 5	ljaŋ ⁵⁵	ljaŋ ⁵³ /2	-	ljaŋ ³¹	li ²² /2	lei ⁵⁵ /2
good	vu ³⁵	vu ³⁵	vu ⁴⁴ /5	vu5	yu ⁴⁴	yai ⁴⁴ /5	yu ²¹ /5
full	pa ⁵⁵	pa ³⁵ (ɕia ³¹² u ³³)	pa ³⁵ /3	pa3	po ⁵⁵	pen ³³ /3	pi ⁴⁴ /3
short	la ³³	la ³⁵	la ³⁵ /3	la3	lo ⁵³	len ³³ /2	le ⁴⁴ /3

Proto-Na Meo-Zhenmin-Guncen

Sound change:

Proto-Hmong-Mien *-ɛŋ > Proto-Na Meo-Zhenmin-Guncen *-a

- ‘eye’: *ma^B ~ *tsei-ma^B (< P-Hmong-Mien *m_ɥɛjH)
- ‘tooth’: *maŋ^B (< P-Hmong-Mien *hmjinX)
- ‘sun’: *na^A ~ *l-na^A (< P-Hmongic *hnɛŋ^A)
- ‘star’: *qa^A ~ *t-qa^A (< P-Hmongic *qɛŋ^A)
- ‘field’: *ljaŋ^A (< P-Hmong-Mien *ljiŋ)
- ‘good’: *vu^C (< P-Hmong-Mien *-ʔrɔŋH)
- ‘full’: *pa^B (< P-Hmong-Mien *p_ɥɛŋX)
- ‘short’: *la^B (< P-Hmong-Mien*ʔlɛŋ^B)

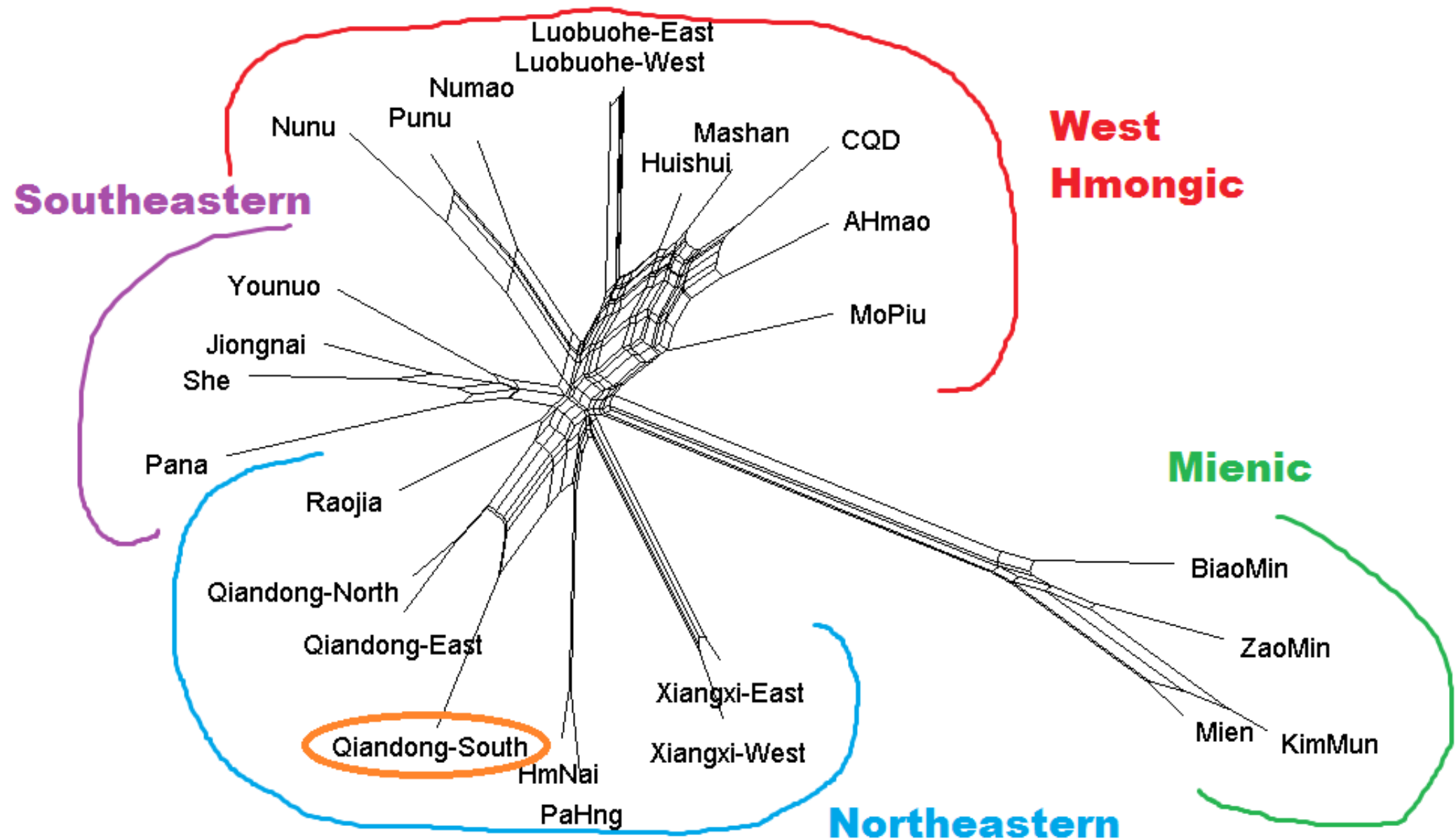
Na Meo innovations

Gloss	Na Meo (Tuyen O.)	Na Meo (Cao Bang)	Zhenmi	Guncen	Yaogao	Datu	Yangpai
nose	ton ⁵⁵ ŋui ³³	ʔon ⁴⁴ ŋoi ³³	nza ²² /6	q ^h aŋ ³ ŋu əb	tjam ³¹ ŋo 22	nzau ¹² /6	nzu ²³ /6
leg	lɔ ⁵³	lɔ ³³	pa ³³ /1	pɛ1	pe ¹³ ; njo ²⁴¹	pei ²⁴ /1	pe ³³ /1
high	q ^h aŋ ⁵³	k ^h aŋ ³³	xe ⁴⁴ /5	xie1, xiaŋ1	xa ¹³	xe ⁴⁴ /5	xe ²¹ /5
stone	gəi ⁵³	ge ³³	ye ³³ /5	yi1	yei ¹³	ye ²⁴ /1	yi ³³ /1

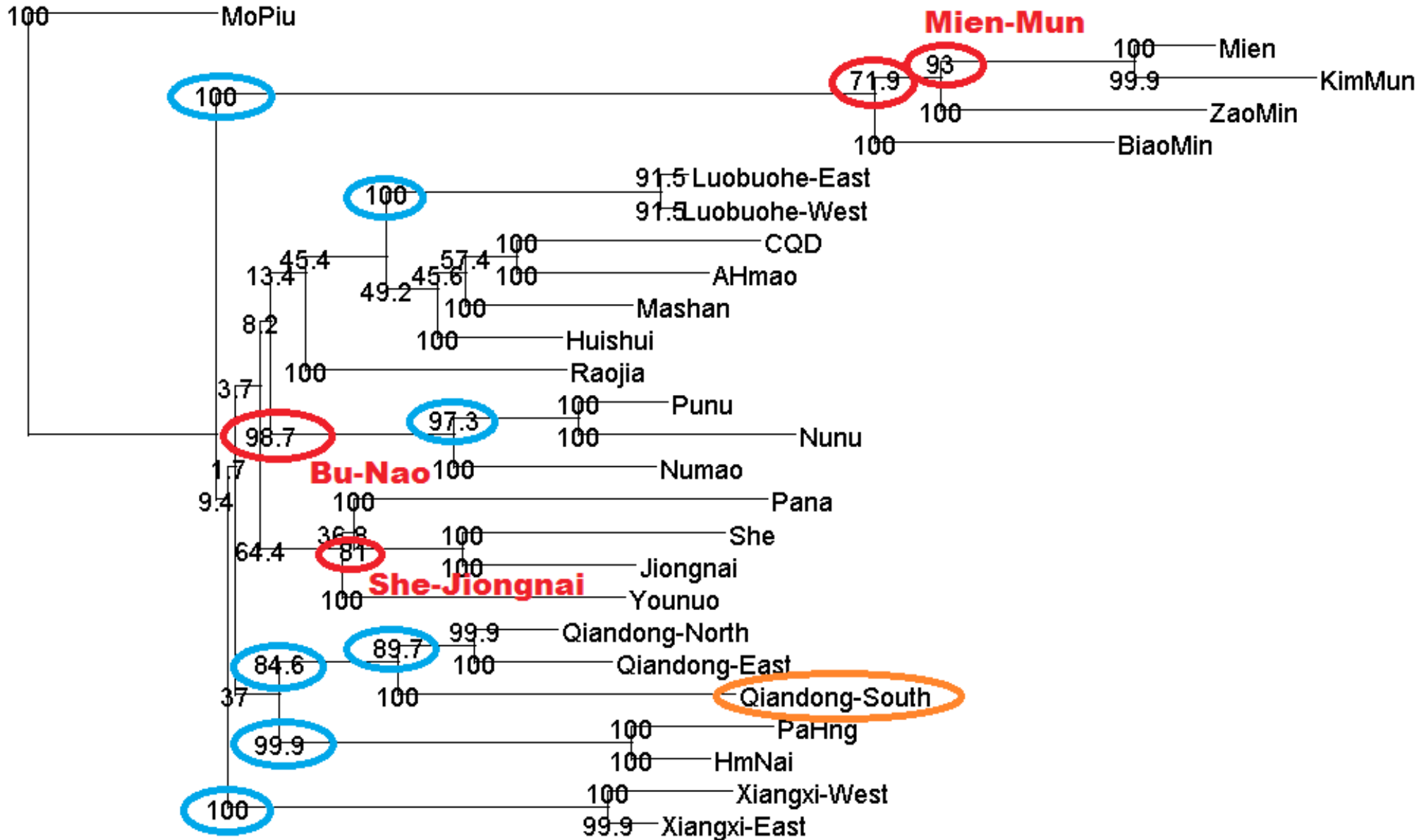
Proto-Na Meo

- ‘nose’: *t-ŋui^c
- ‘leg’: *lɔ^A
- ‘high’: *k^haŋ^c
- ‘stone’: *ge^c

Hmong-Mien: NeighborNet graph



Hmong-Mien: phylogram



Conclusion

- 1) Na Meo is a **Southern Qiandong** dialect (ISO 639-3: hms) most closely related to the **Zhenmin** and **Guncen** topolects (*Southeastern 2* dialect in Wu (2009)).
- 2) One of the defining sound changes: **Proto-Hmong-Mien *-ɛŋ > Proto-Na Meo-Zhenmin-Guncen *-a**
- 3) The ancestors of the Na Meo would have migrated from **northern Guangxi to northern Vietnam** during the **1800's** due to widespread civil unrest in China.
- 4) Na Meo is spoken by perhaps over 1,000 people in the area where Lang Son, Cao Bang, and Bac Kan provinces intersect in NE Vietnam, as well as in one isolated village in Tuyen Quang province. **The Tuyen Quang dialect is the same language as the Na Meo spoken in the other three provinces.**

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