

Reviewer 1

The extremes of language multilingualism found in countries such as Vietnam and Lao PDR are unusual and important and a solid discussion of the development of such a 'mosaic' is well worth the journal space. The authors of this article are clearly experts in the field and can contribute much to the general academic audience they intend to address.

Having said that, this reviewer thinks that the article has several weaknesses in presentation that need to be addressed before it will accomplish its goals. While the audience can be expected to be familiar with the field in general, a better introductory statement of the goals of the paper should appear early in the introduction and not in the brief statement on p. 4, lines 44-48. Please talk more about the issues of mosaic versus expansion and perhaps more about the genetics, archeology, etc. The first paragraph assumes terminology in other fields that the readers may not know and this part of the discussion on genetics, etc doesn't seem to carry through the whole article, so the information on these issues might be done in a more accessible way.

Also in this introduction, there is a lack of tightness of expression such as p.4 lines 11-17 and 30-37. The discussions need to be done with greater clarity, i.e. who are 'would-be subjects'?

Also at the beginning, many terms for language families and ethnic groups are presented with the latest labels which are then not explained until later in the article, e.g. Kra-Dai vs Tai-Kadai on p.2 line 48 or p. 3, line 51, Kinh vs. ethnic Vietnamese. Please give this information right up front when introducing less-likely-to-be-known labels.

There is a tendency to confuse language label with ethnic group label leading to some awkward phrasing where it sounds like a language is moving not the speakers.

A concern in the discussion is a lack of balance in the treatment of the various ethnic groups/linguistics groups. For Kra-Dai there is 5 pages, for Hmong-Mien 3 plus, for Chamic 1 3/4 for Sino-Tibetan 2 1/2 and Mon-Khmer 2-2 1/2. There doesn't need to be total balance, but given that Vietnamese is the national language and the Mon-khmer one of the earlier groups, I would anticipate more of a balance in the discussion as it relates to mosaic and expansion.

Part of the lack of balance can be attributed to some of the features that are discussed for some languages and some groups, eg. names from dress, and tonal features, etc that are lacking in others. As the differentiation of linguistic forms in the different groups who make up the linguistic mosaic are quite interesting, it would make more sense for the article to discuss this consistently and make what ties ins the authors can to the mosaic/expansion issues of areal influence, etc. I'm not sure that labels based on clothing types really adds to the overall goal of the mosaic/expansion issue. There should be a focus on linguistic issues that do.

The figures are very helpful and mostly fine, but again make sure they are consistent, in representing movements and population settlements. e.g. figure 2 I believe.

Typos and grammatical issues are a problem both in the text and in the references. There are really too many of them to comment on individually and yes, they can be hard to find, but there are references in the paper but not in the bibliography, e.g. Leach 1954 is not in references. There are also references out of order. In the references there are commas when need periods, missing periods, inconsistency in italics, upper/lowercase after colons, use of periods, page numbers left of articles in edited volumes and journal, not editors on a proceedings, etc.

In the text itself, there are subject/verb agreement issues, vague uses of 'kind' when the kind of what isn't clear, spelling issues-Shui/Sui, missing parentheses.

Reviewer 2

Review of 'The Languages of Vietnam: Mosaics and Expansions'
for *Language and Linguistic Compass*

This paper contains an extremely interesting and exhaustive description of the peoples and languages that comprise the area of current-day Vietnam. The authors clearly have a deep expertise in the field and include extensive details from both published sources as well as their own fieldwork and other current researchers in the field. With a few suggested changes and additions, the paper will be a valuable resource for those interested in the history, peoples and

languages of the Vietnam region. In addition, a number of typographical errors are called to the attention of the authors.

Substantive comments:

Several language families are discussed in the course of this paper. Those readers with linguistic expertise may have some knowledge of at least the basic characteristics of these language families, however the non-linguist reader will benefit from a short description of the most salient properties of each grammatical type – or at least, of those properties that are important for distinguishing the language families in this area from one another (e.g. differences in basic word order, inflectional complexity, morphological type, presence/absence of nominal classification, etc). Currently the authors limit distinguishing structural information to a little bit of segmental phonology and tone, however a small bit of morpho-syntactic grammatical information would seem necessary to round out the discussion; it would be helpful to have this characterizing information at the commencement of each section on a new language family or subgroup. Identification of regions that display evidence of long-term linguistic contact, and a brief description of the consequent effect on grammars, would also be extremely informative.

In most of the narrative, tonal differences are offered as distinguishing characteristics for languages. On page 14 however (section 5.2) it is remarked that tonal properties of one language are the result of contact with neighboring languages. This muddies the waters a bit, so that the authors might consider adding a brief discussion on the possibility of contact influences on tone and the use of tone (and its perils) in identifying and distinguishing language sub-groups.

Section 2 and the sections following it launch into a listing and discussion of the people and language groups. At the beginning of this section, or the end of section 1, a roadmap of this discussion is necessary – some brief introduction concerning the order in which peoples will be discussed and concerning the logic of the ordering chosen. In a related point, while the maps are very useful, it would also be extremely helpful to have a diagram in hierarchical branching form indicating the genetic relatedness of the languages discussed.

The discussion on page 7, 3rd paragraph of section 2.2, is difficult to follow – who is fighting whom and where each of these people(s) are located. This section could do with some rewriting with close attention to clarity. Otherwise the paper is a clear and straightforward read.

Finally, web citations are made use of in several places in the text. This practice is tricky as the authors of those mss may at some point delete the link or move the file. It may be better to cite the individual ms title referred to. Please consult the editor of this journal about the desired practice here.

Typographical:

page 1,2 – parenthesis missing around Bellwood 2006 and Colani 1927.

page 3, third paragraph, first sentence “To describe...” – needs editing, does not make sense.

page 4 – need to explain the terminology ‘substratum’, the use of ‘(shift)’ following this word will not be sufficient for the non-linguist reader. This sentence also needs an edit, is not a complete sentence. Two sentences further, the sentence beginning ‘But the Kinh..’ is a bit awkward, rephrase without initial ‘But’.

page 6, line 3 – fix ‘historically’

page 6 – special character in Nung Chau form in the second to last line did not print out in my copy of the pdf.

page 7, section 2.2 – names are not consistently cited, Nung is later cited as Nong, Nung Tri Cao later as Nung Zhigao. Please be consistent or state why the different form of the name must be used.

page 10, section 2.7 4th line – final –d missing from voice[d].

page 11 – omit first name from Lemoine citation in the text.

page 12 – special character in Thuong form in the last line did not print out in my copy of the pdf.

page 17, first line- omit the comma after Sidwell, insert a period after this citation reference. At the end of the first paragraph, insert the year of publication for the three references cited (Lee, Blood, Thurgood).

page 17, section 6.1 – first sentence needs an edit (missing ‘and’?). Sentence in same paragraph beginning ‘It is the Chinese..’ is awkward; rephrase with a smoother sentence linkage.

page 18 – 114 thousand > 114,000

page 19 – re the cited lack of information of Lolo; James Matisoff has written extensively on the Lolo languages subgroup, perhaps a citation of some of his work might be appropriate if it is relevant to a discussion of the Lolo of Vietnam.

page 19, section 6.2.3 – pop.6,874)all > pop. 6,874) all

page 19 – Edmondson 2006 not in reference list.

page 20 – sentence beginning 'Appreciating...' should have paragraph indentation.

References: misspelling of 'eighth' in Edmondson 2005.