

Diglossia and monosyllabization in Eastern Cham: A sociolinguistic study¹

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In Eastern Cham, the modern reflexes of Classical Cham disyllables exhibit variation between sesquisyllabic and monosyllabic word shapes, which suggests that the language is becoming increasingly monosyllabic. This apparent change in progress has been attributed to contact with monosyllabic Vietnamese, but a variationist study of formal colloquial speech based on interviews conducted with 42 native speakers sheds doubt on this claim. I propose that the variation in word shapes is actually due to the quasi-diglossia found in Eastern Cham communities. It seems that the variation in word shapes can be explained by the subjects' attitudes towards the two varieties of their own language and that these attitudes are in turn shaped by the relative prestige of Cham and Vietnamese languages and cultures.

Introduction

Eastern Cham, a language that belongs to the Malayo-Chamic branch of Austronesian, is spoken by 60,000 to 100,000 speakers in the provinces of Ninh Thuận and Bình Thuận in south-central Vietnam. The Cham communities scattered throughout these two provinces are the last remnants of a much larger Cham polity that controlled central Vietnam from the 2nd to the 17th century and maintained some political autonomy until the 19th century (Po 1987). Since most Eastern Cham villages are currently surrounded by Vietnamese settlements and since Vietnamese is the language of administration and of government, the overwhelming majority of Cham are bilingual. In fact, most Cham have native or near-native abilities in Vietnamese.

Over the centuries, Eastern Cham has become typologically similar to other Mainland Southeast Asian languages in many respects. Perhaps the most striking example is that while Malayo-Chamic was largely disyllabic, Modern Eastern Cham has now become mostly monosyllabic. This process, which will be discussed in detail in this paper, took place in two stages. First, the disyllables of Proto-Malayo-Chamic were reduced to *sesquisyllables*, a type of iambic word shape composed of a stressed final syllable preceded by an unstressed and phonologically reduced *presyllable*. The second step, which is not fully completed, consists in a further reduction or deletion of the presyllable, leading to the prevalence of monosyllabic forms. Since these

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two steps seem to coincide with periods of intensive contact with Bahnaric languages (Mon-Khmer) and Vietnamese, which are respectively sesquisyllabic and monosyllabic, they have been attributed to language contact (Alieva 1984, 1986, 1994; Thurgood 1996, 1999). Thurgood, for instance, claims quite explicitly that “the subsequent reduction to monosyllables seems to be due in large part to subsequent Phan Rang Cham contact with the monosyllabic Vietnamese...” (Thurgood 1999: p.66).

Although most authors recognize that there is a significant amount of variation between sesquisyllabic and monosyllabic forms in Eastern Cham, the issue has never been explored quantitatively. This paper addresses this variation and shows how it sheds light on the related question of contact-induced change. In Section 1, I claim that the Eastern Cham community is diglossic, at least at a symbolic level, and that the coexistence of two language varieties is an important factor in explaining the variation between sesquisyllables and monosyllables. In Section 2, I briefly review the diachronic processes that have led to the emergence of the current situation, and I try to establish their chronology based on French colonial sources. In Section 3, I then demonstrate through a quantitative study of the formal variety of Eastern Cham spoken in Ninh Thuận province that the current variation cannot be objectively attributed to contact with Vietnamese, but that cultural and linguistic attitudes are important factors. Finally, in Section 4, I show how language attitudes, bilingualism and diglossia interact to shape the sociolinguistic landscape of Eastern Cham communities, which in turn affects monosyllabization.

1. Diglossia and monosyllabization

Previous researchers have long observed that Eastern Cham sesquisyllables tend to be realized as monosyllables (Alieva 1986, 1991, 1994; Aymonier 1889; Blood 1962; Bùì 1996; Lee 1966; Thurgood 1999). Recently, Blood and Alieva have noted that scholars and speakers who know the written language use a larger proportion of sesquisyllables. The most interesting description of this phenomenon comes from a publication of the Cham Cultural Center:

Xưa kia người Chăm nói đầy-đủ cả hai vần trong mỗi tiếng, nhưng ngày này thường bớt vần-phụ mà chỉ nói vần-chính, khiến nhiều khi sinh ra sự lẫn nhĩa. Vì không được nói đến, vần-phụ thường bị quên hay bị nói sai đi. (Trung-tâm Văn-hoá Chăm, p.10)²

“In the past, the Cham pronounced both syllables of each word, but nowadays, they reduce the presyllables and only pronounce the main syllable, which often causes semantic confusion. Because they are not pronounced, presyllables are usually omitted or rendered incorrectly.” (My translation)

The variation described in this quote (“usually omitted or rendered incorrectly”) can be better understood if we first look at the sociolinguistic situation of Eastern Cham speech communities. In addition to bilingualism, Eastern Cham itself has two language varieties: a colloquial variety, which has very little prestige but is the normal code within the community, and a formal variety, mostly written but also used in religious ceremonies and very solemn circumstances, which reflects more or less accurately the language of 19th century manuscripts. This coexistence of two language varieties may be an instance of *diglossia* as proposed by Ferguson (1959):

² Leaflet published by the Cham cultural center in the early 1970's but no exact year of publication is available. The document is available at the Cornell University Library (and listed without a date in the catalog).

DIGLOSSIA is a relatively stable language situation in which, in addition to the primary dialects of the language (which may include a standard or regional standards), there is a very divergent, highly codified (often grammatically more complex) superposed variety, the vehicle of a large and respected body of written literature, either of an earlier period or in another speech community, which is learned largely by formal education and is used for most written and formal spoken purposes but is not used by any section of the community for ordinary conversation.

Although the Eastern Cham situation conforms to Ferguson's definition reasonably well, some qualifications have to be made. First, while it is clear that the Eastern Cham H is *the vehicle of a respected body of written literature*, consisting mostly of stone inscriptions, manuscripts, religious texts and epics, it could hardly be considered *large*. However, if we consider that there at most 100,000 Eastern Cham speakers, this body of literature is of a respectable size relative to the Cham population, and there is no doubt that all Cham speakers have been exposed to it, at least in its oral form. Another important difference with the cases described in Ferguson's paper is that literature is no longer produced in Cham, with the exception of some poetry. The only modern Cham writer, Inrasara, lives in Hồ Chí Minh City and has to write in Vietnamese in order to see his work published and read.

The *very divergent* character of Cham H is unquestionable, but its *highly codified* nature is less obvious. While L is largely monosyllabic, has no affixation and has undergone major syntactic restructuring under Vietnamese influence, H has polysyllables, derivational prefixes and infixes and a syntax that is much closer to other Western-Malayo-Polynesian languages than the syntax of L. This is not to say that speakers actually realize all these characteristics when they attempt to speak H. As we will see shortly, polysyllabic and sesquisyllabic forms are used to some extent, but only language specialists attempt to use affixation, and syntax is always strongly influenced by Vietnamese. The poor knowledge of H grammar has in turn an impact on *codification*: The absence of fluent users of H prevents the emergence of a well-defined standard. However, there are received ideas about what constitutes proper H, and the Committee for the Standardization of Books in the Cham Script (Ban Biên Soạn Sách Chữ Chăm) is making serious efforts to standardize not only the traditional script but also its orthography, which reflects a state of the language even more conservative than the spoken H. For example, most of the diphthongs of written Cham are realized as monophthongs in spoken H, and a small number of onsets that contrast in the script have merged in that variety.

The main goal of the standardization of written Cham is to develop language programs in primary and middle schools in order to teach H to children. Formal instruction is the primary way in which H is passed along to younger generations, although they also imitate the imperfect H of their elders. This is consistent with Ferguson's criterion that H be *learned largely by formal education*. Traditionally, H was taught to children by learned relatives or in classes organized at the village level. A number of older speakers learned it this way, more or less successfully. A few elderly men also mentioned a short-lived trilingual program (French-Vietnamese-Cham) in French schools during the colonial period, and middle-aged men have referred to a few unsuccessful attempts to teach Cham in primary schools under the pro-American South Vietnamese regime in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The common denominator of all these programs seems to be their non-systematic and improvised nature, the small number of enrolled pupils, and the fact that they were only attended by boys. In contrast, the current program has gradually been implemented for 20 years and reaches all pupils enrolled in primary and middle schools in Cham villages where there are trained teachers. Unfortunately, this program also has serious limita-

tions. Pupils only study Cham two hours a week, and teaching materials are scarce. Furthermore, most teachers have a very limited knowledge of H and the standard one-week teacher training program cannot remedy this problem. Perhaps because of this, Cham language education focuses mostly on *akhar thrah*, the Indic script, and on the numerous phonological discrepancies between it and modern Eastern Cham (both H and L). However, since there are no printed materials in Cham script besides a few textbooks, the overwhelming majority of children quickly forget *akhar thrah* as soon as they graduate from middle school. As a consequence, the real written medium in the community is Vietnamese, even in personal mail and electronic communications. Therefore, even if we can say that H *is not used by any section of the community for ordinary conversation*, we cannot claim that H *is used for most written and formal spoken purpose*. Besides the fact that Cham is not used for most written purposes, there are relatively few situations requiring formal speech in the community.

Even if its use in the community is very restricted, the script has a capital importance in the Cham social construction of ethnicity (Blood 1980). In the native language ideology it is not dissociable from H. Besides *akhār thrah*, *akhār pani*, an Arabic-based script is used by the *pani*, the followers of a syncretic version of Islam, for religious purposes. However, this script is restricted to religious functions and does not have the same prestigious status as *akhār thrah*, even among *pani*. Further, it seems that texts written in *akhār pani* are learned and recited by rote rather than read. In any case, even if very few people manage to master the traditional scripts, they are nevertheless largely preferred to any romanization. Since the independence of Vietnam, there have been various attempts to romanize the Cham script by the South Vietnamese Department of Education, American missionaries (Blood 1977), and Vietnamese linguists (Hoàng 1987). These attempts have all been faced with open hostility by the Cham, and the mere mention of a Latin-based transcription (*akhār rumi*) is considered suspicious. Some Cham intellectuals were very critical of my transcriptions and field notes in IPA.

A final qualification about Eastern Cham diglossia has to be made: Is the Cham linguistic situation *relatively stable*? The very definition of stability is problematic. It has been proposed that diglossia is stable if it is maintained over at least three generations (Fishman 1980), but by this criterion, the question cannot be answered definitely in the case of Eastern Cham, for lack of evidence. We hardly know how and when the two varieties became different enough to satisfy Ferguson's definition of diglossia, although, as we will see below, we do have evidence that the monosyllabization of L had at the very least started in the late 19th century (Aymonier 1889). As for the possibility of survival of H in the near future, it largely depends on the ability of the Cham to develop and maintain an adequate language program in village schools, to mobilize their youth and to develop Cham mass media. There are currently limited radio and television broadcasts in H (one hour a week and two hours a month, respectively), but they are limited to news and are severely controlled and censored by provincial authorities. Moreover, the monthly two hours of Cham news on Ninh Thuận TV have all their captions and subtitles written in a romanized script.

Other cases where the H has an objectively limited role in daily interactions are discussed in the literature. The fact that H is in many ways a symbolic target rather than a variety commonly used in the Eastern Cham community is reminiscent of the status of Mandarin in Malaysia (Platt 1977). Platt argues that among Malaysian Chinese, Mandarin and, to some extent, Amoy Hokkien, are "dummy H's," or varieties "of which some members have a certain knowledge, and which are given prestige ratings by the speakers and are even recognized by government authorities, media, or prestige groups within the speech community, but which are not in fact utilized extensively in any domain." Eastern Cham H conforms to this definition very well; although few speakers know it well, it has high prestige, and it is taught in schools and used in news. How-

ever, it is not “utilized extensively in any domain.” In fact, a variety of the language which I will call ‘Formal L’ is used in formal situations. It is a form of L to which many H features have been incorporated, but that is still very close to colloquial L and is mutually intelligible with it. Platt (1977) uses the label M to describe this type of ‘compromise’ variety.

To sum up, the only element of Ferguson’s definition of diglossia that Eastern Cham does not satisfy is the use of H for most written and formal purposes. This condition is not fulfilled because of the parallel existence of bilingualism and diglossia, a complex sociolinguistic situation that is typically found in immigrant communities, like the Old Order Amish and Hassidic communities of the United States³ (Fishman 1980). Like these two groups, the Cham are a minority even in the area where they are concentrated and have a lower social status than the majority group with which they are in contact. Further, because the Eastern Cham population is small and relatively scattered, almost all written communications and most formal spoken interactions involve ethnic Vietnamese and are conducted in Vietnamese. In practice, H is almost only used for religious and educational purposes. While H is clearly the intended target in these situations, it is not spoken fluently; speakers typically produce the hybrid Formal L mentioned above. Therefore, Eastern Cham is not a canonical case of diglossia. The role of H in language ideology and the social functions of H in society are similar enough to treat it as such, but the combination of bilingualism and the small size of the community confine H to the limited, quasi-symbolic role of a ‘dummy H.’

Now, how does diglossia interact with monosyllabization? The H variety closely mirrors the written language and, for this reason, largely preserves its sesquisyllables (and a handful of polysyllables). On the other hand, in the colloquial L variety, sesquisyllables are almost never found, with the exception of occasional cases of learned and religious vocabulary and of sesquisyllables preserved to avoid homophony. A good example of homophony avoidance is the contrast between *ʔalipǎn* [ʔapǎn] ‘eight’ and *t^halipǎn* [t^hampǎn] ‘nine’, which would both be realized as [pǎn] if they were monosyllabized. Nevertheless, there are still a very high number of homophones in L, and many of them are contextually ambiguous. The words *płǎj* [plǎj] ‘buy’ and *paplǎj* [plǎj] ‘sell’, for instance, have become homophonous, which can be seen in the following sentence, recorded during an interview:

- (1) H /Ví dǔ t^ha t^haŋ **paplǎj** pǎtaj t^ha juon maj **paplǎj**./
 L /Ví dǔ ha t^haŋ **plǎj** pǎtaj ha jun maj **plǎj**./
For-ex. one house sell rice one Viet come buy
 ‘For example, a family sells rice and a Vietnamese comes to buy some.’

To complicate this example further, the word *prěj* [plǎj] ‘give’ has also become homophonous with ‘sell’ and ‘buy’ in the speech of most speakers, thus creating more potential ambiguity (Alieva 1994).

We therefore take the strong position that monosyllabization is already completed in the colloquial L variety and has not taken place at all in the H variety (or what speakers imagine it to be). A formal representation of word templates in H and L is given in (2):

- (2) Word shapes in the H (a) and colloquial L (b) varieties
- | | | |
|----|----------|-----------|
| a. | σ | σ |
| | (C)(V) C | (G) V (C) |

³ Note that, since Yiddish and Hebrew are unrelated, Hassidic communities can be considered diglossic only if we accept Fishman’s extension of diglossia to genetically unrelated varieties.

b. σ
(C) C (G) V (C)

Now, when working with linguists, Cham subjects often try to speak what they consider proper language, namely the H variety. However, since very few speakers master it, what is typically produced is the hybrid Formal L. Not surprisingly, the actual proportion of sesquisyllables used in Formal L varies from speaker to speaker, depending on factors such as their knowledge of H, the perceived formality of the situation and their desire to speak “proper” Cham. In short, the analysis developed here is based on the observation that there is little variation in the two “pure” language varieties. By definition, the H variety contains sesquisyllables, while the L variety is almost completely monosyllabic. The locus of most variation is the Formal L variety. This model is admittedly a simplification of the actual sociolinguistic situation, in which varieties might be organized along a continuum (Paolillo 1997). However, since all the quantitative work presented in Section 3 is based on “formal” interviews during which all subjects can be assumed to have used a variant of Formal L, this approach is sufficient to capture basic patterns of variation.

2. Diachrony

The various sound changes through which Proto-Chamic became sesquisyllabic and Eastern Cham monosyllabic took place over two millennia. Therefore, it would be ill-advised to treat them as a unified process teleologically transforming of Eastern Cham into a typologically Mainland Southeast Asian language. They are more likely to be a sequence of short term drifts with converging effects. For the sake of simplicity, I will divide them into two major groups: changes from Proto-Malayo-Chamic to Proto-Chamic (Section 2.1) and changes from Ancient Cham to Modern Eastern Cham (Section 2.2). Note that the diachronic processes described in this section are idealized and do not actually reflect the variation found in the modern language. The issue of variation will be addressed in Section 3.

2.1 From PMC to Proto-Chamic

The canonical word-shape of Proto-Malayo-Chamic (PMC) was the disyllable (Blood 1962; Thurgood 1996, 1999), which is consistent with the disyllabic templates widely attested in Austronesian. The stress pattern of PMC has not been investigated, but it is likely that it had not lost the Proto-Austronesian contrastive stress. By Proto-Chamic (PC), however, this contrast had been neutralized. PC settled on automatic iambic stress, possibly because of the influence of Mon-Khmer languages with which it was in early contact (Thurgood 1996, 1999). This new stress pattern was accompanied by phonological reduction in the unstressed non-final syllables, resulting in a sesquisyllabic canonical word-shape (see Pittayaporn 2005 for similar developments in Moken). As explained above, this means that the consonant and vowel inventory found in unstressed presyllables is a subset of the inventory found in main, stressed syllables and that these weak presyllables are subject to reduction (Blood 1967; Bui 1996; Thurgood 1996, 1999). Since the historical processes at play in this earlier stage are beyond the scope of this paper, we will focus on more recent changes in the next section.

2.2 From Ancient Cham to Modern Eastern Cham

The prevalence of monosyllabicity distinguishes Eastern Cham from its sister languages. While all other Chamic languages, including Western Cham, preserve their sesquisyllables to a large extent, Eastern Cham has lost them almost entirely in its colloquial L variety, becoming in the process typologically more similar to Vietnamese, a monosyllabic language. The first step in the gradual change towards monosyllabicity, sesquisyllabization, is difficult to date. A consequence of sesquisyllabization is the instability of the vowel of the presyllable already reflected in writing in the 19th century:

“...il faut tenir compte de l'état flottant de l'écriture, surtout en ce qui concerne la première syllabe des mots bisyllabiques. On peut écrire: akan ou ikan, poisson, akak ou ikak, lier, kumēi ou kamēi, fille...” (Aymonier 1889)

“...we must take into account the floating state of writing, especially in the case of the first syllable of disyllabic words. One can write: akan or ikan, fish, akak or ikak, tie, kumēi or kamēi, girl...” (my translation)

Another effect of sesquisyllabization is the reduction to schwa of the vowel of the presyllable (Alieva 1991; Bui 1996; Thurgood 1999). This is illustrated in (3).

(3) $V \rightarrow \text{ə} / \text{___} 'CV(C)$

Written Cham	Gloss	Formal L
kubaw	‘water buffalo’	[kəpaw]
jalan	‘road’	[çəlan]
bani	‘nativized Islam’	[pəni]
bataw	‘stone’	[pətaw]
karāj	‘different’	[kərəj]

Further, in the L variety, the vowel of the presyllable is often dropped altogether if this deletion results in a well-formed onset cluster, as shown in (4).

(4) $V \rightarrow \emptyset / (C_1) \text{___} 'CV(C_2)$

Where C_1 is less sonorous than C_2 .

Written Cham	Gloss	Formal L
palāj	‘village’	[plēj]
karāj	‘other’	[krāj]
bani	‘nativized Islam’	[pni]

However, in colloquial L, the most common monosyllabization process is the complete deletion of the presyllable formalized in (5).

(5) $\sigma \rightarrow \emptyset / \text{___} 'σ$

This is not a recent change as it was already described in Aymonier (1889):

“Même lorsqu’il n’y a pas à craindre la confusion, non seulement la première syllabe varie, mais encore elle est supprimée. On peut lire dans certains cas, par exemple: kok pour akok, tête, rau pour arau, laver le linge, nēi pour moenēi, se baigner, vēi pour havēi, rotin, etc., etc.” (p.39)

“Even when there is no possible confusion, not only does the first syllable vary, but it is also deleted. We can read in some cases, for example: kok for akok, head, rau for arau, wash clothes, nēi for moenēi, bathe, vēi for havēi, rattan, etc.” (my translation)

A few examples of presyllable deletion are given in (6).

(6) Written Cham	Gloss	Colloquial L
/ini/	‘this, here’	/ni/
/p̄ani/	‘nativized Islam’	/̄ni/
/ʔula/	‘snake’	/la/
/p̄ila/	‘ivory’	/̄la/
/talah/	‘lost’	/lah/
/t̄alah/	‘tongue’	/̄lah/

The idealized diachronic scenario of Eastern Cham monosyllabization laid out in this section accounts for the current Colloquial L forms used by Eastern Cham speakers. However, as discussed in the previous section, the H variety has not undergone monosyllabization and the Formal L variety exhibits variation between the two types of word shapes. In the next section, we will explore inter-speaker variation in the latter variety and try to determine what sociolinguistic factors account for it.

3. Experiment

In order to explore the social and structural variation in the realization of monosyllabization, short interviews were conducted with Eastern Cham speakers. I used the corpus thus obtained to investigate the types of monosyllabization found in the Formal L variety and the sociolinguistic factors that determine their respective frequencies.

3.1 Methods

I conducted interviews on life stories, language use and language attitudes in and around Phan Rang, Ninh Thuận with 42 native speakers of Eastern Cham (22 males, 20 females)⁴. Out of these, 41 were originally from Ninh Thuận province and one from Bình Thuận, although the latter subject actually lived most of her life in Phan Rang. The speaker sample shows a wide range of sociolinguistic variation. The interviews ranged from 15 to 30 minutes per subject,⁵

⁴One additional interview was unusable because of a high level of background noise.

⁵One subject decided to interrupt the interview after only two questions for fear of problems with local authorities. Her results are nevertheless included here because of their special significance.

and on two occasions, two subjects were interviewed simultaneously. Spectators were discouraged as much as possible, but family members and neighbors were sometimes present during the interviews, especially those conducted with younger women. Questions were asked mostly in Vietnamese, but the subjects were instructed to answer in Cham. This, and the fact that speakers were aware that my language skills are better in Vietnamese than in Cham, might have caused the proportion of Vietnamese words used by subjects to be higher than in daily interactions. Finally, most subjects perceived the interview to be a formal situation and felt they should speak accordingly. Even subjects who knew me before the recording session modified their speech perceptibly. It is therefore clear that the interviews do not reflect Colloquial L, but rather the ‘best’ language variety the subjects could speak, namely Formal L.

The interviews were transcribed in IPA and in a romanization of the H variety based on Moussay (1971)’s transcription. After completing fieldwork, I corrected all the transcriptions with Dr. Phú Văn Hãn, a Cham linguist working for the Institute of Social Sciences of Hồ Chí Minh City. I then compared the H variety sesquisyllables with their realization in Formal L and counted the proportion of sesquisyllables used by each subject.

3.2 Results

The first type of information that can be extracted from the interviews is the array of phonological strategies through which H sesquisyllables are mapped to L monosyllables (section 3.2.1). Ideally, it would be interesting to see the frequency of each strategy and the exact restrictions on their occurrence, but as the interviews are short, it is difficult to obtain statistically significant results from a quantitative investigation of this type. On the other hand, it is possible to consider the prevalence of monosyllables without getting into a more fine-grained analysis and to see how the variation among subjects correlates with their sociolinguistic characteristics (section 3.2.2).

3.2.1 Diachronic monosyllabization strategies

The corpus reveals that there are three main types of correspondences between H sesquisyllables and L monosyllables. It is important to emphasize that these correspondences are not synchronic reduction processes through which sesquisyllables are reduced to monosyllables. It is rather likely that speakers have two lexical entries for each word, one for L and one for H, and make generalizations about the types of connections between their superficially similar forms. Since knowledge of H is highly variable in the community, this model entails that the correspondence strategies vary across speakers depending on the number of H forms that they actually know, and that speakers might occasionally overapply or misapply some of these strategies to coin H forms from familiar L forms. Evidence for this kind of hypercorrection was already attested in Alieva (1986) and will be further discussed in Section 3.2.2.

The most common correspondence strategy is the deletion or addition of the entire presyllable of the H form. This strategy is almost always available, except for H words in which the presyllable onset is a stop and the main syllable onset is a liquid. The L forms of these words always have an onset cluster, as shown in (7).

(7)	H variety	Gloss	L variety
	/ak ^h är/	‘word, script’	/k ^h ăn/
	/tapa/	‘to cross’	/pa/

/rilo/ ‘many, a lot’ /lo/
 But:
 /palāj/ ‘village’ /plēj/
 /çaḷan/ ‘road’ /kḷan/

However, complex onsets in L forms are not restricted to stop + liquid clusters. A second type of correspondence is the mapping of the presyllable of the H form with complex onset clusters in the L form. This strategy is available provided that the L cluster does not violate the sonority hierarchy - i.e., as long as the sonority of their individual elements increases towards the nucleus (Clements 1990). In Table 1, shaded boxes represent the logical possibilities that were not found in the interviews. They would all be cases of clusters with an increasing or equal sonority.

Table 1: Types of complex clusters found in the interviews

		Presyllable onset			
		Sonority			
		-	+		
		Stops	Fricatives	Nasals	Liquids
Main syllable onset + Sonority	Stops	H ₁ kate ~ L ₁ kte ⁶ ‘New year festival’			
	Laryngeals	H ₁ taha ~ L ₁ t ^h a ‘old’			
	Nasals	H ₁ paṅi ~ L ₁ pṅi ‘local Islam’	H ₁ saniŋ ~ L ₁ sniŋ ‘think’	H ₁ manuc ~ L ₁ mnij? ‘person’	
	Liquids	H ₁ palāj ~ L ₁ plēj ‘village’	H ₁ harāj ~ L ₁ hrēj ‘day’	H ₁ miḷām ~ L ₁ mlām ‘night’	

There is one type of cluster that systematically violates sonority sequencing. Its first member is a /m/ while its second member is the onset of the original main syllable. The possibility that this /m/ is vocalic and constitutes a presyllable has to be considered, but in the absence of non-distributional evidence, I will leave this question open. In any case, a /m/ in the onset of a H presyllable is often preserved in its L correspondent:

(8) H variety	Gloss	L variety
/mita/	‘eye’	/mta/
/miʔin/	‘to play’	/mʔin/

Moreover, the entire presyllable of a H word is often mapped to a nasal in L. In such cases, it typically assimilates to the following consonant.

(9) H variety	Gloss	L variety
/ripāw/	‘thousand’	/mpōw/
/likāj/	‘man, male’	/ŋkēj/
/palāj/	‘village’	/mlēj/

⁶ As in many languages, there is often a very short epenthetic schwa in stop+stop clusters, which could actually be a transition between two consonantal gestures. (Gafos 2002).

The third and last type of correspondence strategy is the association of the presyllable of the H variety with a partially or totally assimilated onset cluster.

(10)	H variety	Gloss	L variety
	/p̩ɔ̃aj/	‘female animal’	/m̩ɔ̃aj/
	/take/	‘horn’	/kke/
	/kamäj/	‘woman, female’	/mměj/

Finally, function words and high-frequency words are often monosyllabized according to their own idiosyncratic patterns.

(11)	H variety	Gloss	L variety
	/rilo/	‘much, a lot’	/klo/
	/haräj/	‘day’	/sěj/

Interestingly, a word can have several forms corresponding to different correspondence strategies, a fact already noted by Alieva (1994). For example, the adjective used to designate the syncretic variety of Islam, /pãni/ can be realized as [p̩ni], [m̩ni] or [ni]. Generally, an individual tends to use only one of these forms, but there is good evidence that the use of clusters is a marker of formality (if we exclude stop + liquid clusters that are used systematically even in very colloquial L). In other words, there would be a formality scale going from sesquisyllables to monosyllables with complex onsets, and finally, to monosyllables with simple onsets. A systematic variationist study of these phenomena is necessary to fully grasp the structural as well as social factors that underlie the related diachronic processes of monosyllabization and cluster simplification.

3.2.2 Sociolinguistic variation

3.2.2.1. Methodology

As was just mentioned, a sociolinguistic study of the variability of word shapes has two possible levels. The first level of analysis is to consider words as either monosyllables or sesquisyllables, regardless of the type of onset they have. This level is quite straightforward. It results in two categories of outcomes and can be carried out with a relatively small corpus. At this level of analysis, the various possible realizations of the word /pãni/ ‘nativized Islam’ are counted as disyllabic if their presyllable contains a vowel (^H/p̩ãni/, ^H/p̩ni/, ^H/p̩ə̃ni/), but monosyllabic if it does not (^L/p̩ni/, ^L/m̩ni/, ^L/ni/). The second level of analysis goes further, by distinguishing the various types of onsets found in monosyllables. Forms like ^L/p̩ni/, ^L/m̩ni/ and ^L/ni/ would be categorized as different and possibly regarded as gradient variants along a continuum. While the second level would allow us to capture a probable hierarchy in formality between the various types of onsets, it would require a much larger corpus. As some onset clusters seem to have undergone simplification more readily than others because of structural constraints, different types of onsets would have to be tallied independently. For example, /kate/ ‘new year’ is less likely to be reduced to /kte/ than to /te/, but /pãni/ is more likely to be realized as /p̩ni/, with a cluster, than as /ni/. Therefore, to achieve reproducible results, the corpus would have to include a relatively high number of tokens in each onset category and for each subject. Since the recordings at our disposal are too short (average of 1211 words per speaker; an average of 1422 for

men and 979 for women) to have such a high number of repetitions, the more categorical first option was chosen for methodological reasons, even if it fails to address facts that would enable us to understand the process of language change in its entirety.

For every subject, the proportion of sesquisyllables in the interviews was determined by comparing the realization of every word with its corresponding written form. Obviously, words that are monosyllabic in Written Cham were excluded from the count. Written Cham reflects an earlier state of the language and cannot be equated with the H variety in every respect, but when it comes to word shapes, they are almost identical. The proportion of sesquisyllables used in interviews was then correlated with sociolinguistic variables. In order to determine the role of social factors in variation, the subjects were grouped according to the following factors:

- Age: All subjects were born between 1924 and 1980.
- Sex: Interviews were conducted with 20 women and 22 men.
- Religion: The sample includes 15 followers of the local form of Hinduism (bàlamon), 26 followers of syncretic Islam (paṅi), and 1 Sunni Muslim. This is not a representative distribution. Although there are no reliable statistics on religion among the Cham, paṅi are probably overrepresented and Sunni Muslims might be slightly underrepresented.
- Place of Birth: Most subjects come from the two large villages of Palāj Pīrāw (Phuróc Nhon – 26 subjects) and Hamu Tanrăn (Hũu Đúc – 11 subjects), but five subjects were born in other villages.
- Place of Residence: Most subjects live in Palāj Pīrāw (Phuróc Nhon – 26 subjects) or in other villages near Phan Rang (12). Four subjects live in the Vietnamese-speaking town of Phan Rang itself.
- Knowledge of the Cham script: Subjects were asked if they have any knowledge of the Cham script. A positive answer does not actually mean that they are literate in Cham, but rather that they have studied the script at some point, regardless of their actual ability to use it (no one is fully literate in Cham).
- Culture-related occupation: All employees of the Cham Cultural Center and of the Committee for the Standardization of the Cham Script were considered culture specialists, except support personnel (technicians, secretaries and accountants). All other speakers are non-specialists.
- Frequency of use of Vietnamese: Determined through the answers given by subjects but adjusted through my own personal observations. The scale is the following: 0 = almost never uses Vietnamese, 1 = speaks Vietnamese with a few Vietnamese acquaintances, occasionally uses Vietnamese at work, 2 = speaks Vietnamese with Vietnamese friends and often speaks Vietnamese at work, 3 = works in Vietnamese only, many Vietnamese friends.
- Highest level of schooling: Subjects were asked about the highest level of schooling they attained. This variable raises two problems: 1) Due to changes in political regimes, answers can either reflect the French colonial school system or the pre-1975 and post-1975 Vietnamese systems. The quality of the education provided in these three school systems is not comparable. 2) The number of years of schooling does not necessarily reflect attendance (especially problematic among farmers). The scale is the following: 0 = no formal schooling, 1 = primary school, 2 = middle school, 3 = high school, technical high school, French primary, 4 = college and university.
- Occupation: Subjects were asked about the various occupations they held in their lifetime. They were ranked according to the best position they ever occupied on the following scale: 0

= no occupation, 1 = housework, farming, 2 = manual work, petty trade, priests⁷, 3 = technicians, white collars, 4 = researchers, intellectuals.

- Time spent outside Cham-speaking areas: The following scale was used: 0 = never left the area, 1 = short trips for travel or trade, 2 = 0-5 years, 3 = 5-10 years, and so forth with 5-year increments.
- Proportion of Vietnamese words used in the interview: Although this variable is quantitative, it does not necessarily reflect the proportion of Vietnamese words used by the subject in other contexts. It is as likely to reflect a desire to accommodate the interviewer (I speak Vietnamese much better than Cham) than the fact that Cham is not typically used with outsiders

The data was analyzed by means of a classification tree generated with R 2.3.1. The proportion of Classical Cham sesquisyllables realized as sesquisyllables was used as the dependent variable and all the sociolinguistic variables listed above were listed as covariates or factors. The classification tree method was chosen over a regression because of the small and unbalanced sample, which did not allow us to evaluate interactions between variables, and because of the high correlation between many of the variables (sex, education, occupation, use of Vietnamese, etc.). In this study, the tree method finds the factor that can divide the subject sample into two groups that are maximally different in their proportion of sesquisyllables and operates a first branching split. It then operates similar splits in each of the two sub-groups and proceeds recursively until each branch is composed of a homogeneous sub-sample that has an apparently random variation and thus cannot be further divided. Limitations of the classification tree model include the fact that they only operate binary splits and that they tend to overestimate the weight of high-ranking splits, but since they deal with the data in transparent way (i.e. allow us to retrieve the identity of the subjects dominated by any given branch), the validity of each split will be discussed as we go.

3.2.2.2. *Proportion of sesquisyllables*

The results suggest that of all the sociolinguistic variables just listed, only occupation (culture-related or not), age and sex explain some of the variation in the proportion of sesquisyllables used by speakers with any statistical significance. The relatively small size of the corpus might blur the role of some factors, but it is nevertheless important to emphasize that the variables that reflect familiarity with or frequent use of Vietnamese (frequency of use of Vietnamese, highest level of schooling, time spent outside Cham-speaking areas, proportion of Vietnamese words used in interview) do not significantly account for any of the variation, contrary to what we would expect if language contact with Vietnamese had a direct effect on monosyllabization. As an illustration, Figure 1 gives the average proportion of written Cham disyllables realized as sesquisyllables in the interviews relative to the frequency of use of Vietnamese, for subjects who are not language or culture specialists. The high proportion of sesquisyllables among men who have basic exposure to Vietnamese will be explained below. As the interaction of factors other than occupation has not been filtered out yet, Figure 1 is only meant to show that there is no obvious correlation between the two variables.

⁷ The only priest in the sample is lumped together with manual workers and peddlers because he makes a living off farming. He does have certain level of specialized knowledge, so I did not group him with farmers. However, since he has no formal education, I did not group him with technicians and white collars.

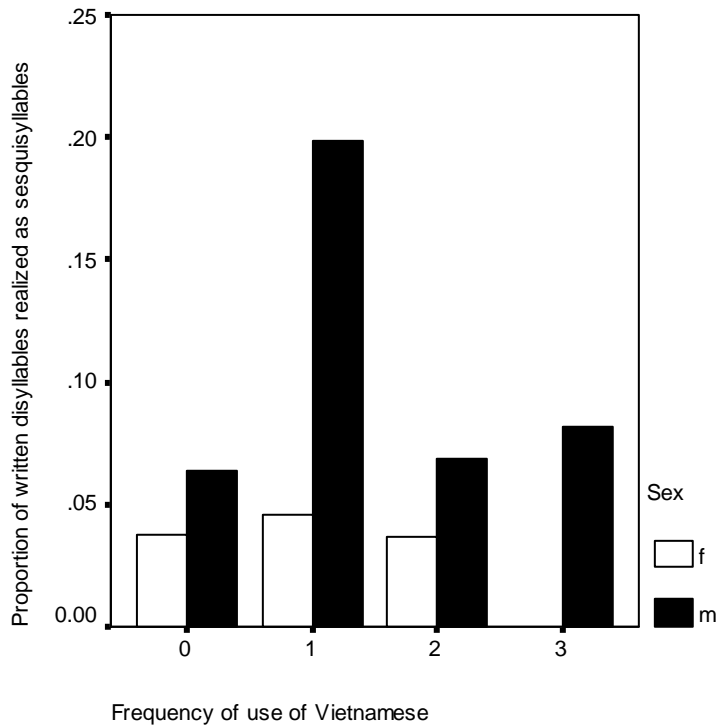


Figure 1. Average proportion of written disyllables realized as sesquisyllables (by frequency of use of Vietnamese – scale described in section 3.2.2.1)

Now that it is established that variables measuring contact with the Vietnamese language and society can be discarded, let us turn to the factors that do account for some of variability in the use of sesquisyllables. These variables are illustrated in the classification tree given in Figure 2. They are, in order, occupation (culture-related or not), year of birth and sex.

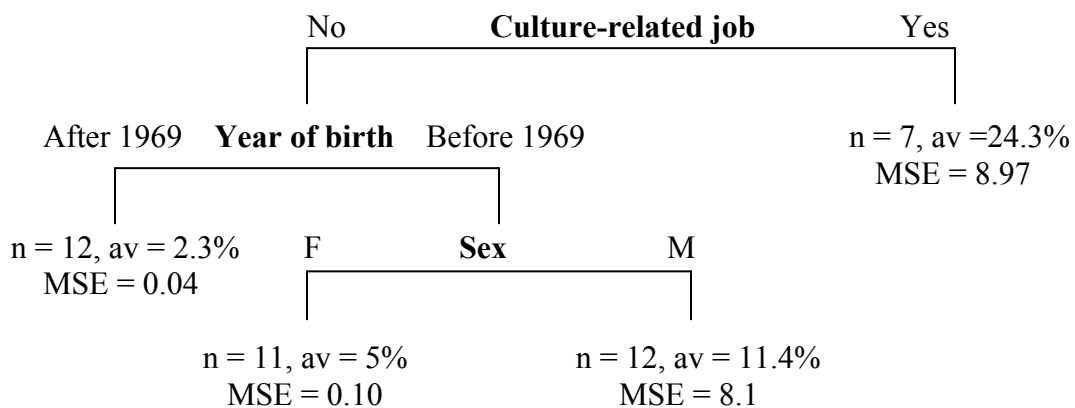


Figure 2. Classification tree for factors predicting the proportion of written disyllables realized as sesquisyllables in the interviews

The most important factor is occupation. The subjects can be divided between culture and language specialists, who use a high proportion of sesquisyllables (24.3%) and all other speakers (6.3%). Individual results are reported in Figure 3, but this figure has an illustrative purpose only; it has no statistical relevance as it only takes into account a few interesting variables. An important point that is not apparent in Figures 2 and 3 is that the sample of language and culture specialists only includes one woman, who happens to be the subject with the highest proportion of sesquisyllables in the entire sample. Her behavior will be discussed in more detail below.

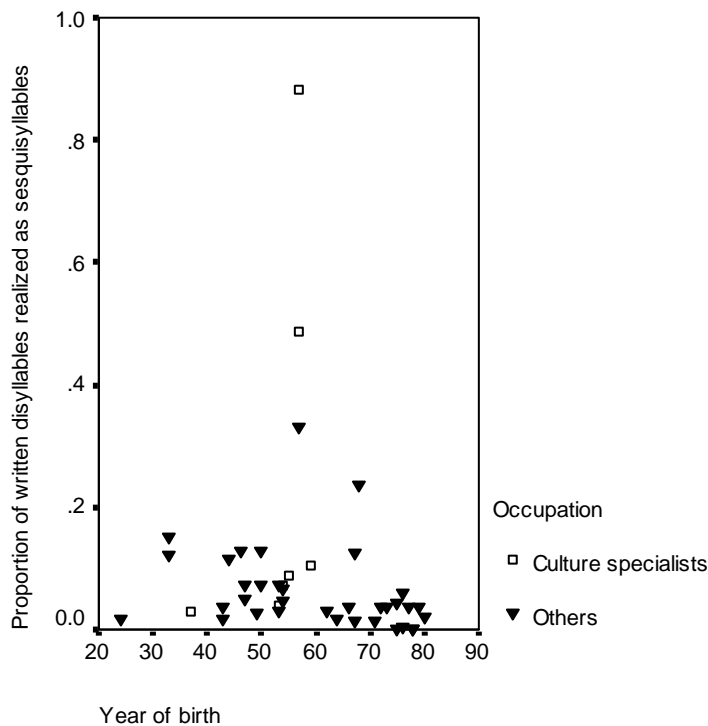


Figure 3. Proportion of written disyllables realized as sesquisyllables (by occupation and year of birth)

The classification tree yielded no further significant split among language and culture specialists. Among non-specialists, however, there is a positive correlation between age and the proportion of written disyllables realized as sesquisyllables. According to the classification tree in Figure 2, the best way to divide the non-specialists into two maximally distinct sub-samples is to separate them between a group of subjects born after 1969 (1969.5 to be more precise), who use an average of 2.3% of sesquisyllables, and a group of subjects born before 1969, who use an average of 8.4% of sesquisyllables. Results for individual non-specialists are reported in Figure 4, where we can see that age seems to play a role, but also that young men and women have comparable behaviours, in contrast to their elders, among which men have a higher proportion of sesquisyllables. However, an important point must be made here; the cut-off point automatically chosen for the classification tree (1969.5) passes to the right of the two subjects with the highest values in Figure 4, and lumps in the process the subjects born between 1960 and 1970 with their elders. If the two subjects with the highest values were treated as outliers or if their weight was moderated by a larger sample, the boundary between younger and older subjects could shift significantly. Therefore, while age definitely seems to be an important factor here, perhaps it

should be treated as a continuous variable rather than being divided into two bins. This is clearly a disadvantage of the classification tree method. As for the two outliers who use more than 20% of sesquisyllables, a possible explanation for their behaviour will be proposed at the end of this section.

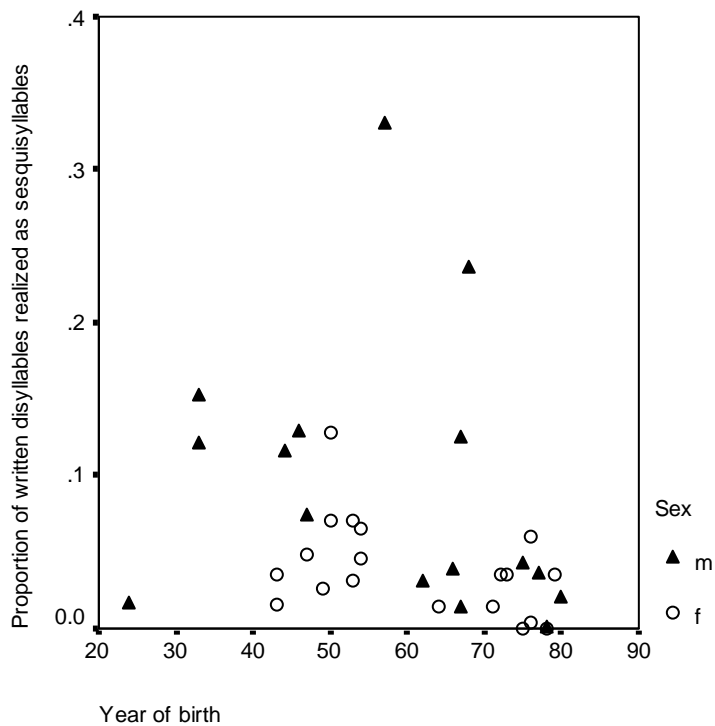


Figure 4. Proportion of written disyllables realized as sesquisyllables by speakers who are not culture specialists (by gender and year of birth)

The last split in the classification tree, which can also be seen in Figure 4, is the division of older non-specialists by sex. Older men use sesquisyllables for 11.4% of written disyllables, while older women have a significantly lower 5%. Note that once again, the two outliers might increase the effect of the split.

3.2.2.3. Hypercorrection.

At this point, it is tempting to propose that a high proportion of sesquisyllables is a conservative feature of middle-aged and older men. Out of seven language specialists, six are male, and among non-specialists, men born after 1969 clearly stand out. We could thus claim that there is a change in progress that started with women and spread to younger men, a sequence of event that is common in variationist studies. However, an additional observation shows that such a conclusion is premature; the relatively high prevalence of hypercorrection among male elders. It became clear to me while I was making recordings (especially while recording wordlists, a very formal task that is not reported here) that some subjects coin forms that they believe to be formal, but that do not correspond to real H forms. This type of hypercorrection is also reported in the literature, in Alieva (1986, 1994) and in Cham sources: “Vì không được nói đến, vần-phụ thường bị quên hay bị nói sai đi.” “Because they are not pronounced, presyllables are usually omitted or pronounced incorrectly” (Trung-tâm Văn-hoá Chăm, p.10). In the interviews, two types of

coinage could be considered hypercorrection. The first one consists of the use of the wrong presyllable for a word that is usually realized as a monosyllable. For example, the word /kamäj/ ‘women,’ normally pronounced /měj/ in Colloquial L is sometimes realized as [laměj] in Formal L. The second type, which is rarer in interviews, but common in wordlist reading, is the addition of a presyllable to a word that is monosyllabic even in the H variety or the addition of an extra syllable to a word that is already polysyllabic. In an interview, the word /riça/ ‘festival’ is produced as [riçiça].

In the rest of this section, I will discuss the proportion of hypercorrect words (hypercorrect words / total number of Cham words) found in the interviews. However, since the interviews were relatively short, ranging from a few hundred to a few thousand words, most speakers exhibit no hypercorrection at all and the raw number of hypercorrect forms never exceeded 5 in individual interviews. Results will therefore be tabulated and presented in figures as in the previous section, but no statistics will be provided, due to the low number of hypercorrect forms.

The proportion of hypercorrect words for every speaker is shown in Figure 5. A first observation we can make is that language and culture specialists seem to hypercorrect less other speakers (0.055% vs. 0.113%). This is not surprising, as one could expect these speakers to know the language well and to be relatively secure linguistically. What is more puzzling is that older speakers seem to hypercorrect much more than younger speakers. If older speakers have retained a higher proportion of sesquisyllables than other speakers because they are less affected by a monosyllabization in progress, why would they hypercorrect more?

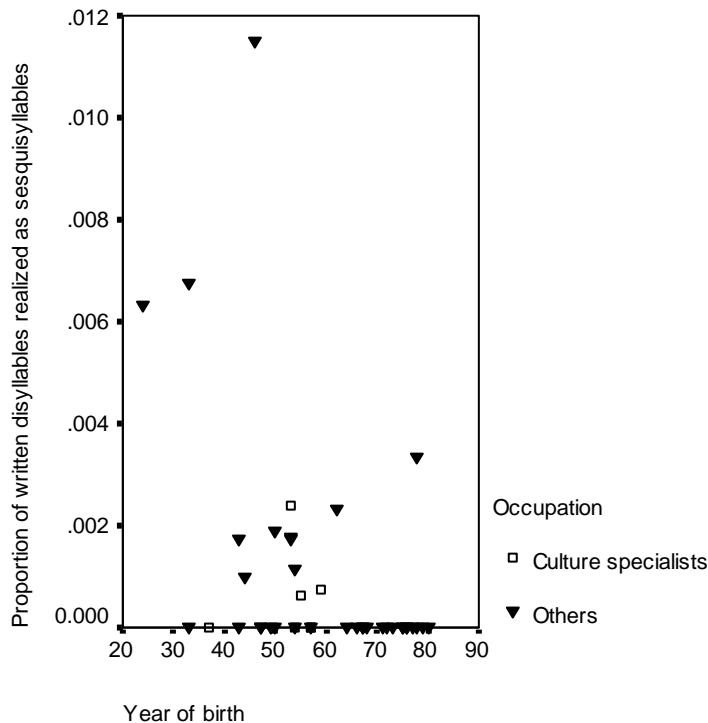


Figure 5. Proportion of hypercorrect forms (by occupation and year of birth)

The data presented in Figure 5 have been broken down further to try to answer this question. Once again, since there is a single female specialist, I will only give the results for non-specialists. They are plotted in Figure 6. We see in that figure that there is an apparent correla-

tion between age and hypercorrection among men, even though the clear majority of subjects, including men, do not show hypercorrection at all (25 out of 35).

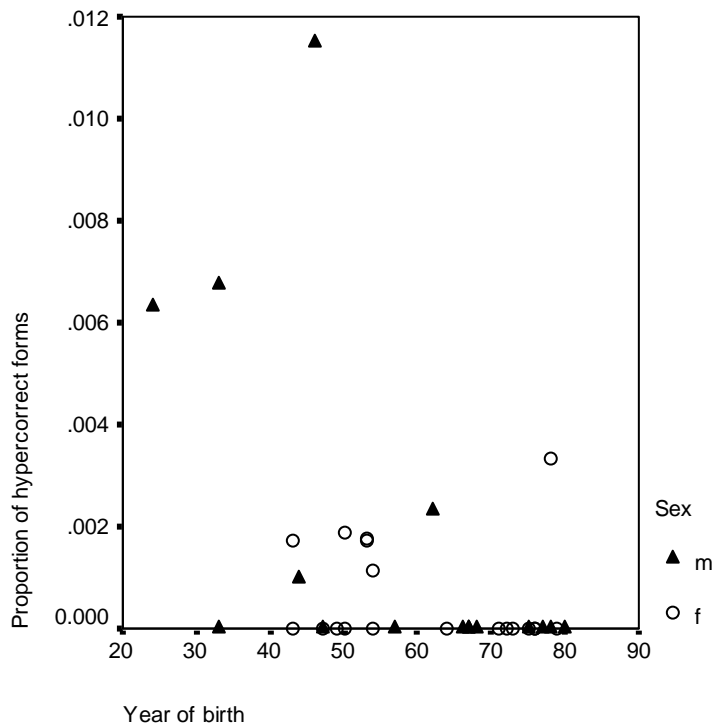


Figure 6. Proportion of hypercorrect forms produced by speakers who are not culture specialists (by gender and year of birth)

For the sake of readability, the data plotted in Figure 6 has been translated into Figure 7. The subjects have been divided into three age groups: younger speakers (35 and less), middle-aged (36-50) and older (51 and above). We can see, albeit impressionistically, that hypercorrection seems to be a feature of older men who are not language-specialists.

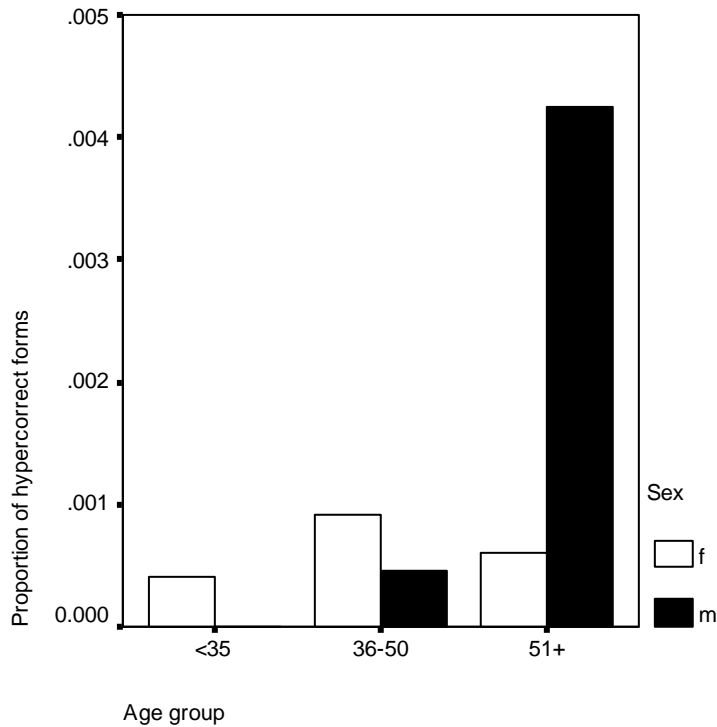


Figure 7. Proportion of hypercorrect forms produced by speakers who are not culture specialists (by gender and year of birth)

Older men therefore seem to behave differently from the rest of the community. In fact, the entire qualitative study yields only two crucial observations: 1) middle-aged and old non-specialist men use a high proportion of sesquisyllables and 2) old non-specialist men are subject to hypercorrection. Why are older men speaking differently from other Eastern Cham speakers? In the next section, I will show that the use of sesquisyllables and hypercorrection can both be explained by language attitudes.

3.2.2.4. Discussion

If we look exclusively at the proportion of written disyllables still realized as sesquisyllables in the interviews (8.7% in the whole corpus), monosyllabization seems to be a diachronic change in its final stage. If we assume the apparent time hypothesis (Labov 1963, 1966), the difference in use of sesquisyllables between older subjects and all other groups looks like an instance of a change in progress. However, the data on hypercorrection show us that there is probably a more adequate explanation. Older men who are not language-specialists not only use a relatively high proportion of sesquisyllables, they also use a suspiciously high proportion of hypercorrect forms. In other words, as already pointed out by Alieva (1986), they try to sound “educated” by using many sesquisyllables, which is a characteristic of the H variety, but as the use of these features is rather artificial and restricted to rare and formal language situations, they overdo it, turning into sesquisyllables words that are monosyllabic even in the H variety. This contrasts with the linguistic behavior of older culture specialists, who have an actual knowledge of the H variety and therefore show use a relatively high proportion of sesquisyllables in formal contexts, while

showing little hypercorrection. The difference between older subjects who are not culture specialists and other groups would be due to language attitudes and insecurity, not to an actual change in progress. This is an appealing hypothesis, but it raises a serious question: Why do older men (non-specialists) try to use more H features than other speakers? The answer lies in the Cham's conception of their ethnic identity.

The Eastern Cham ethnic identity is essentially constructed around the glorious past of the kingdom of Champa (Nakamura 1999). What is left of this past includes religion and rituals, historical monuments and inscriptions, tales and manuscripts and, even more importantly, the Cham language and its script, associated with each other in Cham cultural ideology.⁸ Within the community, even a sketchy knowledge of these cultural elements brings prestige, and conversations and arguments about the details of a ritual or of a myth are commonplace (although probably more so in the presence of a foreign researcher). Besides this culture-internal prestige, there is another type of prestige associated with the outside world. It is typically related to the Vietnamese world and derives from such things as education in Vietnamese schools and universities, high incomes, prestigious jobs and political positions (including Communist Party membership). Ties with foreign countries, such as knowledge of French or English, time spent abroad and relatives in the United States, France or Malaysia, are even more prestigious, but much less common.

Another essential feature of Cham society is that different age and gender groups do not have the same access to these two types of prestige. The first central divide is between genders. There is very strong gender segregation in Cham society, and women have little access to social prestige or recognition, although this seems to be changing among intellectuals and Sunni Muslims. Traditionally, the best positions women could hope for were schoolteacher and nurse, but even then, they were normally expected to become housewives after marriage. They had almost no public role in society (no community-internal prestige) and because of a limited access to Vietnamese education, they rarely had any way of gaining community-external prestige. My personal impression is that even nowadays, the few women who manage to achieve some professional success are not given the same consideration as their male counterparts. Therefore, since linguistic prestige is almost out of reach regardless of the efforts made, women make little attempt to use H features in their Formal L speech. This contrasts with previous studies which indicate that women, even those in discriminated positions, will use the prestige variant more than men.

While women are not encouraged to take part in the "prestige race," it is a very important male activity. Knowledge of cultural symbols reinforces men's status, as attested by the fact that myths and stories about a vaguely-defined past (be it the 16th century or the French colonial period), rare words, long forgotten infixes and knowledge of religious symbols and rituals are highly valued. Since the conception of the past is relatively shallow and distorted, elders are usually assumed and expected to have a good knowledge of these cultural elements. Many stories and words are actually made up, but these spurious elements seem to be readily validated as long as the forgers are old enough and have enough accumulated prestige to back up their claims. During the interviews, when I asked about speech differences between old and young people, consultants systematically answered that older speakers use more sesquisyllables, distinguish more codas and pronounce their onsets in a more conservative way. These differences turn out to be largely imagined, but they are part of a discourse about language according to which elders preserve a less degraded form of the language. On the one hand, some older

⁸ This is certainly a cause of the Cham's rejection of Latin-based scripts (Blood 1980).

speakers make use of this discourse to pose as language experts, but on the other hand, a few old men are ridiculed by their peers for not mastering the H variety or for using too many Vietnamese loanwords.⁹ For older men, linguistic prestige and linguistic insecurity are therefore two sides of the same coin.

As age confers an almost inherent prestige to the speech of older men, the speech of younger men (and women) is worthless by definition, an opinion that is paradoxically shared by young speakers. It is also assumed that younger men have a deficient knowledge of other cultural domains, regardless of what they actually know. However, contrary to women, young men have relatively good access to Vietnamese education and, through it, to other forms of community-external prestige. This might explain why they also use a relatively low proportion of prestigious H variety features in their Formal L speech (in interviews at least). Since their efforts to gain community-internal prestige are not recognized by the community anyway, they choose to look for prestige outside it.

The argument that the use of disyllables and hypercorrection are manifestations of linguistic attitudes is further supported by the individual characteristics of the subjects who use the highest proportion of sesquisyllables. The four subjects who have the highest ratios of sesquisyllables in Figure 2 are the only female culture specialist in the entire Cham community (88%), a male culture specialist (49%), and two men, an accountant (33%) and a computer technician (23%), who work for the Committee for the Standardization of the Cham script. They are all working in institutions that are community-oriented and, to the exception of the second subject, they are in positions of severe linguistic insecurity. The female culture specialist has to prove that she is as linguistically-competent as her male colleagues, while the accountant and the computer technician have to show that they can speak as well as their colleagues who are language specialists. Interestingly, they do it so well that they actually use a higher proportion of sesquisyllables than the people with whom they want to compete. In fact, the female language specialist, who utters an astonishing 88% of written disyllables as sesquisyllables, is almost *speaking* the H variety. Note that these four speakers do not exhibit hypercorrection at all in their interviews. Since they are exposed to the H variety at work, they usually choose the correct presyllable.

4. Social factors and Vietnamese influence

We have seen in Section 3.2.2 that the variables that reflect Vietnamization have no direct effect on the variation in the use of sesquisyllables across subjects. Furthermore, women, who are much less in contact with Vietnamese culture and in many cases seldom leave their village, tend to use a lesser proportion of sesquisyllables than men. It is therefore safe to conclude that there is no direct linguistic influence of Vietnamese on monosyllabization. However, this is not to say that there is no indirect influence. Contact with the Vietnamese affects Cham indirectly, through culture and its effect on language attitudes, and through the interaction of these attitudes with the quasi-diglossic situation. Within the community, older male speakers have easy access to prestige. For them, using H features translates directly into social recognition. By contrast, younger speakers and women are not considered ‘worthy’ of community-internal prestige. Even if they master the H variety to some extent, their status in the community will not improve significantly (although it is occasionally said of a young man that he is making serious efforts to learn about traditional culture and proper language). As a result, young speakers look for prestige outside the

⁹ The best example is that of an old man who had a perfect knowledge of the L but only a limited command of the H because he had spent most of his youth in Vietnamese-speaking areas.

community, in the Vietnamese polity, and do not invest much effort in learning H. The relative ease with which community-external prestige is acquired makes it comparatively much more interesting to young men than a community-internal prestige that they are almost systematically denied because of their age. If community-external prestige were not available, it is likely that young men would content themselves with the little status they get from learning the H variety and would maintain a higher proportion of H forms, hoping to slowly establish their position in the community as they grow older. Through this interaction of language attitudes and socio-cultural contact, it is Vietnamese culture as a whole, rather than the Vietnamese language, that shapes the linguistic landscape of Eastern Cham communities.

If this model is correct, the following predictions should be verified in the future. If young men are collectively successful in the Vietnamese polity and manage to acquire social status through the prestige they derive from outside sources, they will have little motivation to use H features in their Formal L speech and the remnants of the H variety are likely to further weaken and possibly disappear. We would then have a simple bilingual situation where a very colloquial form of L is used in the community, and Vietnamese is used elsewhere. Alternatively, if young men are not collectively successful in the Vietnamese world or if they cannot transfer their externally-acquired status into the community, they could decide to emulate their elders and start to import H features or what they perceive to be H features in their Formal L. In this case, the symbolic and functional role of quasi-diglossia would be maintained, although its structure could be modified. Of course, it is also possible to imagine a variety of intermediate scenarios, in which some youngsters are successful and drop H features, while others are not and maintain them. What has to be emphasized here is that the loss of the H variety would not necessarily be a symptom of language decay or result in language death. Even if young speakers abandon the H variety as a source of prestige, they would not necessarily replace the community-internal functions of the H variety with Vietnamese. It is likely that the domain of the L variety would expand to include formal discourse and perhaps some religious functions, while Vietnamese would remain the language of the education and the government without encroaching on the domain of Cham. If the Cham were to accept a reform of their script or even its romanization, the use of the L variety as the medium of native instruction could even favor literacy in Cham and play an important role in language maintenance.

5. Conclusion

There is little evidence that Eastern Cham is undergoing monosyllabization and that the current variation is symptomatic of a contact-induced change in progress. Rather, it seems that Eastern Cham is in a situation of relatively stable diglossia, where the conservative H variety is largely sesquisyllabic and the Colloquial L variety is almost entirely monosyllabic. Variation in word shapes is only found in the Formal L variety of the language, a type of L register in which speakers introduce more or less H forms, depending on their knowledge of the H variety and their desire to acquire community-internal prestige by displaying this knowledge.

However, the growing integration of the Cham into the Vietnamese polity could affect the current balance between Cham language varieties and Vietnamese. As more and more young Cham derive social status from Vietnamese education and jobs in the Vietnamese world, they could abandon the H variety and other cultural icons which were until recently the only ways of acquiring prestige. The loss of their formal code of communication could then lead the Cham to rely increasingly on Vietnamese for formal purposes even inside the community, unsettling the

current equilibrium and perhaps even jeopardizing the language. On the other hand, the social functions of H could also be taken over by an easier to acquire Formal L, with positive effects on language maintenance.

Obviously, an important question remains. Was the original motivation for the monosyllabization of the L variety of Eastern Cham contact-induced or language-internal? Unfortunately, in the absence of reliable historical evidence and of a well-established chronology of diachronic changes, this question is likely to remain unanswered.

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