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## TONAL FEATURES OF HÀ TÂY DIALECT<sup>1</sup> (The case of Quốc Oai variant)

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**Abstract:** The goal of the paper is to study the tonal features of the Quốc Oai variant (former Hà Tây, Hà Nội nowadays). By use of instrumental phonetics, phonological description and comparative methods, the study presents the following results: (1) A description of tonal features of Quốc Oai using synchronic data; (2) A comparison of Quốc Oai with Thạch Thất tones and the urban Hà Nội tones to provide a broader view of Hà Tây tones; (3) A comparison of Quốc Oai tones with the tones of some neighboring Mường dialects in synchronous and chronological aspects, which help to establish a few details explaining the interesting nature of this dialect; (4) Finally, we also provide some interdisciplinary evidences to support the linguistic data. All kinds of data point to the idea that xứ Đoài, Ba Vì (including Quốc Oai in the past and present) is a mixed space of Việt-Mường culture. In this mixed space one may find similar features of all elements of culture, including linguistic similarities, especially in tones.

**Keywords:** Quốc Oai patois, xứ Đoài, tones, Việt-Mường language, common Việt-Mường community

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## ТОНАЛЬНЫЕ ОСОБЕННОСТИ ХАТЭЙСКОГО ДИАЛЕКТА<sup>3</sup>

(Вариант Куокоай)

Чинь Кам Лан<sup>4</sup>

**Аннотация.** Целью статьи является изучение тональных особенностей варианта произношения района Куокоай, которое ранее бытовало в провинции Хатэй, а теперь существует в Ханое. Используя для проведения исследования инструментальную фонетику, фонологическое описание и сравнительные методы, автор представляет тональные особенности произношения Куокоай, в синхронном и хронологическом аспектах сравнивает их с произношением уезда Тхатъхат и городских районов Ханоя, а также с тонами некоторых диалектов мыонгского языка. Данные исследования подтверждают идею о том, что районы к западу от Ханоя, включая Куокоай в прошлом и настоящем, представляют собой смешанное пространство культуры вьет-мыонг. Доказательством этого являются сходные черты всех элементов культуры, в том числе языковое подобие, особенно в тонах.

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**Ключевые слова:** говор Quốc Oai, xứ Đoài, тоны, язык вьет-мыонг, вьет-мыонгская общность

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## Introduction

Quốc Oai, old Hà Tây (nowadays part of Hà Nội) is located in the west of the capital. This land belongs to the xứ Đoài<sup>5</sup>, which is considered the cradle of the ancient Vietnamese people, one of the four towns that protected Thăng Long (the ancient name of Hà Nội). Although the administrative boundaries have changed over time, it is still a land with historical-cultural-linguistic features that have persisted despite the many changes over time.

Quốc Oai variety in particular, Hà Tây dialect in general constitutes a special dialect, especially its tone system. This feature has entered the folk memory, for the Hà Tây people and the people at surrounding areas are well known because of their uncanny tonal features. In Vietnamese dialectology, intonation and tone are often considered distinctive features between dialects. Based on that, people distinguish one village dialect from another, one region dialect from another [Hoàng 2004; 2014: 205]. The special tonal system is the way for the surrounding people to recognize the Hà Tây accent and for the Hà Tây people to identify themselves. This has attracted the attention of many researchers.

The purpose of the paper is: 1) Describe the tonal features of the Quốc Oai variety using synchronic data; 2) Compare the Quốc Oai tones with the Thạch Thất<sup>6</sup> and the urban Hà Nội tones in order to provide a broader view of Hà Tây tones; 3) Compare the Quốc Oai tones with the tones of some neighboring Mường dialects in synchronous and chronological aspects, allowing to establish a few bases to explain the special nature of this dialect; 4) Provide some interdisciplinary evidences to support the linguistic data.

## Some basic concepts

*Dialect/patois* is a term often used to describe the rural form of language, which often has a narrower geographical distribution than dialects [Wardhaugh 2010]. Most researchers believe that a dialect is a variant that exists in a narrow space and has special features compared to the surrounding larger dialect or language of which it is a variant [Trinh 2017]. These features are often reflected in the specific pronunciation, also known as the dialect/vernacular [Nguyễn, V. L. 2012], which may have some own words different from the common variants... In Hà Nội area, there are some patois such as Cổ Nhuế, Triều Khúc (Từ Liêm), Sơn Tây, Ba Vì (old Hà Tây), Bát Tràng (Gia Lâm)... [Trinh 2017], beyond the Northern coastal dialects such as Thủy Nguyên, Kiến Thụy (Hải Phòng), Vân Đồn, Quảng Yên (Quảng Ninh), Thái Thụy, Tiền Hải (Thái Bình) [Nguyễn, T.T. 2019]. The North Central region has patois of the Hến village (Hà Tĩnh), Nghi Lộc (Nghệ An) [Alves 1995; Andrea 2016], etc.

*Tone* is a supersegmental phoneme, which is a change in pitch associated with the coordination of the laryngeal muscles to create different patterns of vocal cord vibration [Kirby 2011].

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<sup>5</sup> Đoài meaning West, and xứ meaning land, xứ Đoài stands for the land of the West. Xứ Đoài is recognized as a proper name.

<sup>6</sup> The district, located to the west of Quốc Oai, is said to have a typical Hà Tây accent, like Quốc Oai.

The commonly used tonal distinguishing criterias in the tradition are *register* and *contour*, both of which are characterized by *pitch level*. However, in the last few decades, researchers have suggested that tone should be also described using both *voice quality* and *phonation type*. Many Vietnamese linguists also consider *voice quality* as one of the criteria to describe Vietnamese tone [Alves 1998, Nguyễn, V.L. 2009, Kirby 2011, Andrea 2016, etc.].

*Pitch level* is defined as the frequency of vibrations of the vocal cords per unit of time. Tonal pitch can be measured on the Hertz scale (Hz) with the Speech Analyzer or Praat software, and also on the Semitone scale (St) with the Wincecil software. The pitch is Y.R. Chao divided into 5 levels: level 5: high; 4: slightly high, 3: medium; 2: slightly low; 1: low. The *pitch level* characteristic, includes both *register* and *contour*. The vocal range separates tones at different pitches (high, low, and mid). The pictured pitch points identified during the pronunciation of tones are usually the starting pitch and ending pitch, being able to use up to 1-2 additional pitch value points. Contour is the change in pitch over time. Criteria to distinguish contour tones are habitually *level - not level, up - down*.

*Voice quality* is the vibration of the vocal cords during the pronunciation of syllables. Vibration creates different types of voice qualities. The *modal voice* is a neutral voice with a comfortable air flow, regular cycle of sound waves, a stable volume, characteristic of Vietnamese *ngang* and *sắc* tones. *Creaky voice* (cv) or laryngealization is the phenomenon of partial closure of the glottis during pronunciation, causing the contour of the tone to be broken. This is characteristic of *ngã* and *hỏi* tones. *Glottal stop* (gs) is a phenomenon in which the vocal cords are suddenly shortened, forming a stopped point and causing an explosive sound, usually occurring at the end of a syllable with *nặng* tone, distinguishing *nặng* and *huyền* tones. The above phonation types are important criteria for identifying and distinguishing tones in Vietnamese.

### **Methods and materials**

The study was carried out thanks to 6 members of the Quốc Oai community selected by the following criteria:

- At least four generations of ancestors residing in Quốc Oai;
- People living and working in the locality, rarely going away for a long time;
- People from all 3 age groups: youth, middle-aged and elderly (for both men and women).

Research tools: for voice recording, the study used a Sony Corp digital recorder Ic Recorder Icd - UX543F S/N: 32276956. CoolEdit Pro2.1 and Praat software were used for speech analysis. Excel software is used for statistics and graphing. In the progression graph of the fundamental frequency F0 of the tone, pitch level is measured on the Hertz scale.

In addition to the instrumental phonological method, the phonological description method was used to describe the results. In addition, the comparative method is used to compare the results of other researchers. The comparison results help to explain more thoroughly the tonal features of Quốc Oai in particular and Hà Tây in general.

### **Results and discussions**

#### ***Quốc Oai variation tones***

*Ngang tone*: The starting pitch is average level, ranging from 160Hz to over 230Hz, women usually have a higher starting pitch than men. The contour of *Ngang* tone is basic level, slightly down,

about [32] (according to the Y.R. Chao scale), modal voice. To the normal ear, the Quốc Oai *Ngang* tone is almost like *Huyền* tone of the urban Hà Nội.

*Huyen tone*: The starting pitch is slightly lower than the *Ngang* tone, women still have a higher starting point than men. The contours of Quốc Oai's *Huyền* tone mostly go up, ending at about 50 - 80Hz higher than the starting pitch level [34]. This is the key difference between Quốc Oai's *Huyền* tone and surrounding regions.

*Ngã tone*: In all the informants, the *Ngã* tone is going up slightly and then going down [454]. In addition to the popular variant [454], this tone has 2 other variants: (1) up-down contour [454] but 2 times of laryngealisation (variant 2); (2) tends to go up like *Sắc* tone and also has laryngealisation (variant 3), typical creaky voice (Fig. 1).

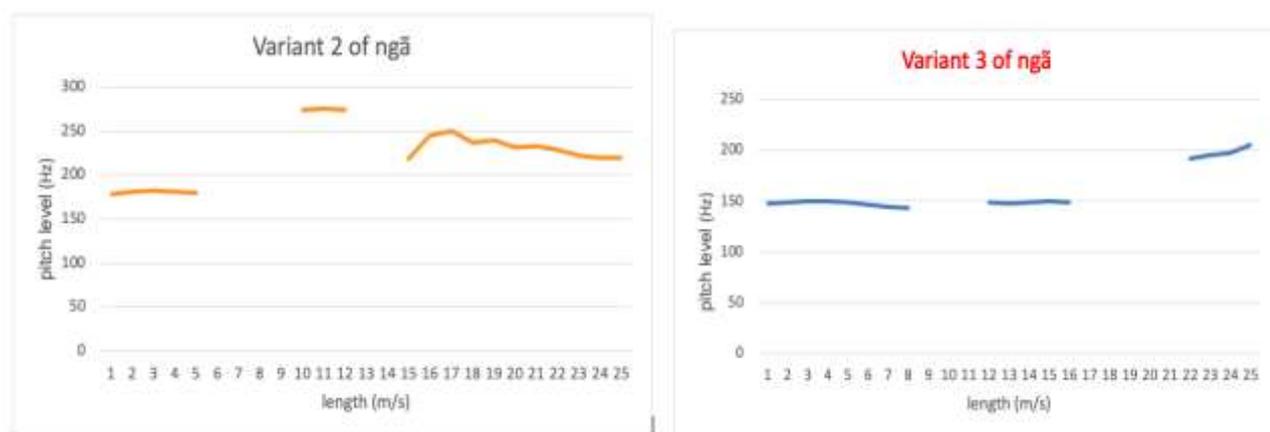


Fig. 1. Ngã tone variations of Quốc Oai

*Hỏi tone*: Low mid pitch, basic contour goes down [32] or [31] ends in the low-pitched area. The contours of the *Hỏi* tone in the elderly informants were similar to the *Ngã* tone, causing the impression that these two tones were not clearly distinguished.

The Quốc Oai's *Hỏi* tone has two variations: variant 1 has seamless lines; variant 2 has the laryngealisation, a typical creaky voice, especially the elderly and middle-aged.

*Sắc tone*: It is a high tone, the contour is going up [34] or going down slightly and then up [324] without creaky voice, but modal voice. The syllabic length of some informants is quite long.

*Nặng tone*: The starting pitch is average, going down but the slope is not high, making the contour somewhat flat, quite similar to the *Huyền* tone [32]. This tone has a slightly short duration/length. There is a glottal stop, but not clear one.

### Compare Quốc Oai tones with Thạch Thất and the urban Hà Nội tones

As we show in Table 1, it is not difficult to realize that Quốc Oai tones are quite similar to Thạch Thất tones. All distinctive features such as medium pitch, contour and voice quality are significantly similar in each of the tones when comparing the two dialects. It is possible to imagine the phonemic-phonetics values between the two systems through the following table (there is a urban Hà Nội tone system for reference):

Table 1. Phonemic-phonetic Features of Quốc Oai tones, Thạch Thất tones<sup>7</sup> and the urban Hà Nội tones<sup>8</sup>

Tone	Quốc Oai	Thạch Thất	Urban Hà Nội
<b>Ngang</b>	down, [32]	down, [32]	level, [33]
<b>Huyền</b>	up [34]	up [35]	down, [32]
<b>Ngã</b>	up-down /up, cv*, [343]/[34]	up-down, cv, [454]	down-up, cv, [325]
<b>Hỏi</b>	down, cv, [32]/[31]	down, cv, [31]	down, cv, [31]
<b>Sắc</b>	up/ down-up, cv, [34]/[324]	down-up, cv, [425]	up, [35]
<b>Nặng</b>	down, gs**, [32]	down, gs, [21]	down, gs, [31]

\* cv: creaky voice

\*\* gs: glottal stop

- *Hỏi* and *Nặng* tones of Quốc Oai, Thạch Thất and urban Hà Nội are essentially the same, all going down, the phenomenon of laryngealisation (*Hỏi* tone) and glottal stop (*Nặng* tone) are clearly present.

- *Ngang*, *Huyền* and *Ngã* tones of Quốc Oai and Thạch Thất are quite close and different from urban Hà Nội. *Ngang* tone goes down [32] in the two peripheral dialects, while in urban Hà Nội the same tone is basic level [33]. Research results of Nguyễn, T. T. in Ba Vì and Sơn Tây also shared this feature: "The contour is slightly going down, sounding deeper than *Ngang* tone in standard Vietnamese" [Nguyễn, T. T. 2015: 88]. Thus, *Ngang* tone in most of the typical language varieties of Hà Tây such as Quốc Oai, Thạch Thất, Ba Vì and Sơn Tây is almost the same as *Huyền* tone in urban Hà Nội.

*Huyền* tone of Quốc Oai, Thạch Thất tends to go up [34] and [35], ending in a high level, while in standard Vietnamese or urban Hà Nội dialect, this tone is down [32]. Nguyễn T.T. did not encrypt the *Huyền* tone of Sơn Tây according to the scale of Y.R. Chao but describing it as 'a high level tone, the contour does not go down like the standard language but flattens or goes up. In all surveys, the contour of this tone does not go down.' [Ibid.: 90). With this feature Hà Tây's *Huyền* tone is perceived almost like the *Sắc* tone.

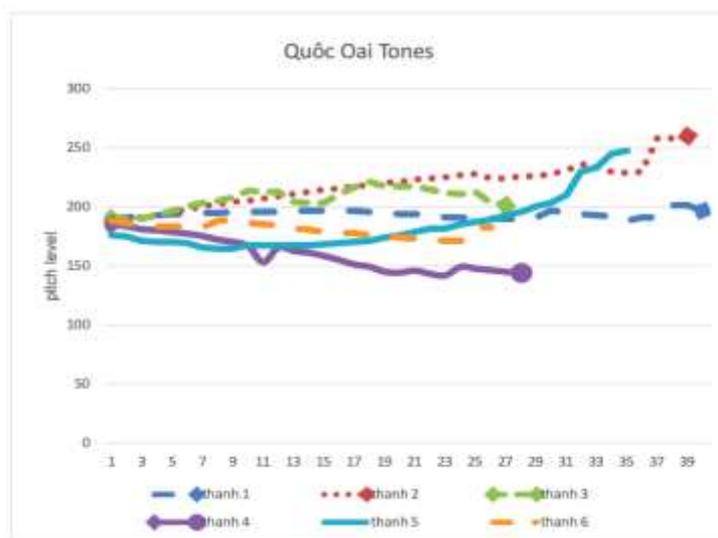
*Ngã* tone of Quốc Oai, Thạch Thất has contour up-down [454] or [343], different from this tone in standard language. Nguyễn, T.T. also described the Sơn Tây *Ngã* 'going up about 120-150ms and then changing the direction, then going down, the contour are shown in the direction of up-down' (2015: 95). In short, *Ngang*, *Huyền*, *Ngã* tones of Quốc Oai are quite different from the correspondent urban Hà Nội tones. Only the phenomenon of laryngealisation (creaky voice) is shared between both Hà Tây and Hà Nội language varieties when it comes to these three tones.

- The *Sắc* tone of Quốc Oai, besides one of the variants, goes up like urban Hà Nội. This variant is a down-up variant [324]/[425]. There is also a phenomenon of laryngealisation (creaky voice), different from urban Hà Nội dialect.

It is possible to picture the system of tone of Quốc Oai through the following diagram(Fig. 2):

<sup>7</sup> The results of Nguyễn, V. L. 2009.

<sup>8</sup> The results of Trịnh, C. L. 2017.



1: ngang; 2: huyền; 3: ngã; 4: hỏi; 5: sắc; 6: nặng

Fig. 2. Quốc Oai's tones

Thus, among the 6 tones, there are 4 tones that vary from the Quốc Oai variant to the urban Hà Nội one. Overall, the Quốc Oai tones have starting points quite close to each other, the pitch levels are also close, that is, the difference in pitch level among the tones is not large. This is a completely similar point between our experimental results [2019], the papers Nguyễn, V.L. [2009] and Nguyễn, T.T. [2015] and also a remarkable difference between Hà Tây and the surrounding North dialects.

*Compare Quốc Oai tones with neighboring Mường dialect tones*

*Synchronic aspect: phonetic-phonological features*

Table 2. **Phonetic-phonological features of the Quốc Oai (Vietnamese Language) tones and the (Mường language) Ba Vì tones<sup>9</sup>**

Tone	Vietnamese in Quốc Oai (Hà Tây)	Mường language in Ba Vì (Hà Tây)
<b>Ngang</b>	down, [32]	down, [32]
<b>Huyền</b>	up, [34]	up, [34]
<b>Ngã</b>	up - down/up, cv, [343]/[34]	down - up, cv, [325]
<b>Hỏi</b>	down, cv, [32]/[31]	down, cv, [31]
<b>Sắc</b>	up/ down - up, cv, [34]/[324]	up, [35]
<b>Nặng</b>	down, gs, [32]	down, gs [31]

Comment:

- Both tonal systems of Hà Tây Vietnamese and Ba Vì Mường have 6 tones (different from some Mường dialects such as Mường Bi, Mường Vàng, Mường Khén..., and Vietnamese dialects from Thanh Hóa back to the South have only 5 tones). This analysis is shared by many Vietnamese dialect researchers [Nguyễn, V.T. 1972; Hoàng, T.C. 1989; Nguyễn, V.L. 2002, 2009].

<sup>9</sup> The results of Nguyễn, V.L. 2009.

- The second common point of the two tonal systems of Vietnamese and Mường language in Hà Tây is that the *Ngang* tone have all contours going down [32], while the *Huyền* tone is going up [34]. These two tones in Vietnamese of Hà Tây are in complete contrast to other dialects. Similarly, the two *Ngang* and *Huyền* tones in Mường language in Ba Vì are also completely different from Mường Như Xuân and Mường Ngọc Lạc (Thanh Hóa) according to Nguyễn, V.L. [2009], different from Mường Đam (Hòa Bình), Mường Tân Phong (Sơn La) according to M. Ferlus [1974]; different from Mường Khói (Thanh Hóa) according to Nguyễn, V.T. (1972). Obviously, there is a certain connection between the Mường language and Vietnamese language that makes them form a “variation island”. In the end, in terms of geographical distance, the Việt Hà Tây and the Mường Ba Vì regions are overlapped, with their ethnic population intertwined in the same small geographical place.

- The third common point between the tones of Vietnamese and Mường language in Hà Tây is that the starting point of both tonal systems are quite close to each other. Then, they remain flat or go up or down with a slight slope. Therefore, between the pitch points among or between the tones, there is not a large range of pitch, making them seem like they are mixed together.

- The fourth common point is the downward contour, the creaky voice quality is typical for the *Hỏi* tone, the downward contour, the glottal stop at the end of the syllable is a common feature for the *Nặng* tone in both systems.

*The chronological aspect: the tonogenesis process*

Haudricourt's (1954) hypothesis states that the tonal system of Việt- Mường languages was formed and developed as a result of two processes:

1. The process of shedding some syllabic elements at the end of syllables such as */\*-ʔ, \*-h /* is compensated by 3-tone opposition, occurring about before the 10th century.

2. The process of unvoicing the voiced initial consonant and the phonological value conversion from the voiced/unvoiced distinction of the first consonant to the high/low range distinction of the tone. This process is thought to have been completed around the 12th century.

Based on the above hypothesis, in the way that Nguyễn, V.L. (2009) did, and based on the results of his survey of the Ba Vì Mường language, we examined the development of Vietnamese tones in Quốc Oai (Hà Tây) in comparison with the development of Vietnamese tones in Mường language in Ba Vì, the results show that:

Table 3: Quốc Oai Vietnamese (Hà Tây)

Final \ Initial	*A (*-resonant)	*B (*-ʔ)	*C (*-h)
*p, *t, *k (High)	[32]	[34]/[324]	[32]/[31]
*b, *d, *g (Low)	[34]	[32]	[343]/[34]

Table 4: Ba Vì Mường language (Hà Tây)

Final \ Initial	*A (*-resonant)	*B (*-ʔ)	*C (*-h)
*p, *t, *k (High)	[32]	[35]	[31]
*b, *d, *g (Low)	[34]	[31]	[325]

Comparative data<sup>10</sup>:

<sup>10</sup> The results of Nguyễn, V.T. 1972.

Table 5: Thanh Hoá Vietnamese

Final \ Initial	*A (*-resonant)	*B (*-?)	*C (*-h)
*p,*t,*k (High)	[44]	[35]	[323]
*b,*d,*g (Low)	[32]	[32]	

Table 6: Mường Khôi language (Thanh Hoá)

Final \ Initial	*A (*-resonant)	*B (*-?)	*C (*-h)
*p,*t,*k (High)	[43]	[213]	[35]
*b,*d,*g (Low)	[55]	[11]	

The change in tones of Quốc Oai Vietnamese and Ba Vì Mường language can be visualized as follows:

- The process of tonal duplication, the result of the devoicing of a voiced initial consonant, which occurs when there are three opposing tonalities in the two varieties of language: \*A (later divided into Ngang and Huyền tones), \*B (later divided into Sắc and Năng tones), \*C (later divided into Ngã and Hỏi tones). This process in Hà Tây in particular and the Northern Delta in general was reported by Nguyễn, V.L. [2009], who assessed that unlike some other dialects (the other Việt-Mường languages have only 4 tones, such as Rục, Mã Liềng, Poọng... or some Vietnamese dialects in Nghệ An), in which the process of devoicing occurs when in the original language there are only 2 tones, which duplicate into a system of 4 tones.

- The aforementioned process in Hà Tây Vietnamese and Ba Vì Mường languages is different from the Vietnamese and Mường dialects in other regions - for instance, Thanh Hóa (tables 5 and 6). In Hà Tây Vietnamese the process of merging Hỏi and Ngã as in Thanh Hoá Vietnamese did not happen, and in Hà Tây Mường language there was no process of merging Ngã and Năng like in Thanh Hóa Mường language.

- Compared with the Northern Việt and Mường Tonkin patois, the important similarity in tonal variation in Hà Tây Việt and Mường is the phenomenon that Nguyen, V.L. called *flip flop* in some pairs of tones: pair of tones \*A and \*C in both varieties (swapping the contour features of Ngang – Huyền and Hỏi – Ngã pairs).

Comparing the tones of Quốc Oai Vietnamese and Ba Vì Mường, both in terms of synchronicity and chronology (two types of data that perfectly support each other), both tone systems clearly show remarkable similarities between them.

**Data on the Việt-Mường branching process and some other interdisciplinary data**

*Data on the Việt-Mường branching process*

In terms of language, researchers of Vietnamese history have demonstrated that Vietnamese and Mường languages are derived from the same proto-language - the Proto Việt-Mường language [Haudricourt 1954; Felus 1974; Nguyễn, V.T. 1974; Phạm, D.D. 1983; Alves 1995; Trần, T.D. 2011, etc.]. According to Phạm, D.D., the Proto Việt-Mường population was originally thought to be very widely distributed in the western part of Area 4<sup>11</sup> and the West Trường Sơn. Then, some of these Việt-Mường tribes migrated to the North when the Northern Delta was still flooded. They stopped in the midlands along the plains and came into contact with the ancient Tay tribes that were widely distributed around Hà Nội Bay. Among these regions, Hà Tây (xứ Đoài) (along with Phú Thọ)

<sup>11</sup> North Central Region of Vietnam

occupies the central part. Here, the Proto Việt-Mường language changed into the so-called Việt-Mường language, whose tonal system then had 6 tones with the opposition of 2 registers and 3 tones [Phạm, D.D. 1983: 124-125]. The authors also acknowledge that the Việt-Mường split corresponds to an internal process of the two languages and not the result of migration like some other ethnic groups, for example, the Mèo and Dao split, the split of Thái Đen, Thái Trắng with Tày, Nùng... such as Nguyễn, V.L. [2009] explained. The Việt-Mường separation process began when there was a divergence between the delta and the mountainous variant of the common Việt-Mường language. The delta variant, due to exposure to the Chinese language and culture, had been strongly influenced by this language. The result of lexical and phonetic changes due to influence or borrowing from Chinese has made the common Việt-Mường language speaking by inhabitants of the Red River Delta to gradually separate from the Việt-Mường language of the inhabitants of the mountainous region - at the villages ("Mường"<sup>12</sup>) of Sơn Tây, Hòa Bình, and Phú Thọ. Based on the ratio of 67.4% common vocabulary between Mường Hòa Bình, Sơn La and Vietnamese Hà Nội, Nguyễn, T.C. argues that the Việt-Mường split started around the 8th century AD and is thought to have been completed around the XI-XII centuries [Nguyễn, T.C. 1995: 277-278]. In this historical development, Hà Tây (xứ Đoài) represents a transitional area. The similarities in both the phonetic-phonological features (synchronic aspect), and in the process of transformation to form tones (diachronic aspect) in the Vietnamese and Mường Hà Tây language varieties can be considered as evidences arguing for this "transitional" position. In the continuous and long-lasting separation process during the 4-5 centuries mentioned above, the separation in the Hà Tây transitional region is said to have taken place at the 5<sup>th</sup> century.

*Some other interdisciplinary data*

*- Ethnographic data:*

According to Nguyễn, B. [1974], the Mỹ Đức region of Hà Tây today is no longer the residence of the Mường. However, less than a century ago, as recorded in the bibliography, when Mỹ Đức belonged to Mỹ Lương, they still used the "Lang - Đạo" chief system<sup>13</sup> particular of the Mường society.

Regarding the family structure in Xứ Đoài, the Nguyễn and Đinh families account for a very high percentage of the population among the Mường [Mac, D. 1974]. According to the records of J. Cuisinier<sup>14</sup>, these two families are present in many Mường regions. This record of the family structure is interesting because it is reminiscent of Nguyễn Cao and Đinh Thị Đen - the parents of Tân Viên (Nguyễn Tuấn) recorded in *Tân Viên Sơn Thánh*<sup>15</sup>. These three characters are worshiped by Mường residents, not only between communities but also in each family, proving that these are Gods with a very deep position in Mường beliefs [Lam, B.N. 1997]. According to Lam, B.N., the distribution space of the *Tân Viên* legend is associated with the residence area of ancient Vietnamese residents, representing a mixed area of Việt-Mường residents.

<sup>12</sup> Mường: social organization unit of the Muong people, gathering many villages in the same valley, or many valleys that adjacent to each other.

<sup>13</sup> The social organization of the Muong people is under the management of an aristocratic family called the "Nhà Lang". Lang - Đạo is the ruling system of the Muong people ruled by this family.

<sup>14</sup> Cuisinier, J. (1948) *Le Mường (Géographie Humaine et Sociologie)*. Paris (See Lâm, N. 1997).

<sup>15</sup> Legend of the mountain god Tân Viên. In primitive society, Tân Viên was simply a mountain god who protected people and was worshiped by the people. In the ancient state of Van Lang, Tân Viên became the legendary hero of the whole national community.

Field data in 1968 in the communes of Minh Quang, Khánh Thượng, and Ba Trại have recorded many "mixed" families of Mường husband and Kinh (Vietnamese) wife, or Mường wife and Kinh husband. The number of Vietnamese women marrying Mường men in Khánh Thượng commune is 19, 39 in Minh Quang, 10 in Ba Trại. The number of Vietnamese men marrying Mường women in Khánh Thượng is 12, 38 in Minh Quang, 13 in Ba Trại [Mac, D. 1974]. The formation of these mixed families gives a hint on the harmony of the two ethnic groups in the past as well as the ancient residence of the common Viet-Muong community [Lam, B.N. 1997].

- *Archaeological data:*

In addition to the pre-historic relics, the Institute of Archeology, when surveying the Mường tombs in the southern Đồng Mô, discovered relics of feudal times in these tombs, dating from the 12th -13th century to the 15th -16th century, corresponding to the Lý, Trần and Lê dynasties. Many archaeological remains show that up to the Ly dynasty, Mường and Viet (Kinh) tombs were strangely similar in structure, funeral rites and especially burial accessories [Pham, Q. 2016]. Notably, there are fragments of Vietnamese ceramics and pottery dating from the 12th -13th century to the 15th -16th century, mainly bowls, plates, vases, jars.... with white enamel, white glaze with brown flowers, celadon and brown glaze decorated with chrysanthemums and lotus flowers, typical of glaze ceramics of the Lý - Trần dynasties, besides a few white glazed ceramics painted in blue from the early Lê dynasties [Nguyen, D. 2008]. The similarity of funeral rites shows that the concept of "death" and "home" for the deceased does not differ between the Việt- Mường ethnic groups [Pham, Q. 2016]. Thus, at a very late stage after the period believed to have had the Việt - Mường division, the Mường and Việt communities of Xứ Đoài, Hà Tây still shared a common cultural space.

- *Historical and folklore data:*

According to Trần, Q.V. (1997), the genealogy of the Đặng family in Lương Sơn and Chương Mỹ states that during a military test in Bạch Hạc, Hưng Đạo Vương "sent" his youngest son at the Mường Quảng Oai women (Ba Vì, Sơn Tây). In the 15th century, 'ông Nghè' (the way to call a doctor in the old days) Trần Văn Huy and then his son – Trần Tuấn - was born. After Trần Tuấn rebelled against the Lê dynasty (1511), this Trần family branch moved to Lương Sơn, Chương Mỹ and changed their surname to Đặng. Thus, at least from the Trần dynasty until now, the foothills of Ba Vì mountain still represent a cultural and social space of the Mường people.

After field trips throughout the Mường cultural space from Sơn La to Thanh Hoá, Trần Quốc Vương noted 'a special feature' in the spiritual world of the Mường people in the belief and worshipping of 'Bua Pa Ví' (King Ba Vì) or 'the Saint Đản (Tản)'. He believes that the legendary ancestor of the Việt-Mường people is King Ba Vì - the Saint Đản (Tản) - Sơn Tinh. He also wrote 'Even among the Kinh - Việt people, I have never found any documents from the Lý - Trần dynasties about the Temple of the Hung Kings, but only the book *Đại Việt sử lược* (late 15th century) records that King of the Lý Dynasty went to Sơn Tinh Temple' [Trần, Q.V. 1997]. Particularly, in Ba Vì - the area where Việt and Mường people live - there are 60 temples and shrines worshipping the Saint Đản/Tản - Sơn Tinh. Also according to Trần, Q.V., the common ancestor of the Việt-Mường people came from the foothills of the Ba Vì mountain. Then, due to population pressure, many branches migrated to the delta, merging with tribes of ancient Tay, ancient Malay and ancient Chinese... to become the Kinh (Việt) tribe. The other branches, from Ba Vì, went up to Phú Thọ, Sơn La... or went down the foothills path to Hòa Bình, Thanh-Nghệ.

It can be said that interdisciplinary data all support a common point that the land of Xứ Đoài, Ba Vì (including Quốc Oai in the past and present) is a mixed space of Mường-Việt culture. This space leaves a similar mark on all elements of culture, including similarities on language.

### **Conclusion**

Thanks to our research results we are able to confirm a few points:

1. The Quốc Oai dialect (Hà Tây) has a special tonal system. This tonal system is significantly different from urban Hà Nội tones in particular and Northern dialects in general, making Hà Tây dialect exist as an 'island of dialect/vernacular'. Although the internal change of Hà Tây dialect is still happening quietly, the "rough" spots on the surface of the dialect are gradually being levelled, but the difference with neighboring areas still remains.

2. Comparing the Quốc Oai tones with some other regions in Hà Tây, we have found a common denominator called *Hà Tây tones* with different features from other regions. The results also show the undeniable similarity between Vietnamese and Mường language in Hà Tây. It is noteworthy that these two dialects are similar to each other but different from other dialects of Vietnamese and Mường respectively. This assumes a meaningful relationship from the past, involving the separation of these two languages from a precursor language.

3. Besides the linguistic evidence, we have provided several other interdisciplinary evidences supporting this historical relationship.

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