

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	ʔaw [?]	ʔuʔ ³⁵	ʔau
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	ʔvn ³⁵	ʔăn
4	what	zi ¹¹	ʔa [?] ⁷ rai ²	ma ²	pə ti [?]	ka [?] ³¹ na [?] ³⁵	mΛ sei
5	who	ai ⁵⁵	khrai ²	pou ⁴ lau ²	mɔ [?]	nvn 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	pvn ³¹ mu [?] ³¹	kha mɔu
7	with	mvi ³⁵ va ¹¹	le [?] 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	khɛŋ

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11	left	tʂai ³⁵	thaŋ ² sai ⁴	pai ⁶ sui ⁴	ɡua?	kaʔ ³¹ veʔ ³⁵	?a gaʔ
12	right	dam ⁵⁵	taŋ ² khwa ¹	pai ⁶ kva ²	dɔm	kaʔ ³¹ tɔm ³⁵	?a ?ah
13	far	vien ¹³⁵	klai ²	kjai ¹	si ɲai	ka ³¹ ɲai ³¹	toŋ
14	near	ɣɻn ¹¹	klai ³	kjau ³	de?	nteʔ ³³	ntät
15	to sit	ɲɔm ²¹⁴ ɲoi ⁵⁵	naŋ ³⁽⁶⁾	naŋ ⁶	ɲɔm	mok ³⁵	kɔi
16	to go, to flee	tru ²¹⁴	thiau ²	pjai ³	to	tɔl ³⁵	hau
17	to fly	bäi ⁵⁵	bin ²	bin ¹	pu	pyh ³⁵	ban
18	throw away	vvt ⁵⁵	tiŋ ⁴ khwaŋ ³	kveŋ ¹	tik, vut	kaʔ ³¹ vat ³³	ven
19	stand	duŋ ³⁵	ju:n ²	du:n ¹	tɕuŋ ³¹	tɕɔŋ ³¹	tɕɔŋ
20	push	dvi ²¹⁴	dan ²	kai ⁴	dhun		
21	swim	loi ¹¹	loi ² na:m ⁴	?ap ⁷ ram ⁴	loi ³¹	loi ³¹	loi
22	to catch	na ⁴³⁵	kam ² , tsap ⁷ , au ² , kum ²	tau ² kap ³	tui	ɲut ³⁵	ɗah
23	flow	luu ³⁵	lai ¹	lai ¹	la	lai ³⁵	lai
24	slap	dvp ¹¹	top ⁷	dap ⁷	piat, tup		
25	wash	tvj ²¹⁴	sak ⁸ , laŋ ⁴	sak ⁸	si ɗau?	kaʔ ³¹ tuʔ ³⁵	bai
26	to scratch	läu ⁵⁵	tset ⁸	ut ⁷	?ɔt	?ot ³⁵	khut
27	to tear	se ⁵⁵	tshik ⁹	sik ⁷	riah	tɕhek ³³	zai?
28	to dig	vet ⁵⁵	luan ⁴	vait ⁷	vat	puk ³³	ɲɔh
29	year	nvm ⁵⁵	pi ²	pi ⁴	num	nvm ³	si nam
30	day	ɲai ¹¹	wan ²	ɲon ²	ɲai?	saʔ ³¹ ɲiʔ ³³	si ɲäi
31	one	mot ¹¹	nun ⁵	deu ¹ , it ⁷ , he ¹	ti?	tiʔ ³¹	?u
32	two	hai ⁵⁵	sɔŋ ¹	sɔŋ 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	ɲu ¹³⁵	ha ³	ha ³	phuan	phɔn ³⁵	phan
36	six	ʂäu ³⁵	hok ⁷	ɣok ⁷	liah	leʔ ³³	ndɔ

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37	seven	băi ²¹⁴	tset ⁷	cat ⁷	?a liah	?a ka? ³¹ lel ³³	bvu
38	eight	tam ³⁵	pet ⁹	pet ⁷	dai?	χɔŋ ³¹ ti? ³⁵	da
39	nine	cuu ²¹⁴	kau ³	kou ³	d̄im	ka? ³¹ tim ³⁵	dim
40	ten	muyi ⁵⁵	sip ⁷	ɕip ⁸	kau	ku ³⁵	gɛ
41	twenty	hai ⁵⁵ muyi ⁵⁵	ŋi ⁶ sip ⁷	ŋei ⁵ ɕip ⁸	ti? ŋa	sau ³¹	?a gɛ
42	little, few	it ³⁵	nɔi ⁴	noi ⁴	?iak, tu?	leiŋ 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, ŋaiŋ	ŋeiŋ ³⁵	ta?
47	tiny, small	ŋɔ ²¹⁴	nɔi ⁴ , lek ⁸	noi ¹	?iak, siah	?iat ³⁵	tɛ? tɛt
48	narrow	hep ¹¹	khɛ:p ¹⁰	hep ⁸	si ghɔp	ka? ³¹ tɔk ³⁵	ka khia?
49	fire	luy ²¹⁴	fai ⁴	fei ²	ŋu	ŋol ³¹	ŋɔ
50	sky	tʂvi ¹¹	fa ⁴	bun ¹	rau ma	ka? ³¹ ?au ³⁵	bleiŋ
51	mountain	nui ³⁵	dɔi ²	doi ¹	gɔŋ	ŋkoŋ ³¹	kɔŋ
52	stone	za ⁵⁵	hin ¹	ɣin ¹	si mau?	ka? ³¹ mu? ³³	mau
53	sun	măt ¹¹ tʂvi ¹¹	duaŋ ² ta ² van ²	taŋ ¹ ŋon ²	si ŋai?	ka? ³¹ mviŋ ³⁵	si ŋăi
54	star	sau ⁵⁵	da:u ¹	da:u ¹ dei ⁵	sim ?uiŋ	ka? ³¹ mviŋ ³⁵	si măiŋ
55	river	ʂoŋ ⁵⁵	mɛ ³⁽⁶⁾ nam ⁴	ta ⁶	klɔŋ	khaŋ ³¹ khi? ³⁵	?vm
56	month	thaŋ ³⁵	duan ²	ɣoŋ ⁶ du:m ¹	khi?	ka? ³¹ tɛ? ³⁵	mɛ gian
57	earth	dai ²¹⁴	din ²	ɣei ⁶	tɛ?	ka? ³¹ tɛ? ³⁵	ka dăi
58	salt	muyi ³⁵	klwa ²	kju ¹	kih	ki ³³	sai?
59	water	nuyk ³⁵	nam ⁴	ɣam ⁴	rɔm	?um ³⁵	?vm
60	rain	muy ⁵⁵	fon ¹	fun ¹	lhe?	le? ³⁵	glai

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61	wind	zɔ ³⁵	lom ²	yum ²	bhauŋ	kuw ³⁵	khun
62	seed	hat ¹¹	phan ²	ce ⁶	si mɛ	tʃy ³¹	si ma
63	rice	ɣau ⁵⁵	kharu ³	nau ⁴	ŋho? gau?	ta ⁷³⁵	ŋlu
64	fibrous root	ɣru ⁵⁵	nuat ⁹	ɣak	riah	ɣeɪ ³³	riah
65	melon	bi ³⁵	fak ⁸ te:ŋ ² , buap ⁸	kva ¹	bi	ka ⁷³¹ kel ³⁵	gluan
66	tree	kvi ⁵⁵	ton ³ mai ⁴	fai ⁴	khau?	khu ⁷³⁵	hei
67	peach	dau ¹¹	luk ¹⁰ thɔ ⁴	mak ⁷ tau ²	te	mak ³⁵ ta ³¹	blei si pɣm
68	grass	kɔ ²¹⁴	ja ³	ŋu ³	rip	ɣep ³³	pɔt
69	flower	boŋ ⁵⁵	dɔ:k ⁹	va ¹	tai, pruih	phɣɪ ³⁵	bluh
70	leaf	la ³⁵	bai ²	bau ¹	lha?	la ⁷³⁵	la
71	snake	rǎn ³⁵	ŋu ²	ŋu ²	si?uiŋ	ka ³¹ ʔviŋ ³⁵	hǎiŋ
72	insect	svu ⁵⁵	mleŋ ²	nom ¹ neŋ ²	viak, kɔŋ	vak ³³	va?
73	(a) fly	roi ²¹⁴	me 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 ⁷³¹ moi ³¹	mǎk
75	fish	ka ³⁵	pla ²	pja ¹	ka?	ka ⁷³⁵	ga
76	wing	kan ³⁵	pi:k ⁹	fuit ⁸	prui:k	pvik ³⁵	phraŋ
77	moth	mɔt ¹¹	mɔ:t ¹⁰	mo:t	mɔt	ŋɣuiŋ ³¹	mɔt
78	dog	tɕo ³⁵	ma ¹	ma ¹	so?	so ⁷³⁵	sɔu?
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 khɣih ³⁵	gɔn na bia
81	human	ŋuvi ¹¹	khon ²	vun ²	pui	pvi ³¹	du vi
82	child	kɔn ⁵⁵	luk ¹⁰	luk ⁸	kɔn	kon ³⁵	gɔn
83	mouth	mieŋ ¹¹	pa:k ⁹ sop ⁷	pa:k ⁷	mɔiŋ	nduiŋ ³¹	moi?
84	heart	tvɣm ⁵⁵	tsai ¹	sim ¹	rhɔm	mul ³⁵	nauh
85	hand, arm	tǎi ⁵⁵	mu ²	fuiŋ ²	tai?	ti ⁷³⁵	dǎi
86	ear	ɣuŋ ¹¹	bin ³ hu ¹	ɣu ²	ʔhauk	huk ³⁵	ɕɔu?

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87	horn	ʃuŋ ¹¹	khau ¹	kau ¹	ruŋ	χɿŋ ³⁵	nyŋ
88	bone	ɕuɿŋ ⁵⁵	du:k ⁹	do:k ⁷	si ʔaŋ	kaʔ ³¹ ʔaŋ ³⁵	ka ʔaŋ
89	intestines	ruot ¹¹	sai ³	sai ³	krauŋ vaik	veik ³³	ɳoŋ vǎik
90	tooth	rǎŋ ⁵⁵	fan ²	heu ³ , fan ²	rhaŋ	χaŋ ³⁵	raŋ
91	nose	muj ¹³⁵	tʂa ² muk ⁹	daŋ ¹	mwih	muɿ ³³	ka mɿuh
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	ɗak	ka ³¹ tak ³⁵	si daʔ
95	liver	ʔan ⁵⁵	tap ⁷	tap ⁷	tɔm	kaʔ ³¹ pɿp ³⁵	ka dom
96	tail	duvi ⁵⁵	haŋ ¹	ɿiŋ ¹	si ɗaʔ	kaʔ ³¹ taʔ ³⁵	si da
97	leg	dui ¹¹	kha ¹	ka ¹	ba	kaʔ ³¹ vaŋ ³⁵	plau
98	abdomen	buŋ ¹¹	thoŋ ⁴	tuŋ ⁴	vaik	kaʔ ³¹ tɿ ³⁵	vǎik
99	chest	ŋuk ⁵⁵	na ³ ak ²	ak ⁷	nauk	kaʔ ³¹ ʔuŋ ³⁵	nauh
100	feather	loŋ ⁵⁵	khon ¹	pɿn ¹	hauk	huk ³⁵	hɿk
101	hair	tɔk ³⁵	phom ¹	pjom ¹	hauk	huk ³⁵	hɿk
102	blood	tiet ³⁵	luat ¹⁰	lu:t ⁸	ɳham	nam ³⁵	ɳam
103	foot	tɕɿn ⁵⁵	tin ² , thau ⁴	tin ¹	tɕauŋ	tʃuŋ ³¹	tɕeiŋ
104	drink	uoŋ ³⁵	kin ¹ , du:m ⁵	dot ⁷	ɳauʔ	ɳuʔ ³³	ɳup
105	alive, fresh	ʃoŋ ³⁵	mi ² khi ² wi ⁸ ju ⁵	kun ¹ sut ⁸	ʔim	ʔim ³⁵	ʔim
106	afraid	ʃɿ ¹¹	klua ²	lau ¹	lhat	ʔat ³⁵	zɿu
107	know	biet ³⁵	ru ⁴ , tɔk ⁷	ɿo ⁴	tɔŋ	tʃɿ ³⁵ , ʔoŋ 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	ɳou ⁵	ŋhut	xut ³⁵	ʔɿuh

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110	want	muon ³⁵	khit ⁸	ŋei ⁴ , au ¹	saŋ, mhain	kaʔ ³¹ kɣt ³³	si ŋain
111	watch, see	sem ⁵⁵	du ²	yan ¹ jau ³	dzhak, gaik	nok ³³	zɔʔ zɛ
112	listen	ŋe ⁵⁵	fan ²	tiŋ ⁵	ŋhiat	ŋiat ³⁵	si tɔŋ
113	eat	ăn ⁵⁵	kin ¹	kun ¹	ʔih, sɔm	tɔk ³³	hom
114	to die	tɕet ³⁵	tai ²	tai ¹	zum	ʒɣm ³¹	zəm
115	cry; weep	xɔk ³⁵	rɔŋ ⁴ hai ³	tai ³	ziam	ʒam ³³	zam
116	speak	nɔi ³⁵	va ⁶ , kla:u ⁵ , phut ¹⁰	kaŋ ³ , nau ²	lau, krai	laʔ ³⁵	klaŋ
117	laugh	tieu ³⁵	hua ¹ rɔʔ ⁸	ɣiu ¹	ŋiah	kaʔ ³¹ ŋat ³⁵	ka ŋah
118	white	tʂaŋ ³⁵	kharu ¹	haru ¹ pi:k ¹	pain	pain ³¹	lui
119	red	ɔ ²¹⁴	dɛŋ ²	diŋ ¹ hoŋ ²	rau ^h	saʔ ³ khxak ³⁵	reŋ
120	curved	kɔ ⁵⁵	khom ⁴	kau ²	kɔk	vuk ³⁵	gɛuʔ
121	good	tot ³⁵	di ²	dei ¹	mhɔm	nɔm ³⁵	ŋɔm
122	smell	hoi ⁵⁵	men ¹	hau ¹	si ʔoi	kaʔ ³¹ ʔui ³⁵	ʔyuh
123	new	mvi ³⁵	mai ⁵	mau ⁵	khrauʔ	tʃhuʔ ³⁵	ka mai
124	bad	hu ⁵⁵	tshua ³⁽⁶⁾	ɣui ⁴ , vai ⁶ , jak ⁷	lauʔ	luʔ ³³	la
125	decomposed	wɣn ⁵⁵	nau ⁶	fok ⁸	siʔum	ka ³¹ ʔɣm ³⁵	ʔɔm, ram
126	hot	nɔŋ ³⁵	rɔm ⁴	ɕik ⁷	rau	hɔn ³⁵	ŋăi
127	old, worn	ku ¹³⁵	kau ⁵	kau ⁵	prim	liŋ ³⁵	brim
128	wet	wɣt ³⁵	piak ⁹	tum ² , ba ⁵	tɕauʔ	ʃiau ³⁵	na ŋip
129	cold	ret ³⁵	jen ² , nau	nit ⁷ , ɕeŋ ⁴	kuat	kat ³⁵	găt
130	dry	rau ²⁵	heŋ ³	ɣau ³	kroh	kaʔ ³¹ ʔoh ³⁵	ka hauh
131	cooked	tɕin ³⁵	suk ⁷	ɕuk ⁸	sin	sin ³⁵	sin
132	black	dɛn ⁵⁵	dam ¹	dam ¹	luŋ	lɔŋ ³¹	vɔŋ

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133	mother	mɛ ¹¹	mɛ ⁶ , man ² da ²	me ⁶	mɛ [?]	ma [?] 33	ma
134	wife	vɣ ¹¹	mia ²	ja ⁶	moij	ka ³¹ muij ³¹	ʔi ban
135	younger sibling	ɛm ⁵⁵	nuŋ ⁴	nuŋ ⁴	pau [?] pu [?]	ʔoŋ ³⁵	va
136	elder sibling	aŋ ⁵⁵	phi ⁴	pei ⁴	pau [?] ke	tɣ [?] 35	ʔi kăt
137	husband	tɕoŋ ¹¹	phua ¹	kva:m	mɛ [?]	ka [?] 31 me [?] 31	ʔi mai
138	father	tɕa ⁵⁵	pho ⁶	po ⁶	kuiŋ	kuiŋ ³⁵	guiŋ
139	rope	thuŋ ¹¹	tshuak ¹⁰	ɕa:k ⁸	mau [?]	mu [?] 35	văn
140	shoot	băn ³⁵	jin ²	ŋij ²	puij	pviŋ ³⁵	băij
141	sew	ŋip ³⁵	jep ⁸	ŋip ⁸	tɕaiŋ	tʃij ³⁵	tɕeiŋ
142	weave	dan ⁵⁵	sam ¹	pu ² , sam ¹	taiŋ	taiŋ ³⁵	daiŋ
143	no	xoŋ ³⁵	mai ³⁽⁶⁾	bou ³	ʔaŋ	ʔun ³¹	ʔau
144	swelling	ɕuŋ ⁵⁵	buam ²	fok ⁸	ʔuah	kɣ [?] 31	ʔauh
145	kill	te ²¹⁴	kha ³⁽⁶⁾	ka ³	pauh	toh ³³	ŋauh
146	name	ten ⁵⁵ tuoi ²¹⁴	tshu ³⁽⁶⁾	ɕo ⁶	kau [?]	tʃɣ [?] 31	ga
147	burn	dot ³⁵	phau ¹	ɕom ⁶	toŋ, gluiŋ	toŋ ³⁵	dau [?]
148	house	ŋa ¹¹	ban ³	ɣan ²	ŋie [?]	ŋa [?] 33	kaŋ
149	still have	kɔn ¹¹	jaŋ ² mi ²	li ³ mi ²	kɔn koi	zaŋ 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 , rɣt ³⁵	la:k ¹⁰	va:k ⁸	rut, sɿ nhut	za [?] 33	
153	insert	sap ³⁵	pak ⁷	pak ⁷	suɔp	nsɣt ³⁵	siap
154	axe	buo ³⁵	khwan ¹	fou ³	mɔi	mui ³⁵	mɣi
155	chaff	kam ³⁵	ram ²	taŋ ²	gam	kam ³⁵	kham
156	crawl	bo ¹¹	khun ³	ɣai ⁶	mo	muh ³³	mɣan
157	have	kɔ ³⁵	mi ²	mi ²	koi	kui ³⁵	maɣh
158	cheap	rɛ ²¹⁴	zau ²	pi:n ² zei ²	zie	zau [?] 31	khrei
159	wall	turɣ ¹¹	kam ¹	ɕiŋ ²	diŋ	ntal ³¹	rɛŋ

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	muɪh
'hand'	tay	taiʔ
'leaf'	lá	lɛʔ
'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	mɛhɔ̃n
'to smell'	ngửi	ŋɦuɪt
'leaf'	lá	lɛʔ
'tooth'	răng	rɛhɔ̃n

(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	ʃim
'cooked'	chín	ʃin

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 ʃim
'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	niɛʔ bɔŋ 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	
he studies English	Vietnamese	anh ấy	học	tiếng	Anh
	Wa	he	study	language	English
		nɔh	gaw	lɔʔ	kə
		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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