



VOWEL SHIFT IN ZOPHEI

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Round Robin Research Profile, IUB
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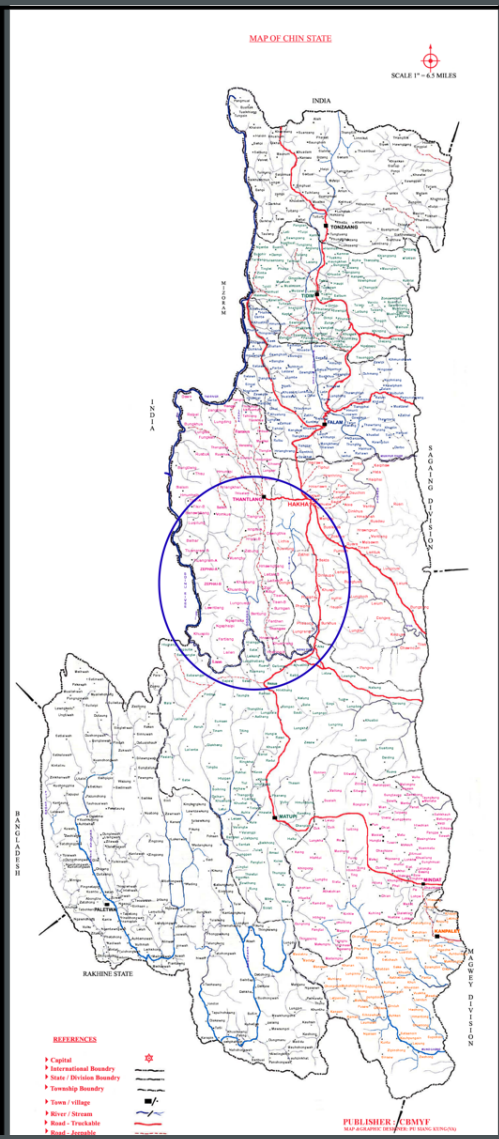
ZOPHEI

- Sino-Tibetan>>Tibeto-Burman>>Kuki-Chin>>Maraic>>Zophei
- Undescribed, data from 3 native speakers of 3 different varieties:
Tlawngrang, Nuitah, & Lawngtlang
- 1994 Estimate: 17,000 Zophei speakers in Myanmar and India, 20,000 speakers worldwide (Simons & Fennig, 2018).
- Now: 4,000 ethnic Zophei in Indiana, over 25,000 Burmese in Indiana

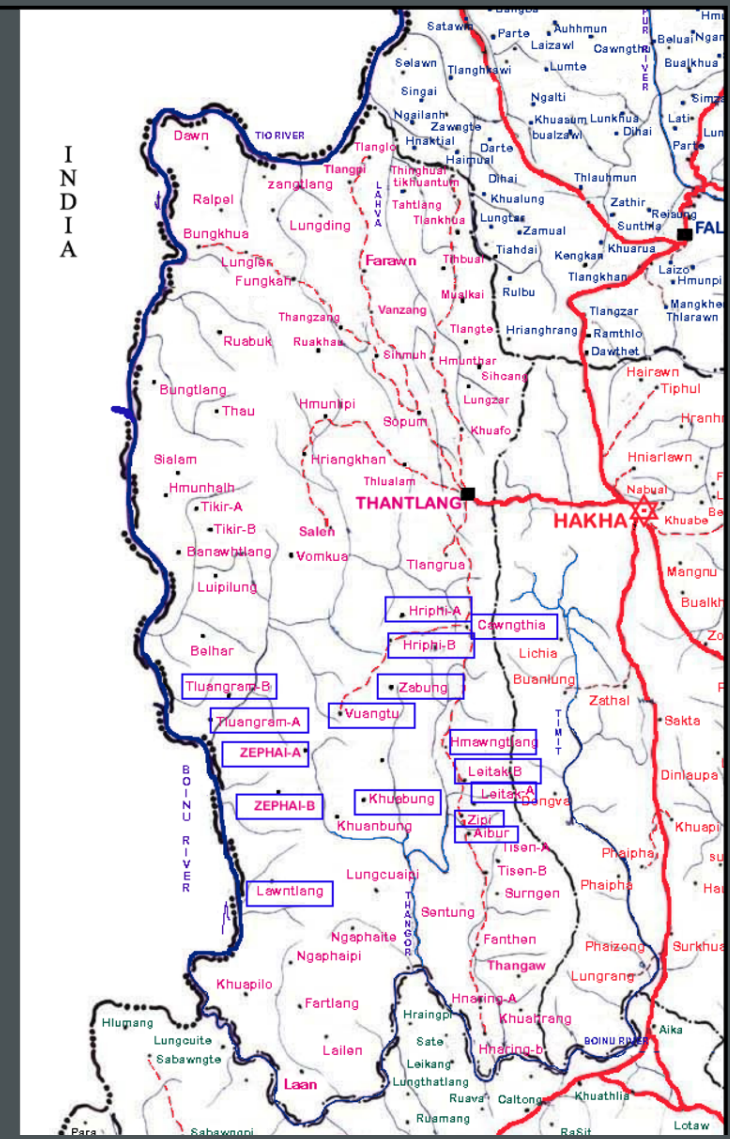
WHERE IT'S SPOKEN



Chin State

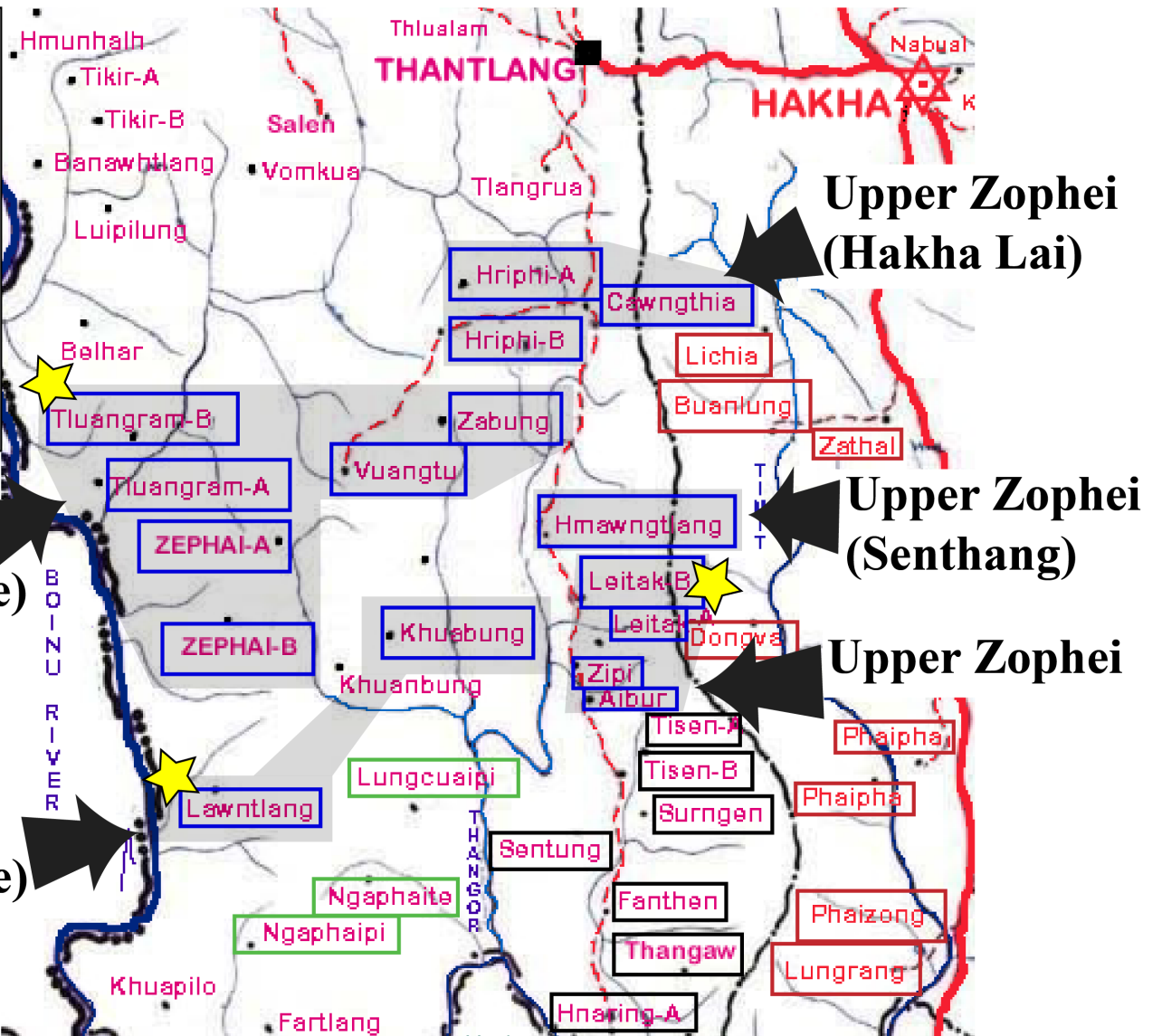


Thantlang Township



ETHNIC ZOPHEI VILLAGES

- Key
- Zophei
 - Sentshang
 - Zotung
 - Mara
 - Lutuv
 - ★ Language Assistant home villages



ONSETS IN ZOPHEI

ALL VARIETIES: NOT MUCH VARIATION

	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Alveolar	Velar	Glottal
Stops	p p ^h b		t t ^h d	k k ^h	ʔ
Fricatives		f v	s z		h
Sib. Affricates			t͡s t͡s ^h		
Lat. Affricates			t͡l t͡l		
Nasals	m̥ m		ɲ n	ŋ(ŋ ^j)	
Laterals			l̥ l		
Rhotics			ɹ̥ ɹ		

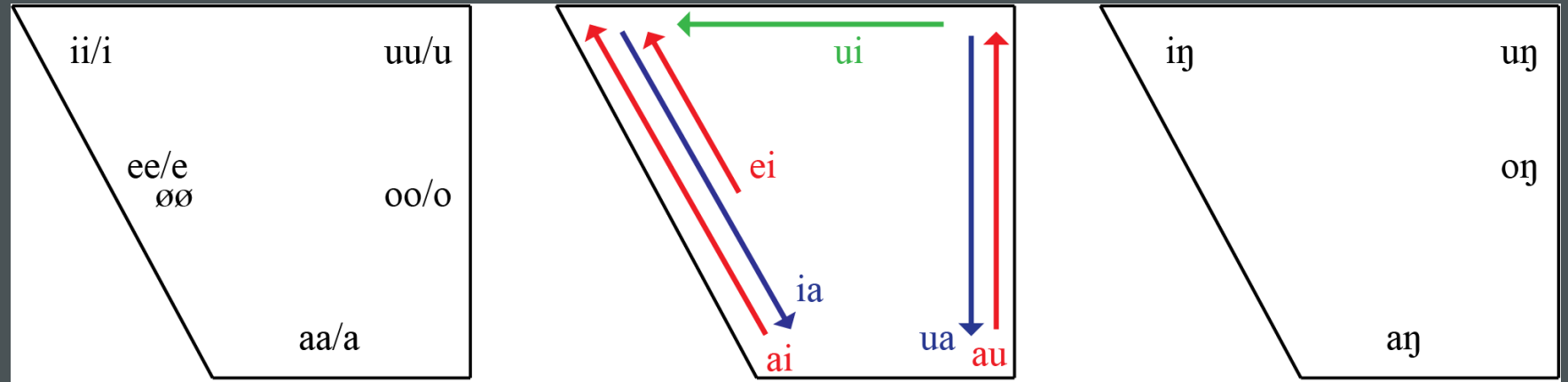
A. Tlawngrang Zophei

6 long vowels

5 short vowels

6 diphthongs

4 vowel-nasal rhyme



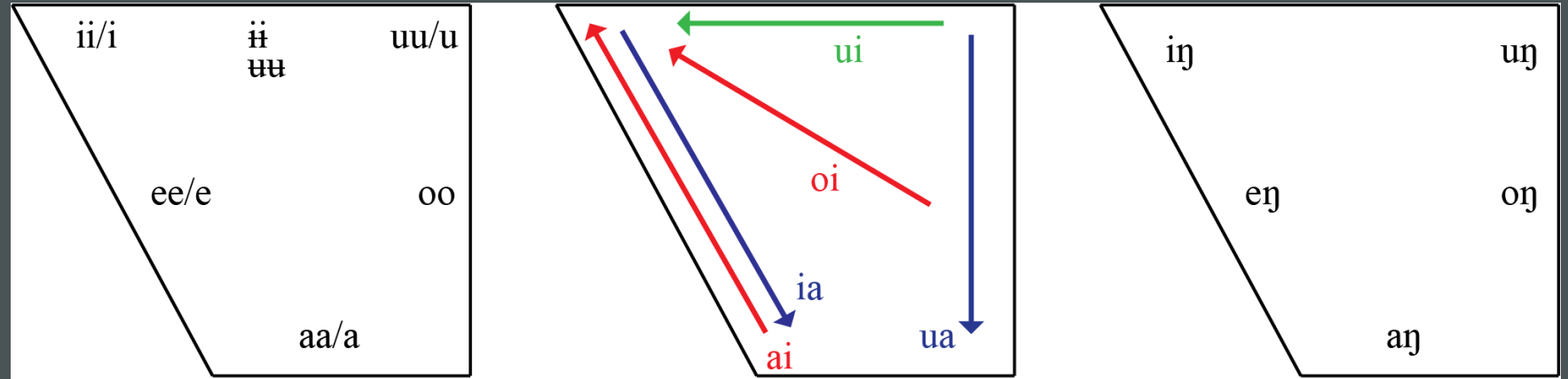
B. Nuitah Zophei

7 long vowels

4 short vowels

5 diphthongs

5 vowel-nasal rhyme



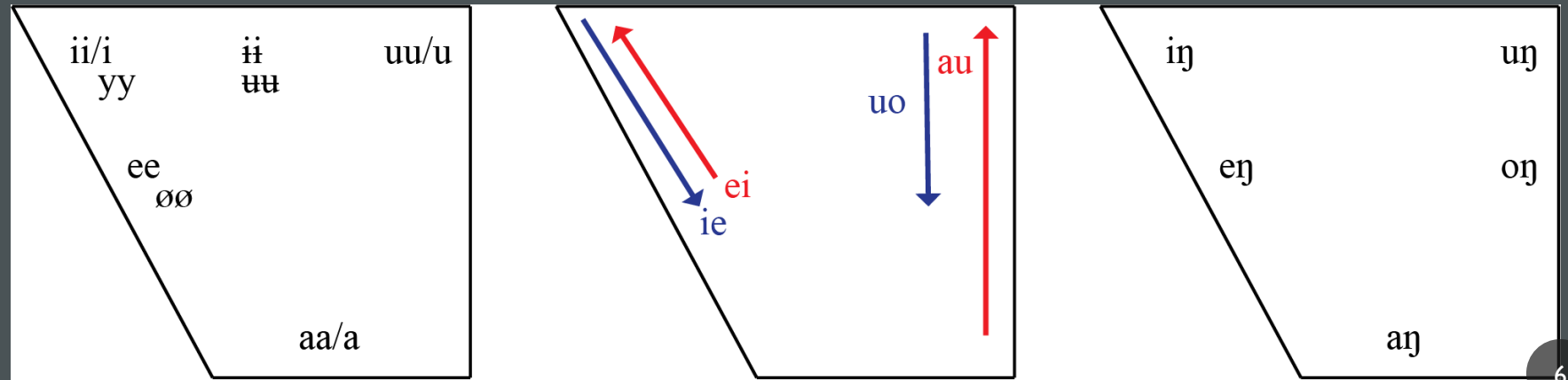
C. Lawngtlang Zophei

8 long vowels

3 short vowels

4 diphthongs

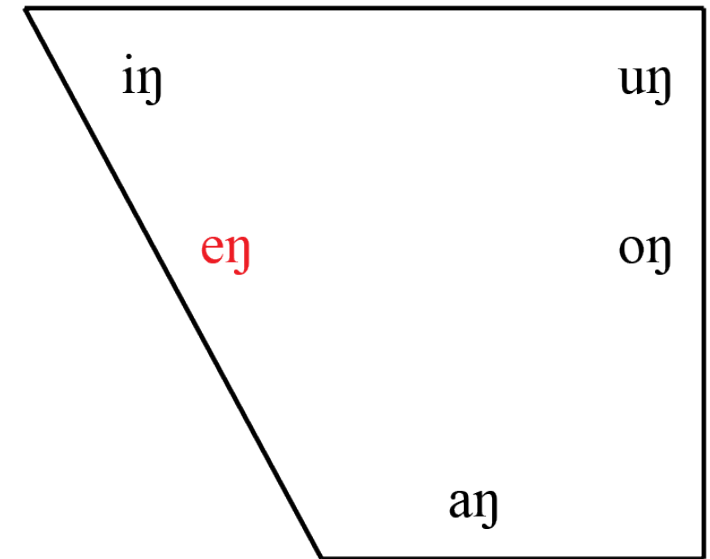
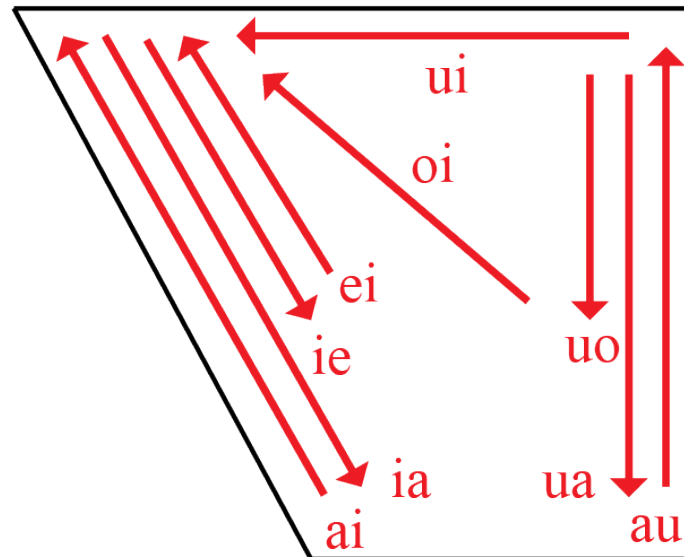
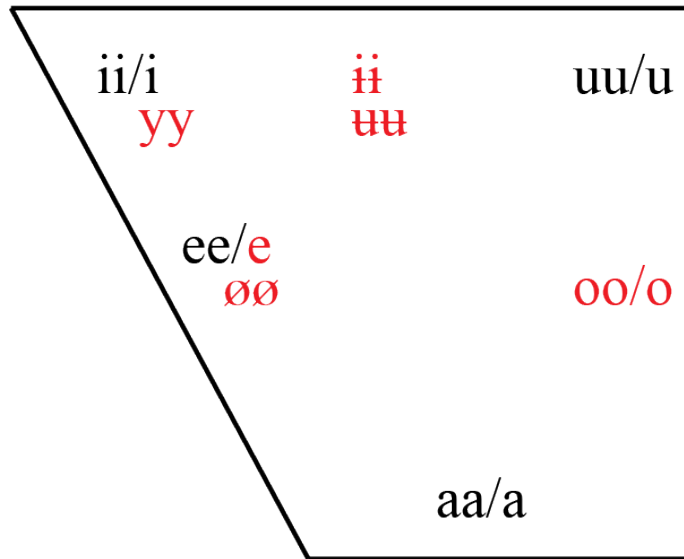
5 vowel-nasal rhyme



RHYME INVENTORY COMPARISON

BLACK: FOUND IN ALL 3 VARIETIES IN

RED: FOUND IN 1 OR 2 VARIETIES

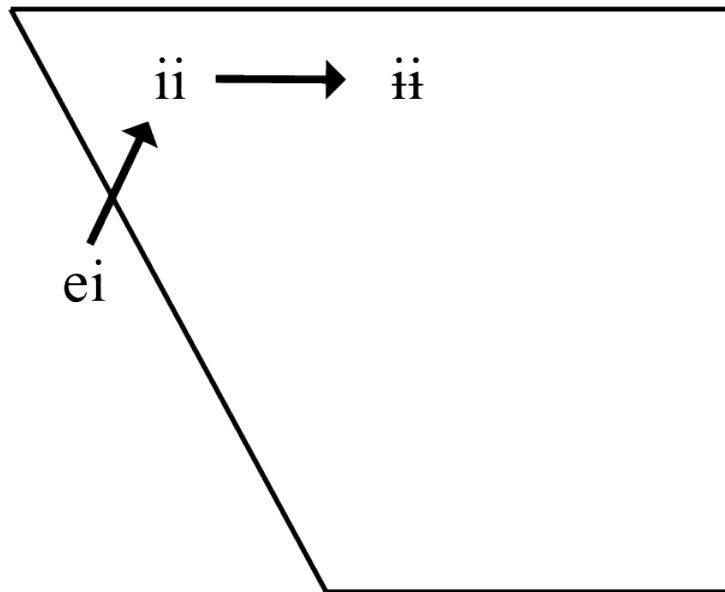


FRONT VOWEL SHIFT

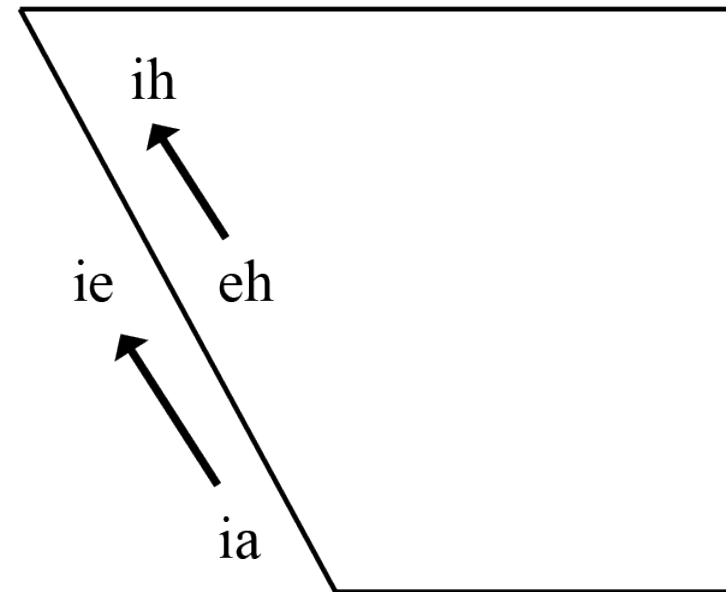
BASED ON LEXICAL COMPARISON

Compare:

Tlawngrang to Nuitah



Nuitah to Lawngtlang

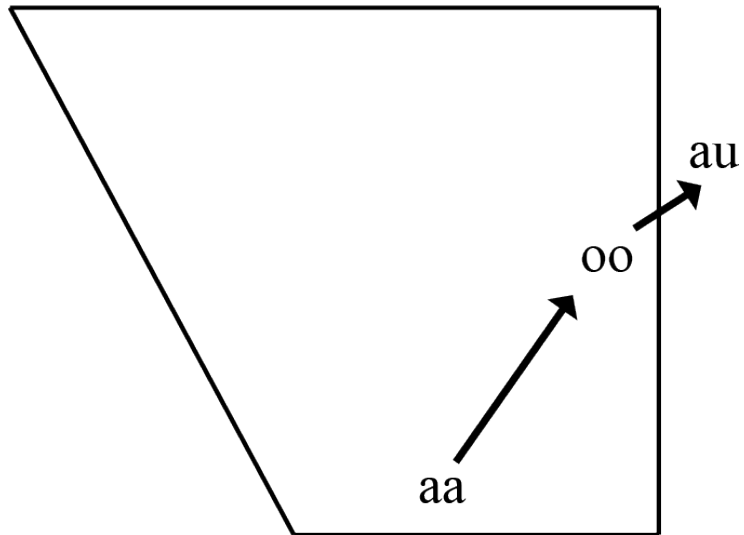


BACK VOWEL SHIFT

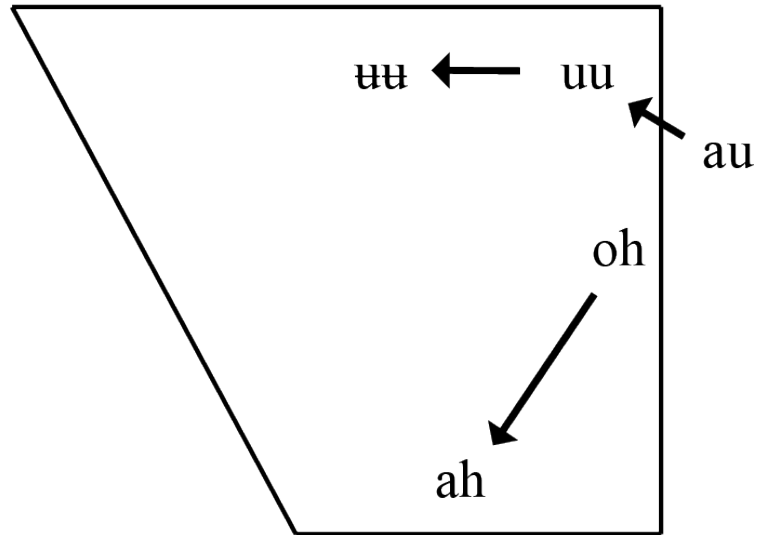
BASED ON LEXICAL COMPARISON

Compare:

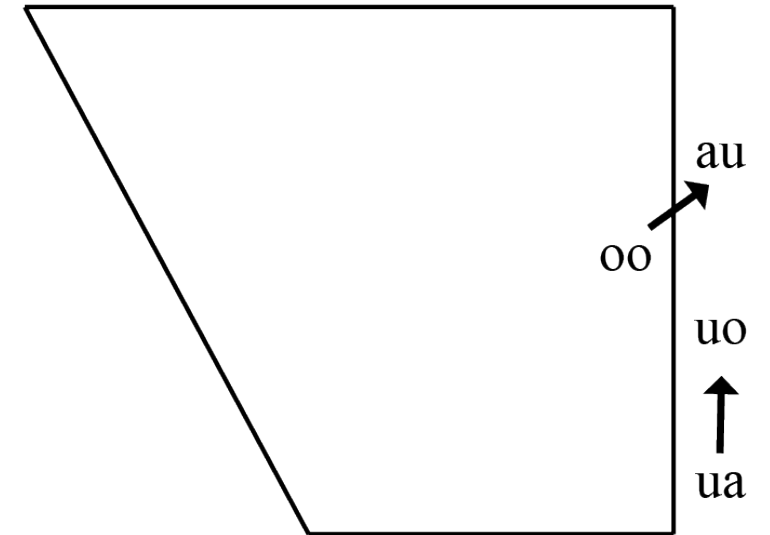
Proto-KC* to Tlawngrang



Tlawngrang to Nuitah



Nuitah to Lawngtlang

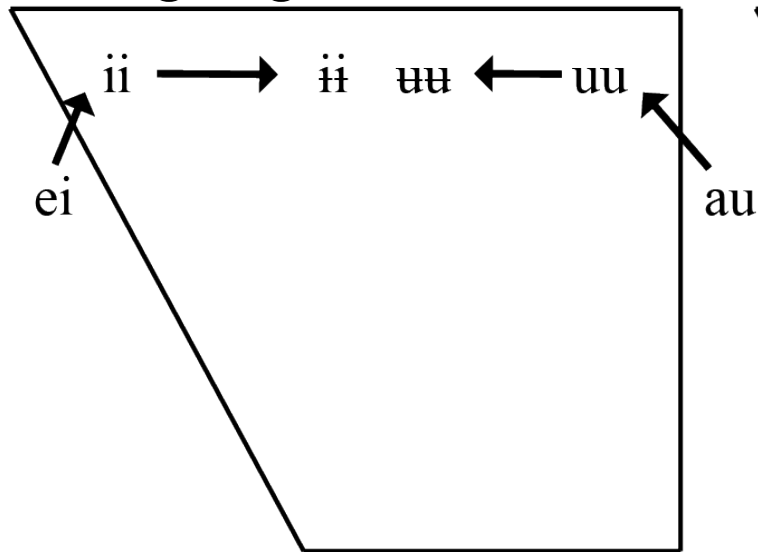


*Proto-KC=Proto-Kuki-Chin; based on reconstructions in Van Bik (2009).

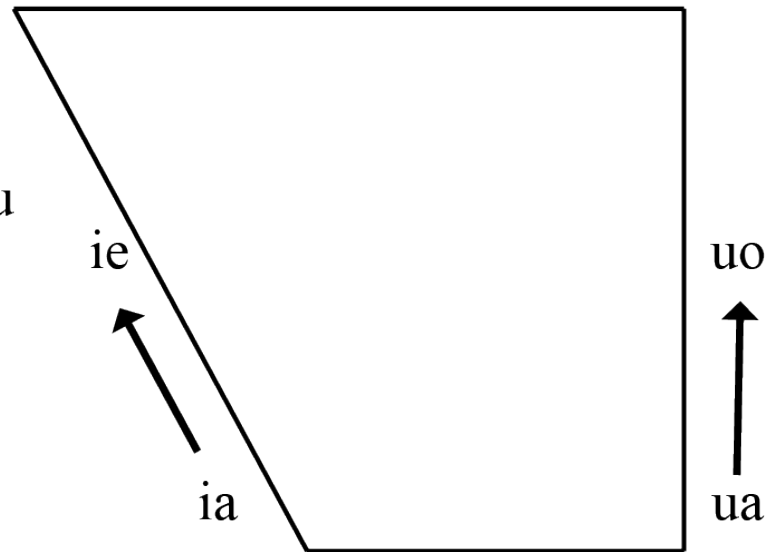
SYMMETRICAL DIACHRONIC CHANGES

Compare:

Tlawngrang to Nuitah



Nuitah to Lawngtlang



SUMMARY

- Zophei varieties have **diverse rhymes**
- Lexical comparison reveals **front and back vowel shifts**.
- Some vowel changes are **symmetrical**.
- Just one small part of a larger description and analysis of the sound systems of Zophei varieties.
- Also, **vowel coalescence**, inter- and intra-speaker **variation** in onset production, **complex tone systems** (lexical and grammatical tone).

THANK YOU!

More information on my research,
please contact me directly at slotven@indiana.edu
or visit my website: www.samsonlotven.com

REFERENCES

Eberhard, David M., Gary F. Simons, and Charles D. Fennig (eds.). 2020. *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*. Twenty-third edition. Dallas, Texas: SIL International. Online version: <http://www.ethnologue.com>.

VanBik, K. (2009). Proto-Kuki-Chin: A Reconstructed Ancestor of the Kuki-Chin Languages. STEDT Monograph Series, Vol. 8.: University of California, Berkeley.

Maps modified from:

- http://asiapacific.anu.edu.au/maponline/system/files_force/maps/bitmap/standard/2016/01/13-058b_Burma_states.png?download=
- Chin Baptist Mission Youth Fellowship (Pu Siang Kung (Va))