

Problems of the B' tone in Proto-Karen (PK)

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Paper presented at SEALS 23, organised by the Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand, May 29-31, 2013.

Extracted from “A view on Proto-Karen phonology and lexicon”(ms.)

Different opinions on the PK tones (1)

- ▶ **Jones (1961): 2 tones (*´ and *` in both non-checked and checked syllables)**
- ▶ **Burling (1969): 6 tones (4 in non-checked syllables and 2 in checked syllables)**
- ▶ **Haudricourt (1946): 3 tones (2, i.e. *A and *B in non-checked syllables and *C in checked syllables)**
 - (1975): 4 tones (3, i.e. *A [level], *B [falling] and *B' [rising] in non-checked syllables and *C in checked syllables)**

Different opinions on the PK tones (2)

- ▶ **Solnit (2001): 4 tones (3, i.e. *A, *B and *B' in non-checked syllables and *D in checked syllables)**
- ▶ **Shintani (2003): 4 tones (3, i.e. *1, *2 and *2' in non-checked syllables and *3 in checked syllables)**
- ▶ **Manson (2009, 2011): 4 tones (3, i.e. *A [high], *B [low] and *B' [mid] in non-checked syllables and *C [mid+glottal] in checked syllables)**

PK tones and their developments (1)

N.Karen

N. Pa-O

	*A	*B	*D
1	31 ^{..}	55	21 [']
2			
3	33	53	45 [']

S. Pa-O

	*A	*B	*D
1	31 ^{..}	33	21 [']
2			
3	53	55	45 [']

PK tones and their developments (2)

C. Karen

Kayan

	*A	*B	*D
1	53	11	45'
2			
3	33		21'

E. Kayah

	*A	*B	*D
1	33	11	55
2			
3			33

W. Bwe

	*A	*B	*D
1	55	33	11
2			
3			

Kayaw

	*A	*B	*D
1	55	11	33
2			
3	33		

PK tones and their developments (3)

S. Karen

N. Sgaw

	*A	*B	*D
1	33	31 [~]	45 [']
2			
3		11 ^{''}	21 [']

S. Sgaw

	*A	*B	*D
1	55	45 [']	21 [']
2			
3	33	31	11 ^{''}

N. Pwo

	*A	*B	*D
1	35	33	45 [']
2	55		
3		11 ^{''}	21 [']

S. Pwo

	*A	*B	*D
1	53	55	21 [']
2	31 ^{''}		
3		33	45 [']

Tones in four Sgaw varieties

(1)

	*A	*B	*D
1	33	11''	45'
2			
3			21'

(2)

	*A	*B	*D
1	33	31~/21'	45'
2			
3		11''	21'/53

(3)

	*A	*B	*D
1	55	11''	45'
2			
3	33		21'

(4)

	*A	*B	*D
1	55	45'	21'
2			
3	33	31	11''

Unusual split in the B column

(Sgaw variety spoken in Ban Mueang Paeng, Amphoe Pai, Mae Hong Son)

	*A	*B	*D
1	33	11 ^{''} ←	45 [']
2		21 [']	
3		11 ^{''} ←	53

3 tones in non-checked syllables: 33 (< *A), 11^{''} (< *B), and 53 (< *D)

2 tones in checked syllables: 21['] (< *B) and 45['] (< *D)

Examples of the B2 tone in Mueang Paeng Sgaw

	PK	MP Sgaw
left side	*ce ^B	ce ^{? 21} / ce ^{21'}
dung, excrement	*?e ^B	?e ^{? 21} / ?e ^{21'}
close (one's eyes)	*?bi ^B	bi ^{? 21} / bi ^{21'}
frog	*?de ^B	de ^{? 21} / de ^{21'}

Tone *B'

	N.Karen	C. Karen				S. Karen	
	S. Pa-O	Kayan	Kayah	Kayaw	Bwe	N. Pwo	S. Sgaw
breathe, breath	A	D	D	D	D	B	A
many, much	A	D	D	D	D	B	A
muddy, turbid	A	D	D	D	D	B	A
paddy, unhusked rice	A	D	D	D	D	B	A
child	A	D	D	D	D	B	A
evening	A	D	D	D	D	B	A
right side	A	D	D	D	D	B	A

*-S (Benedict, 1979:13)

	PB	TL
five	*ŋas	*ŋjat^D
pungent, spicy hot	*[hy]as	*hat^D (B')
seven	*hnəs	*ʔnwet^D
to comb	*khwis	*khwit^D
nine	*ʔkus	*kot^D
bone	*khrus	*khrwit^D (B')
carry by the headstrap	*ʔbüs	*ʔbwit^D (B')
four	*lis	PNK *lit^D, PCK *hlwi^A, PSK *lwi^B

Conclusion

Between the two solutions, i.e. the *B´ tone and the *-s, if I have to choose one, my preference would be the *-s. However, I wonder why the *-s has not been kept in any Pa-O and Pwo language varieties, since the speakers of Pa-O and Pwo have been in close contact with Austroasiatic speaking peoples both in the past and the present. It is known that Austroasiatic languages have final fricatives. To reach a definite conclusion, perhaps we need more solid data especially on Central Karen (CK) languages spoken in Myanmar collected by professional linguists and well-trained linguistic students.

Thank you