

Review of *Moyu Yanjiu* [A Study of Mak] by YANG Tongyin. 2000. Central Nationalities University Press. 313pp.

*Moyu Yanjiu* is a linguistic and ethnographic description of the Mak language (a Kam-Sui language in the Kadai phylum) and its speakers, who live in the Lingnan Buyi-Miao Autonomous Zone of Guizhou, China. It actually draws grammatical examples largely from (Ai-)Cham, which until now has been described as a separate language close to Mak, but which the author argues is merely a sister dialect of the same language. Following is a summary of the contents of the book, completed with an evaluation of its contents.

### **Chapter One: Cultural Background Description**

Chapter one begins with description of the area in which Yang and his team conducted fieldwork, beginning in October 1994. Along with some broad population statistics, Yang asserts that having investigated both Mak and Cham (also know as Ai-Cham, , although this is more properly the designation of the people who speak Cham, and not the language itself) during this period, the two are close enough to be considered separate dialects of the same language, rather than two closely related but different languages. The second section gives a much more detailed account of the living situation of the Mak and Ai-Cham peoples, including specific localities in which the languages are spoken, population percentages in those areas, and living conditions.

The third section is a condensed but informative description of the history of Mak/Cham research, beginning with Li Fang-Kui's initial research in 1942 which culminated in his 1943 book, *Mohua Jilue* (the author notes was this was the first time that the Cham language appeared in print). Other scholars who have published more recent work in the eighties (Ni Dabai, Shi Lin, and Cui Jianxin) are also men-

tioned. After some discussion about the difficulties in trying to learn anything about the history of the Mak or Cham from Chinese written documents, Yang describes another problem with their own oral tradition (the Mak say that they originated in Shandong, but the Ai-Cham say Guangxi). After a look at the various Kam-Sui autonyms and exonyms, he sides with the Ai-Cham tradition, suggesting that an original homeland in Guangxi fits well with the current distribution of the various Kam-Sui groups as well as the close relationship of the Kam-Sui languages with Lakkia, itself located in Guangxi.

The following sections offer descriptions of Ai-Cham societal and family structure, rituals, food and drink, holidays, customs, and house styles (the places where the Mak differ from the Ai-Cham, which amount largely to the Mak having more surnames and holidays than the Cham, are noted at the end of the chapter). These are all of anthropological interest, both generally and for anyone interested in pursuing comparative regional or Kam-Sui-specific ethnography.

The focus then moves to the status of language use in the Ai-Cham villages. The present level of native language maintenance is described as stable, since anyone who calls themselves Ai-Cham but cannot speak Cham becomes the object of ridicule. However, there is also a significant amount of interaction with speakers of other languages, notably the Mak and Buyi, but also Sui, Zhuang, and, increasingly, Chinese. All children are therefore at least bilingual by the time they become teenagers, although many people can speak three or four or even all five languages to some degree.

Chapter one ends with a mention of the few cultural differences between the Mak and the Ai-Cham (which amount largely to the Mak having more surnames and holidays than the Ai-Cham) and the decision to use the Cham dialect of Mak as the basis for the following grammatical description in the next several chapters.

## Chapter Two: The Mak Sound System

The Cham subdialect used for this description is that of Taiyang village, and the chapter is split into two sections, the first on the structure and components of the syllable, and the second on Han loans.

The initials are described first, including 61 one in all. There are five places of articulation (labial, alveolar, palatal, velar, and glottal), and there is the option of palatal coarticulation with the labial and alveolar series, and labial coarticulation with the alveolar, palatal, and velar series. The manners of articulation are normal for a Kam-Sui language, possible stops being plain, aspirated, and voiced, and fricatives being voiceless or voiced (although there are some gaps). Sonorants – nasals, liquids, and glides – are all able to be realized as either voiced or voiceless, the only interesting exception being the nasals with coarticulations (these are voiced only). There are some useful notes on the phonetic realizations of some initials, and examples illustrating each of them (and showing that the alveolar affricates have entered the Mak inventory as a result of Chinese loanwords).

Next are the 65 rhymes. There are eight open rhymes, eleven with final glides, 22 with final nasals, and 23 with final stops. There is also one word, the second person singular pronoun, which consists of the syllabic velar nasal [ŋ]. There is a length distinction only of the vowel [a] in closed rhymes. Yang again gives some additional information on phonetic realizations as well as co-occurrence restrictions, and gives examples for all rhymes.

Finally, the nine tones are described, which include six tones in ‘live’ syllables and three tones in ‘dead’ syllables. Of the latter category, the seventh and ninth tones represent a length-based split in syllables with originally voiceless initials; there has not been a comparable split in syllables with originally voiced initials (all with the eighth tone). Examples and discussion by the author follow.

The final part of this section is on syllable structure, and describes the possible shapes of the syllable as well as various co-occurrence restrictions between the initials, rhymes, and tones.

The second half of this chapter is devoted to a description of Han loans. There are two distinct layers of Han loans in Mak: an older layer, and a more recent layer corresponding to the variety of southwest Mandarin with which Mak is in contact. Yang addresses the old layer first, comparing Mak loans with the Middle Chinese of the Qieyun (note that a basic understanding of the Qieyun will help the reader keep up with Yang's comparisons), describing the correspondences between initials, rhymes, and tones. He then moves to the more recent layer of Mandarin loanwords, doing the same. Here, he is meticulous in his discussion of the final outcome of these loans in all parts of the syllable. This section is quite interesting, not only for historical reasons, but also for anyone interested in the topic of loanword phonology.

### **Chapter Three: Structure of the Mak Vocabulary**

The first of three sections in this chapter begins with a general statement on the Mak lexicon. Yang first seeks to establish the place of Mak within Kadai, using basic lexico-statistical methods. His results generally agree with the findings of other Kadai scholars: within Kadai, Mak is closest to other Kam-Sui languages, further from Zhuang-Tai, and furthest from Hlai; within Kam-Sui, it is closest to *Maonan*, almost as close to *Sui*, and furthest from *Kam* and *Mulam* (note that the author did not include the *Then* (Yanghuang) language because he did not have access to the data in time). Other significant points in this section include the facts that approximately ten percent of Mak vocabulary is comprised of lexical isolates (having no cognates with either other Kadai languages and no evidence to show that they are loans), homophones are very limited, and that there are two layers of words, native and loans, with some of the loanwords having been fully assimilated into the grammar.

The second section describes the actual structure of the Mak word, and is divided between simple monomorphemic (and largely monosyllabic) items, which comprise the majority of the lexicon, and complex polymorphemic words. The first category of words includes bisyllabic words in which either (a) the initials of both syllables are identical, (b) the rhymes of both syllables are identical, or (c) the two syllables cannot be shown to have separate etymologies, and therefore the words which contain them can't be considered compounds. Yang gives several examples of each type, and discusses them in turn. He then turns to complex word types, including what he calls the 'subject' type (where the order of morphemes is noun-predicate), the 'object' type (predicate-noun), words in which both morphemes are of the same category, and finally head/modifier compounds of different types, one of the most interesting of which is those in which the head of the compound is preceded by a minor syllable descended from a former full syllable (for example *laʔ²-*, used with plant and human terms, from *la:k*<sup>8</sup>, 'son').

The third section is on the status of loanwords in Mak, which come primarily from Chinese and secondarily from Buyi. Yang breaks the Chinese loans down into four categories: (1) new loans in variation with native Mak words of the same meaning; (2) older loans in variation with native Mak words, where they have developed complementary semantic uses; (3) loans which have entered compounds with native words; and (4) old loans which have completely replaced native words. Three categories in this group, numerals, metals, and the earthly branches and heavenly stems, are old Chinese loans which are shared across all of Kam-Tai, and Yang argues that these are among the oldest Chinese loans in the lexicon. All in all, this section is one which should be very interesting to anyone studying loanword behavior.

## Chapter Four: The Mak Grammatical System

Chapter four, by far the largest chapter in the book, is divided into five sections. The first topic is word categories, of which there are a total of thirteen: nouns, place and time words, pronouns, numerals, classifiers and measure words, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, appositions, conjunctions, auxiliaries, onomatopoeia, and exclamations. Yang delves into each one in meticulous detail, citing subcategories, examples, and providing succinct discussion of the diagnostics for each class of words.

The second section enumerates the various kinds of phrases in Mak, including (roughly translated): topic phrases, coordinate phrases, determiner phrases, verb phrases, modifier phrases, serial verb phrases, co-referential phrases, embedded phrases, prepositional phrases, and set phrases. Some of these are rather Chinese-specific, diverging somewhat from Western syntactic tradition, and it is interesting to examine the way in which Yang analyzes these categories when he goes beyond pure description and touches on theory.

Section three is devoted to sentence parts and their classification. Yang divides the core parts of the sentence into topic and comment (or predicate). He then goes on to the optional parts of the sentence, which include objects (optional because they do not occur in intransitive sentences), determiners, adverbs, and various kinds of modifiers including resultatives, abilitatives, and limiters.

The fourth section describes sentence types: declaratives, interrogatives (including yes/no as well as informational), commands (including prohibitives and exhortatives), and exclamations, the last of which are normally realized with some type of discourse particle.

The final section briefly lists two main types of complex sentences: (1) coordinate, where two statements are uttered which place two facts in some sort of juxtaposition (i.e. 'We are Cham, they are Mak'), and (2) modifying, where the first statement is modified in some way by a

second statement (i.e. 'Because you said that, he is crying'). Yang lists several subtypes of each kind.

### **Chapter Five: Mak Dialects**

Yang prefaces this chapter once more with the assertion that Mak and Cham are dialects of the same language, not two separate languages. The three reasons he gives for this are (1) the large number of cognate words shared by Mak and Cham, (2) the similarity both in the sound system, and overall grammar, and (3) the similarities in general culture.

In section one, he outlines the Mak sound system (remember that the sound system described in chapter two was that of Cham). The Mak phoneme inventory is slightly larger than that of Cham, the biggest differences being the following. For the initials, there are a series of preglottalized voiced stops at the labial and alveolar places of articulation, as well as a pair of plain and labialized voiced retroflex fricatives. As with Cham, the alveolar affricates of Mak are only found with Chinese loan words. For the rhymes, Mak differs from Cham significantly in preserving a length distinction in closed rhymes containing the high vowels [i] and [u] (both dialects have a length distinction in rhymes with [a]). Mak also has the vowel [y], found only in Chinese loan words. When compared with Cham, Mak has an additional tenth tone in 'dead' syllables; its distribution is extremely limited, occurring in only twelve words, and Yang is unsure of its origin. As in chapter two, Yang gives commentary on the Mak initials, rhymes, and tones, describing phonetic details, co-occurrence restrictions, and so forth.

Section two briefly describes the criteria used for comparing Mak and Cham vocabulary, and the cognacy level between the two dialects is shown to be roughly 85%. A small set of example words are given

where the two dialects either agree totally or differ only slightly in their segmental composition.

Section three outlines some of the phonemic similarities between Mak and Cham, such as their voiceless sonorants and tonal systems, before showing their contrasts. In the sound system, these include the loss of preglottalized voiced stops in Cham, the lenition of the Mak plain palatal stop and plain voiced retroflex fricative to a lateral and a palatal glide in Cham, respectively, the loss of a length distinction in all Cham rhymes except those with [a], and more. The impression given is that Cham is generally the innovator whenever the two dialects differ.

The fourth section describes differences between Mak and Cham in the rest of the grammar. There are significant differences in the pronouns, and several lexical items are listed in which the two dialects differ. Yang indicates the items which agree with other Kam-Sui languages, are isolates, or are otherwise the result of loans from Chinese in one dialect (usually Cham) but not the other. The beginnings of some Han-influenced word order changes in Cham are noted, and the difference in forming questions between older and younger Cham speakers is shown (the older generation does not use a question particle, but the younger generation does).

Finally, the fifth section sketches the sociolinguistic situation between Mak and Cham, and it is explained that while Mak and Cham people often intermarry, they maintain bilingual households with children learning Cham first. Speakers of both communities also interact with the Buyi in this way, but have less of a propensity to learn Sui because they perceive Sui segments and tones as being difficult to master. The chapter ends with Yang reiterating the idea that Mak and Cham are not two closely related languages, but two dialects of one language (which he refers to collectively as Mak, because of the fact that the Mak population is significantly larger than the Cham population).



### Chapter Six: The Linguistic Position of Mak

This chapter is devoted to establishing the place of Mak within *Kam-Tai*, and a discussion of some issues which fall out of that. In the first section, Yang sets up his criteria for establishing cognates, which essentially consist of identifying obvious loans and then relying on regular sound correspondences between individual languages (he unfortunately fails to list these in the book itself). After doing so, he divides his sets of cognates into those where (a) Mak, other Kam-Sui languages, and languages of the Tai branch agree, (b) Mak and the Kam-Sui languages agree but exclude Tai, (b) Mak and the Tai languages agree, but exclude Kam-Sui, and (d) individual Mak words have cognates in other individual languages but not in the whole branch to which they belong. For data on other Kam-Sui and Tai languages, he relies on the vocabulary section of the 1982, January edition of the Zhuangdong Yuzu Yuyan Daiocha Shoutse, the Zhuangdong Yuzu Yuyan Cihuiji, and the collection of the Zhuangdong Yuzu Yuyan Jianzhi.

Section two gives the results of Yang's comparisons along with some representative examples. His sample includes a total of 1,078 words. Of these, 44.99% have cognates in both the Kam-Sui and Tai branches; 16.97% have cognates in Kam-Sui but not in Tai; and 3.99% have cognates in Tai but not in Kam-Sui. He also finds that 170 Mak words (15.77%) have isolated correspondences with individual languages in the Kam-Sui branch, and 84 (7.8%) with languages in the Tai branch. The total number of Mak words with no apparent cognates in either branch is 113 (10.48%), of which Yang lists ten examples on p. 188 (not all of these appear in the word list in the first appendix, however). Lacking is any mention of shared innovations between Mak and Cham, which would make his argument for their especially close relationship more convincing (see discussion below).

In the third section, Yang uses the reconstructed Kam-Tai from Liang Min and Zhang Junru's (1996) *Dongtaiyu Gailun* to compare with his Mak data, and discusses some postulated retentions and changes between the two. For the consonants, he shows that the plain voiceless stops have continued into Mak basically unchanged, and that plain voiced stops have devoiced unless they were part of an original cluster. Voiceless sonorants have in some cases been preserved as such, while palatal fricatives have merged with the alveolar fricatives. Liang and Zhang's reconstructed prenasalized stops have been retained in Mak as plain voiced stops, and their preglottalized voiced stops have been preserved as such in Mak proper but were lost through mergers in Cham. Yang gives Kam-Tai reflexes for vowels as well (see discussion below). For the tones, Yang merely makes brief mention of some complications in the Tone C category of Mak, the tonal variation between Mak and Cham in words with originally preglottalized initials, the failure of the C and D1 tone categories to split in the Doucun dialect of Cham, and the failure of Mak Tone D2 to split according to vowel length.

In the brief final section, Yang provides a genetic tree of Kam-Sui, in which he includes Lakkia as the most divergent member. As he himself states, the only significant difference between his tree and the model which is generally accepted is his merger of Mak and Cham into one language. He concludes with an exhortation to other scholars to continue the study of Mak.

### **Appendix One: The Mak/Cham lexicon**

The first appendix contains the 1,078 words which Yang and his colleagues collected during their 1994 expedition. Taiyang Cham is used, and the two Mak varieties given are those of Laliu and Fangcun. The wordlist used is the standard one in use with Chinese fieldworkers at present, which covers a range of basic vocabulary in various semantic fields. The list is well-organized, and I don't see any obvious indica-

tions of typographical mistakes. The Taiyang Cham and Laliu Mak vocabularies are quite robust; the Fangcun Mak, on the other hand, has quite a few gaps, although there is still enough words listed to be useful for comparison. When the two Mak varieties diverge from each other, they normally do so because they have distinct lexical items, not because there is variation in the phonemes in the same items.

### Appendix Two: Folk Stories

The second appendix contains a total of seven short stories, most of them told by Cham speakers: 'The smart monkey', 'A monkey story', 'The race between the rabbit and the mollusk', 'Why does the chicken cry like that?', 'A burial story', 'The tiger and the pangolin', and 'The rabbit and the mollusk.' Each story is accompanied by Chinese interlinear text, and a translation at the end.

### Evaluation and Discussion

This book is a valuable contribution to the field of Kam-Sui and Kadai, and to Southeast Asian linguistics in general. It is therefore gratifying not only to see this work done on Mak, but that it was done by someone who is quite competent at linguistic fieldwork. This book will serve as a valuable addition to the limited amount of published work on Mak, which includes Li (1943), Shi and Cui (1988), and Ni (1988), and will greatly enhance comparative Kam-Sui studies, tentative foundations for which are found in Thurgood (1988).

One of the most important contributions of the book documenting the close relationships that exists between Mak and Cham. Shi and Cui (1988) hinted at this, but they decided to regard the two as separate languages despite their large similarities because '...their self-designa-

tions are different, their customs are different, and because they do not have the concept of a common origin...' None of these were proper linguistic reasons to regard Mak and Cham as separate languages of course, and it is good to have the artificial distinction between the two removed.

As mentioned above, however, a more convincing argument would include an illustration of shared innovations between Mak and Cham. This can be readily achieved when Yang's data from the first appendix is used with the Kam-Sui data from Thurgood (1988). One can perform an optimal test by choosing specific examples from the Kam-Sui lexicon where Mak initial consonants show a unique reflex differing from the initial consonants of every other Kam-Sui language; examples of this nature are easiest to come by in words reconstructed with complex initials. Table (1) below gives a handful of these examples, showing the Cham and two Mak dialects, along with Thurgood's reconstruction:

(1)	English	Proto-K-S	Cham	Laliu Mak	Fangcun Mak
	<i>dream</i>	*pwjan <sup>1</sup>	<i>fin</i> <sup>1</sup>	<i>fin</i> <sup>1</sup>	<i>fin</i> <sup>1</sup>
	<i>ear</i>	*khra <sup>1</sup>	<i>tha</i> <sup>1</sup>	<i>tha</i> <sup>1</sup>	<i>tha</i> <sup>1</sup>
	<i>sell</i>	*kwe <sup>1</sup>	<i>te</i> <sup>1</sup>	<i>te</i> <sup>1</sup>	<i>te</i> <sup>6</sup>
	<i>dove</i>	*gwau <sup>2</sup>	<i>kau</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>kau</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>kau</i> <sup>2</sup>
	<i>rain</i>	*xwin <sup>1</sup>	<i>vin</i> <sup>1</sup>	<i>vin</i> <sup>1</sup>	<i>vin</i> <sup>1</sup>

It can be seen that there is a very close (basically identical) correspondence between Mak and Cham in these examples, which are a subset of the Kam-Sui words most likely to have extreme variation in initial consonants. This more than anything shows that Yang's assertion that they are dialects of one language is correct; the only detraction is that he does not actually present this evidence himself.

Outside of this, I do not have any serious reservations with the handling of the Mak data itself within the book. However, there are a cou-

ple of points in the final chapter which I feel deserve a critical comment. For one, it would have been valuable to have an appendix of the compared Kam-Tai lexicon so that we did not have to merely take Yang at his word for which words pass the test as cognates.

My other misgiving is not a problem with Yang's work per se, but rather with his uncritical connection of it with Liang & Zhang (1996). Although their book is easily the most ambitious attempt at a reconstruction of Proto-Kam-Tai to date and includes some important theoretical contributions, I have some reservations about the handling of the data in their analysis. This is not the place to go into detail on this point (although the book certainly deserves its own review); to give just one example, Liang and Zhang's reconstructed vowel system appears to suffer from the kind of overcrowding which is typical in reconstructions which do not take into account all possible explanations for vocalic variation across languages. One example quoted by Yang, 'this', is a classic example of Gedney's puzzle (Gedney 1972, cf. Strecker 1988), and so I am skeptical of this particular reconstructed Kam-Tai vowel system from which the Mak examples are purportedly descended. My present feeling is that it is still premature to speak of concrete Proto-Kam-Tai phonemes until more work is done on the daughter branches and a systematic theory of canonical word structure developed.

That being said, I strongly recommend this book to anyone who is interested in comparative Kadai, or Southeast Asian linguistic typology. Although the non-linguistic sections are modest, they contain enough information to be of use to the cultural anthropologist as well. I am sure that this work will be used by scholars of Southeast Asia for years to come.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Edmondson, Jerold A. and David B. Solnit (eds.). 1988. *Comparative Kadai: Linguistic Studies Beyond Tai*. Dallas: The Summer Institute of Linguistics and The University of Texas at Arlington.
- Gedney, William J. 1972. A Puzzle in Comparative Tai Phonology. In Jimmy G. Harris and Richard B. Noss (eds.), *Tai Phonetics and Phonology*, Pp. 52-57. Bangkok: Central Institute for English Language.
- Li Fang Kuei. 1943. *Mohua Jielue*. Institute of History and Philology, publication 19. Beijing: Academia Sinica.
- Liang Min and Zhang Junru. 1996. *Dongtaiyu Gailun*. Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Chubanshe.
- Ni Dabai. 1988. Yafeng Mak of Libo County. In Edmondson and Solnit (1988), pp. 87-106.
- Shi Lin and Cui Jianxin. 1988. An Investigation of the Ai-Cham Language. In Edmondson and Solnit (1988), pp. 59-85.
- Strecker, David. 1988. Gedney's Puzzle in Kam-Sui. In Edmondson and Solnit (1988), pp. 107-127.
- Thurgood, Graham. 1988. Notes on the Reconstruction of Proto-Kam-Sui. In Edmondson and Solnit (1988), pp. 179-218.
- Wang Jun, et. al. 1984. *Zhuangdong Yuzu Yuyan Jianzhi*. Beijing: Minzu Chubanshe.
- Zhongyang Minzhu Kexue Jiayuan Shaoshuminzu Yuyan Yanjiusuo Diwu Yanjiuzhi. 1985. *Zhuangdong Yuzu Yuyan Cihuiji*. Beijing: Zhongyang Minzu Xueyuan Chubanshe.

Reviewed by Peter Norquest  
 The Joint Program in Linguistics and Anthropology  
 The University of Arizona  
 norquesp@email.arizona.edu