

On the genetic affiliation of Vietnamese

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Long ago Maspero stated (1912:118) that Vietnamese belonged to the Tai family. Logan (1856) and many others since him have classed Vietnamese within Mon-Khmer or Austroasiatic. Wang Li (1958) observed that Vietnamese is closer to Tai and Mon-Khmer than it is to Chinese. The question is still open.

It is the purpose of this paper to compare some 159 basic vocabulary items from Vietnamese with the clearly Tai languages Thai and Zhuang, and the clearly Austroasiatic languages Wa, Blang, and Palaung, attempting to shed further light on the question of the genetic relationship of Vietnamese.

Words	Language	Vietnamese	Thai	Zhuang	Wa	Blang	Palaung
1	I	toi ⁵⁵	ku ² , phom ¹ , tshan ¹	tou ¹	ʔau [?]	ʔu [?] 35	ʔΛu
2	you	măi [?] 11, mi ⁵⁵	muŋ ² , khun ²	muŋ ²	mai [?]	mi [?] 33	măi
3	he, she, it	nɔ ³⁵	man ² , khau	te ¹	nɔh	ʔɤn ³⁵	ʔăn
4	what	ʔi ¹¹	ʔa [?] 7 rai ²	ma ²	pa ti [?]	ka [?] 31 na [?] 35	mΛ sei
5	who	ai ⁵⁵	khrai ²	pou ⁴ lau ²	mɔ [?]	nɤn ³⁵	ʔa sei
6	how many how much	mvi ³⁵	thau ³⁽⁶⁾ rai ²	kei ³ lai ¹ kei ³ pou ⁴	mɛ [?] diŋ	pɤn ³¹ mu [?] 31	kha məu
7	with	mvi ³⁵ va ¹¹	lɛ [?] 8	cau ⁵	mai	tam ³⁵	gai
8	because	vi ¹¹	phrɔ [?] 8	an ¹ vi ⁶	khɯ	hak ³³	gɔp
9	on	tai ¹¹	ju ⁵	jou ⁵	ʔot, kah	kuh ³⁵	kɔi
10	inside	tɕɔŋ ⁵⁵	kham ³ nai ²	pai ⁶ da:u ⁴	dau [?]	ka [?] 31 nai [?] 31	kheŋ

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11	left	t̚sai ³⁵	tham ² sai ⁴	pai ⁶ sui ⁴	g <u>ua</u> [?]	ka [?] 31 ve [?] 35	?a ga [?]
12	right	dam ⁵⁵	taŋ ² kwa ¹	pai ⁶ kva ²	d <u>o</u> m	ka [?] 31 t <u>o</u> m ³⁵	?a ?ah
13	far	vien ¹³⁵	klai ²	kjai ¹	si ŋai	ka ³¹ ŋai ³¹	toŋ
14	near	ɣvn ¹¹	klai ³	kjau ³	de [?]	nte [?] 33	ntät
15	to sit	ŋom ²¹⁴ ŋoi ⁵⁵	naŋ ³⁽⁶⁾	naŋ ⁶	ŋ <u>o</u> m	mok ³⁵	k <u>o</u> i
16	to go, to flee	tvu ²¹⁴	thiau ²	pjai ³	to	to ³⁵	hau
17	to fly	bäi ⁵⁵	bin ²	bin ¹	pu	pvh ³⁵	ban
18	throw away	vvt ⁵⁵	tiŋ ⁴ khwam ³	kven ¹	tik, vut	ka [?] 31 vat ³³	ven
19	stand	dun ³⁵	ju:n ²	du:n ¹	t <u>o</u> ŋ ³¹	t <u>o</u> ŋ ³¹	t <u>o</u> ŋ
20	push	dvi ²¹⁴	dan ²	kai ⁴	dh <u>u</u> n		
21	swim	loi ¹¹	li ² nam ⁴	?ap ⁷ ram ⁴	loi ³¹	li ³¹	li
22	to catch	na ⁴³⁵	kam ² , tsap ⁷ , au ² , kum ²	tau ² kap ³	tui	m <u>u</u> t ³⁵	da ^h
23	flow	luu ³⁵	lai ¹	lai ¹	la	lai ³⁵	lai
24	slap	dvp ¹¹	top ⁷	dap ⁷	piat, tup		
25	wash	tv <i>i</i> ²¹⁴	sak ⁸ , lam ⁴	sak ⁸	si d <u>au</u> [?]	ka [?] 31 tu [?] 35	bai
26	to scratch	läu ⁵⁵	tset ⁸	urt ⁷	?ot	?ot ³⁵	khut
27	to tear	se ⁵⁵	tshik ⁹	sik ⁷	riah	t <u>ch</u> ek ³³	zai [?]
28	to dig	vet ⁵⁵	luan ⁴	vait ⁷	vat	puk ³³	ŋoh
29	year	nvm ⁵⁵	pi ²	pi ⁴	num	nvm ³	si nam
30	day	ŋai ¹¹	wan ²	ŋon ²	ŋai [?]	sa [?] 31 ŋi [?] 33	si ŋäi
31	one	mot ¹¹	nun ⁵	deu ¹ , it ⁷ , he ¹	ti [?]	ti [?] 31	?u
32	two	hai ⁵⁵	soŋ ¹	soŋ ¹	ra	lai ³⁵	?a
33	three	ba ⁵⁵	sam ¹	sam ¹	loi	loi ³⁵	?oi
34	four	bon ³⁵	si ⁵	sei ⁵	pon	pun ³⁵	phan
35	five	ŋu ¹³⁵	ha ³	ha ³	ph <u>u</u> an	ph <u>o</u> n ³⁵	phan
36	six	şäu ³⁵	hok ⁷	yok ⁷	liah	le [?] 33	ndo

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37	seven	băi ²¹⁴	tset ⁷	ɕat ⁷	ʔa liah	ʔa ka ^{ʔ31} lel ³³	bvu
38	eight	tam ³⁵	pɛt ⁹	pet ⁷	dai [?]	χoŋ ³¹ ti ^{ʔ35}	da
39	nine	cuu ²¹⁴	kau ³	kou ³	dim	ka ^{ʔ31} tim ³⁵	dim
40	ten	muyi ⁵⁵	sip ⁷	ɕip ⁸	kau	kul ³⁵	gɹ
41	twenty	hai ⁵⁵ muyi ⁵⁵	ŋi ⁶ sip ⁷	ŋei ⁵ ɕip ⁸	ti [?] ŋa	sau ³¹	ʔa gɹ
42	little, few	it ³⁵	nɔ:i ⁴	noi ⁴	ʔiak, tu [?]	leŋ ³¹	preik
43	many	ŋieu ¹¹	ma:k ¹⁰	lai ¹	hun	hvn ³⁵	kun
44	big	lɤn ³⁵	jai ^{2.5}	huŋ ¹	tiŋ	hɔn ³⁵	taŋ
45	long	zai ¹¹	ja:u ²	ɣai ²	laŋ		toŋ
46	short	ŋvn ³⁵	san ³	tin ³	dɔt, ŋain	ŋeiŋ ³⁵	ta [?]
47	tiny, small	ŋɔ ²¹⁴	nɔ:i ⁴ , lek ⁸	noi ¹	ʔiak, siah	ʔiat ³⁵	tɛ [?] tɛt
48	narrow	hɛp ¹¹	khɛ:p ¹⁰	hep ⁸	si ghɔp	ka ^{ʔ31} tɔk ³⁵	ka khia [?]
49	fire	luy ²¹⁴	fai ⁴	fei ²	ŋu	ŋol ³¹	ŋɔ
50	sky	tɕvi ¹¹	fa ⁴	bun ¹	rau ma	ka ^{ʔ31} ʔau ³⁵	bleiŋ
51	mountain	nui ³⁵	dɔ:i ²	doi ¹	gɔŋ	ŋkoŋ ³¹	kɔŋ
52	stone	za ⁵⁵	hin ¹	ɣin ¹	si mau [?]	ka ^{ʔ31} mu ^{ʔ33}	mau
53	sun	măt ¹¹ tɕvi ¹¹	duaŋ ² ta ² van ²	taŋ ¹ ŋon ²	si ŋai [?]	ka ^{ʔ31} mviŋ ³⁵	si ŋăi
54	star	sau ⁵⁵	da:u ¹	da:u ¹ dei ⁵	sim ʔuiŋ	ka ^{ʔ31} mviŋ ³⁵	si măiŋ
55	river	ɕoŋ ⁵⁵	mɛ ³⁽⁶⁾ nam ⁴	ta ⁶	klɔŋ	khaŋ ³¹ khi ^{ʔ35}	ʔvm
56	month	thaŋ ³⁵	duan ²	ɣoŋ ⁶ du:m ¹	khi [?]	ka ^{ʔ31} tɛ ^{ʔ35}	ma gian
57	earth	dai ²¹⁴	din ²	ɣei ⁶	tɛ [?]	ka ^{ʔ31} tɛ ^{ʔ35}	ka dăi
58	salt	muyi ³⁵	klua ²	kju ¹	kih	kil ³³	sai [?]
59	water	nuyk ³⁵	nam ⁴	ɣam ⁴	rɔm	ʔum ³⁵	ʔvm
60	rain	muy ⁵⁵	fon ¹	fun ¹	lhɛ [?]	le ^{ʔ35}	glai

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61	wind	zɔ ³⁵	lom ²	ɣum ²	bhauŋ	kuh ³⁵	khun
62	seed	hat ¹¹	phan ²	ɕe ⁶	si me	tʃv ³¹	si ma
63	rice	ɣau ⁵⁵	khau ³	nau ⁴	ŋho? gau?	ta ³⁵	ŋʌu
64	fibrous root	ɣvu ⁵⁵	nuat ⁹	ɣa:k	riah	ɣel ³³	riah
65	melon	bi ³⁵	fak ⁸ tɛŋ ² , buap ⁸	kva ¹	bi	ka ³¹ kel ³⁵	gluan
66	tree	kvi ⁵⁵	ton ³ mai ⁴	fai ⁴	khau?	khu ³⁵	hei
67	peach	dau ¹¹	luk ¹⁰ tho ⁴	ma:k ⁷ tau ²	tɛ	mak ³⁵ ta ³¹	blei si pvm
68	grass	kɔ ²¹⁴	ja ³	ŋu ³	rip	ɣep ³³	pat
69	flower	boŋ ⁵⁵	do:k ⁹	va ¹	tai, pruih	phv ³⁵	bʌuh
70	leaf	la ³⁵	bai ²	bau ¹	lha?	la ³⁵	la
71	snake	rǎn ³⁵	ŋu ²	ŋu ²	si?uiŋ	ka ³¹ ?viŋ ³⁵	hǎiŋ
72	insect	svu ⁵⁵	mleŋ ²	nom ¹ neŋ ²	viak, kɔŋ	vak ³³	va?
73	(a) fly	roi ²¹⁴	mɛ ² loŋ ² wan ²	meŋ ² ŋan ¹	rɔi	ɣaŋ ³¹ hoi ³¹	ma rɔi
74	cattle	bɔ ¹¹	wua ²	ɕu ²	mɔi	ka ³¹ moi ³¹	mǎk
75	fish	ka ³⁵	pla ²	pja ¹	ka?	ka ³⁵	ga
76	wing	kaŋ ³⁵	pi:k ⁹	fuit ⁸	pruik	pvik ³⁵	phraŋ
77	moth	mɔt ¹¹	mɔ:t ¹⁰	mɔ:t	mɔt	ŋxuiŋ ³¹	mɔt
78	dog	tɕo ³⁵	ma ¹	ma ¹	so?	so ³⁵	sʌu?
79	bird	tɕim ⁵⁵	phu ³ jiŋ ¹	ɣok ⁸	sim	sim ³⁵	ma sim
80	girl	naŋ ¹¹	khon ²	luk ⁸ sai ¹	naŋ, bun krih	kon ³⁵ khyih ³⁵	gɔn na bia
81	human	ŋuvi ¹¹	khon ²	vun ²	pui	pyi ³¹	du vi
82	child	kɔn ⁵⁵	luk ¹⁰	luk ⁸	kɔn	kon ³⁵	gɔn
83	mouth	mien ¹¹	pa:k ⁹ sop ⁷	pa:k ⁷	mɔiŋ	nduiŋ ³¹	moi?
84	heart	trɪm ⁵⁵	tsai ¹	sim ¹	rhɔm	mul ³⁵	nauh
85	hand, arm	tǎi ⁵⁵	mu ²	fuiŋ ²	tai?	ti ³⁵	dǎi
86	ear	ɣuŋ ¹¹	bin ³ hu ¹	ɣu ²	zhauk	huk ³⁵	ɕʌu?

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87	horn	ʃuŋ ¹¹	khau ¹	kau ¹	ruŋ	χvŋ ³⁵	nvŋ
88	bone	ɕuɤvŋ ⁵⁵	du:k ⁹	do:k ⁷	si ʔaŋ	kaʔ ³¹ ʔaŋ ³⁵	ka ʔaŋ
89	intestines	ruot ¹¹	sai ³	sai ³	krauwŋ vaik	veik ³³	ŋɔŋ vǎik
90	tooth	rǎŋ ⁵⁵	fan ²	heu ³ , fan ²	rhaŋ	χaŋ ³⁵	raŋ
91	nose	mui ¹³⁵	tʂa ² muk ⁹	daŋ ¹	muih	mui ³³	ka mɤuh
92	face	mǎt ¹¹	na ³	na ³	ŋai bauh	ŋaʔ ³¹	na
93	eye	mǎt ³⁵	ta ²	ta ¹	ŋai	ŋai ³⁵	ŋai
94	tongue	luvi ¹³⁵	lin ⁴	lin ⁴	da:k	ka ³¹ tak ³⁵	si daʔ
95	liver	ɣan ⁵⁵	tap ⁷	tap ⁷	tɔm	kaʔ ³¹ pup ³⁵	ka dom
96	tail	duvi ⁵⁵	haŋ ¹	ɣiŋ ¹	si daʔ	kaʔ ³¹ taʔ ³⁵	si da
97	leg	dui ¹¹	kha ¹	ka ¹	ba	kaʔ ³¹ vaŋ ³⁵	plau
98	abdomen	buŋ ¹¹	thɔŋ ⁴	tun ⁴	vaik	kaʔ ³¹ tvɿ ³⁵	vǎik
99	chest	ŋu:k ⁵⁵	na ³ ak ²	ak ⁷	nauk	kaʔ ³¹ ʔun ³⁵	nauh
100	feather	loŋ ⁵⁵	khon ¹	pun ¹	hauk	hwk ³⁵	hɤk
101	hair	tɔk ³⁵	phom ¹	pjom ¹	hauk	hwk ³⁵	hɤk
102	blood	tiet ³⁵	luat ¹⁰	lu:t ⁸	ŋham	ŋam ³⁵	ŋam
103	foot	tɕvŋ ⁵⁵	tin ² , thau ⁴	tin ¹	tɕauŋ	tʃuŋ ³¹	tɕeiŋ
104	drink	uoŋ ³⁵	kin ¹ , du:m ⁵	dot ⁷	ŋauʔ	ŋuʔ ³³	rup
105	alive, fresh	ʃoŋ ³⁵	mi ² khi ² wit ⁸ ju ⁵	kun ¹ sut ⁸	ʔim	ʔim ³⁵	ʔim
106	afraid	ʃɤ ¹¹	klua ²	lau ¹	lhat	lat ³⁵	zɤu
107	know	biet ³⁵	ru ⁴ , tɔk ⁷	yo ⁴	tɔŋ	tʃɤʔ ³⁵ , ɔŋ ³¹	nap
108	sleep	ŋu ²¹⁴	nɔ:n ² lap ⁷ , nɔ:n ²	nin ²	ʔit	ʔit ³⁵	ʔit
109	to smell	ŋui ²¹⁴	dom ²	ŋou ⁵	ŋhut	xut ³⁵	ʔɤuh

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110	want	muon ³⁵	khit ⁸	nei ⁴ , au ¹	saŋ, mhainj	ka ³¹ kvt ³³	si maŋ
111	watch, see	sem ⁵⁵	du ²	yan ¹ jau ³	dzhak, gaik	nok ³³	ʔəʔ ʔa
112	listen	ne ⁵⁵	fan ²	tin ⁵	ŋhiat	ŋiat ³⁵	si təŋ
113	eat	ăn ⁵⁵	kin ¹	kun ¹	ʔih, səm	tək ³³	hom
114	to die	tčet ³⁵	tai ²	tai ¹	zum	ʔym ³¹	ʔəm
115	cry; weep	xək ³⁵	rəŋ ⁴ hai ³	tai ³	ziam	zam ³³	zam
116	speak	nəi ³⁵	va ⁶ , kluu ⁵ , phu:10	kaŋ ³ , nau ²	lau, krai	la ³⁵	klaŋ
117	laugh	tieu ³⁵	hua ¹ rəʔ ⁸	yi ¹	ŋiah	ka ³¹ ŋat ³⁵	ka ŋah
118	white	tʂaŋ ³⁵	kha:u ¹	ha:u ¹ pi:k ¹	paiŋ	paiŋ ³¹	lui
119	red	də ²¹⁴	dəŋ ²	diŋ ¹ hoŋ ²	rauh	sa ³ kxak ³⁵	reŋ
120	curved	kə ⁵⁵	khom ⁴	kau ²	kək	vuk ³⁵	gəu [?]
121	good	tot ³⁵	di ²	dei ¹	mhəm	nəm ³⁵	məm
122	smell	hoi ⁵⁵	men ¹	hau ¹	si ʔoi	ka ³¹ ʔui ³⁵	ʔyuh
123	new	mvi ³⁵	mai ⁵	mau ⁵	khrau [?]	tʃhu ³⁵	ka mai
124	bad	hu ⁵⁵	tshua ³⁽⁶⁾	yui ⁴ , vai ⁶ , jak ⁷	lau [?]	lu ³³	la
125	decomposed	wvŋ ⁵⁵	nau ⁶	fok ⁸	siʔum	ka ³¹ ʔym ³⁵	ʔəm, ram
126	hot	nəŋ ³⁵	rəm ⁴	çik ⁷	rau	hən ³⁵	măi
127	old, worn	ku ¹³⁵	kau ⁵	kau ⁵	prim	liŋ ³⁵	brim
128	wet	wvt ³⁵	piak ⁹	tum ² , ba ⁵	tçau [?]	liau ³⁵	na ŋip
129	cold	rət ³⁵	jen ² , nau	nit ⁷ , çeŋ ⁴	kuat	kat ³⁵	găt
130	dry	rau ²⁵	heŋ ³	ya:u ³	kroh	ka ³¹ ʔoh ³⁵	ka hauh
131	cooked	tçin ³⁵	suk ⁷	çuk ⁸	sin	sin ³⁵	sin
132	black	dən ⁵⁵	dam ¹	dam ¹	luŋ	lən ³¹	vəŋ

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133	mother	mɛ ¹¹	mɛ ⁶ , man ² da ²	me ⁶	mɛ?	ma ^{?33}	ma
134	wife	vɤ ¹¹	mia ²	ja ⁶	moɪŋ	ka ³¹ muɪŋ ³¹	ʔi bɔn
135	younger sibling	ɛm ⁵⁵	nuŋ ⁴	nuŋ ⁴	pau?pu?	ʔoŋ ³⁵	va
136	elder sibling	an ⁵⁵	phi ⁴	pei ⁴	pau? ke	tv? ³⁵	ʔi kăt
137	husband	tɕoŋ ¹¹	phua ¹	kva:n	me?	ka ^{?31} me ^{?31}	ʔi mai
138	father	tɕa ⁵⁵	pho ⁶	po ⁶	k _u ɪŋ	k _u ɪŋ ³⁵	guɪŋ
139	rope	thuŋ ¹¹	tshuak ¹⁰	ɕa:k ⁸	mau?	mu? ³⁵	văn
140	shoot	băn ³⁵	jiŋ ²	ŋiŋ ²	puɪŋ	pviŋ ³⁵	băiŋ
141	sew	ŋip ³⁵	jep ⁸	ŋip ⁸	tɕaiŋ	tʃiŋ ³⁵	tɕeiŋ
142	weave	dan ⁵⁵	sam ¹	pu ² , sam ¹	taɪŋ	taɪŋ ³⁵	daiŋ
143	no	xoŋ ³⁵	mai ³⁽⁶⁾	bou ³	ʔaŋ	ʔun ³¹	ʔau
144	swelling	ɕuŋ ⁵⁵	buam ²	fok ⁸	ʔuah	ky? ³¹	ʔauh
145	kill	te ²¹⁴	kha ³⁽⁶⁾	ka ³	pauh	toh ³³	ŋauh
146	name	ten ⁵⁵ tuo ⁱ²¹⁴	tshu ³⁽⁶⁾	ɕo ⁶	k _{au} ?	tʃy ³¹	ga
147	burn	dot ³⁵	phau ¹	ɕom ⁶	toŋ, gluɪŋ	tɕoŋ ³⁵	dɔu?
148	house	ŋa ¹¹	ban ³	ɣan ²	ŋiɛ?	ŋa ^{?33}	kaŋ
149	still have	kɔn ¹¹	jaŋ ² mi ²	li ³ mi ²	kɔn koi	ʒaŋ ³¹ kui ³³	nsi
150	borrow, lend	văi ⁵⁵	ju:m ²	ɕi ⁵	vai	vai ³¹	vai
151	bright	raŋ ¹¹	sa? ⁷ waŋ ⁵	laŋ ⁵	riaŋ	tʃeŋ ³⁵	blaŋ
152	drag	rut ³⁵ , ryt ³⁵	la:k ¹⁰	va:k ⁸	rut, s _i nhut	ʒat ³³	
153	insert	sap ³⁵	pak ⁷	pak ⁷	s _u p	nsyt ³⁵	siap
154	axe	buo ³⁵	khwa:n ¹	fou ³	moi	mui ³⁵	mvi
155	chaff	kam ³⁵	ram ²	taŋ ²	gam	kam ³⁵	kham
156	crawl	bo ¹¹	khun ³	ɣai ⁶	mo	muh ³³	mvan
157	have	kɔ ³⁵	mi ²	mi ²	koi	kui ³⁵	mayh
158	cheap	re ²¹⁴	ʒau ²	pin ² zei ²	ʒiɛ	ʒau? ³¹	khrei
159	wall	tuɤŋ ¹¹	kam ¹	ɕiŋ ²	diŋ	ntal ³¹	reŋ

The number and percentage of apparently related words is given below:

	Number	Percentage
Vietnamese - Thai	10	6.7%
Vietnamese - Zhuang	16	10%
Vietnamese - Wa	65	40%
Vietnamese - Blang	42	25.5%
Vietnamese - Palaung	34	21%

Though speakers of modern Wa, Blang, and Palaung live hundreds of kilometers from the Vietnamese and have little or no direct communication with them, yet their percentage of apparently related words is far higher than the percentages shown by Thai and Zhuang, geographic neighbors of the Vietnamese.

And furthermore, there are some regular correspondences between Vietnamese and Wa.

(1) The final aspiration *-h* and final glottal *-ʔ* in Wa are wholly missing in their Vietnamese cognates. Of the 159 words compared, 33 have final glottal *ʔ* in Wa, of which 12 appear in Vietnamese with *ngang* tone, 10 with *sắc* tone, 7 with *huyền* tone, 3 with *hỏi* tone, 1 with *nặng* tone, and none with *ngã* tone.

Of the 159 words, 16 have final aspiration *-h* in Wa, of which 5 appear in Vietnamese with *ngang* tone, 5 with *sắc* tone, 4 with *hỏi* tone, 1 with *nặng* tone, 1 with *ngã* tone, and none with *huyền* tone.

	Vietnamese	Wa
'he'	nó	nɔh
'fibrous root'	râu	riah
'nose'	mũi	muih
'hand'	tay	taiʔ
'leaf'	lá	lahʔ
'you'	mày	maiʔ
'earth'	dải	tɛʔ
'mother'	mẹ	mɛʔ

(2) The aspirated nasal, lateral and trill in Wa are matched by similar unaspirated sounds in Vietnamese.

	Vietnamese	Wa
'want'	muốn	mhuɔ̃n
'to smell'	ngửi	nhuɔ̃t
'leaf'	lá	lahʔ
'tooth'	răng	rhan

(3) Some initial nasal consonants in Wa are matched by voiced plosives in Vietnamese.

	Vietnamese	Wa
'cattle'	bò	mɔi
'axe'	buá	mɔj
'crawl'	bò	mo

(4) Some initial fricatives in Wa are matched by affricates in Vietnamese.

	Vietnamese	Wa
'dog'	chó	sɔʔ
'bird'	chim	s̺im
'cooked'	chín	s̺in

In addition to the phonetic correspondences shown above, there are also similarities in word cooccurrence patterns and in grammar:

(1) The two languages have similar words for 'child': Vietnamese *con*, Wa *kɔn*. In both languages, when it is joined to another morpheme its meaning changes to 'young, little'.

	Vietnamese	Wa
'little bird'	con chim	kɔn s̺im
'pupil [little eye]'	con ngoi	kɔn ŋaj

(2) In both languages the noun modifier is put after the noun.

	Vietnamese	Wa
'tiled house'	nhà ngói house tiled	ɲiɛʔ bɤŋ house tiled
'red flower'	hoa lo flower red	tai rəuŋ flower red

(3) Both languages have SVO word order.

you teach me	Vietnamese	anh	dạy	tôi
	Wa	you	teach	me
	Vietnamese	mai	gaw	ʔɤʔ
	Wa	you	teach	me

he studies English	Vietnamese	anh ấy	học	tiếng	Anh		
	Wa	he	study	language	English		
	Vietnamese	nọh	gaw	lɔʔ	kə	la	paŋ
	Wa	he	study	language	foreign	person	white

These phonetic and grammatical similarities would support the hypothesis that Vietnamese is genetically affiliated with the Austroasiatic languages.

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Received: 2 August 1996

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