Assessing the Linguistic Vitality of Miqie: An Endangered Ngwi (Loloish) Language of Yunnan, China

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Language shift is the process by which a speech community in a contact situation gradually abandons one language in favor of another. Because the causal factors of language shift are largely social (Fishman 1991), languages, groups, and communities with diverse social situations can be expected to exhibit varying levels of language shift. This paper reports on the linguistic vitality of Miqie [ISO 639-3:yiq], an endangered Central Ngwi/Yi language of Yunnan, China, and identifies the social factors contributing to language shift. Findings from participant interviews in 11 village survey points show there are varying degrees of language endangerment, with intermarriage and access to a major road as primary indicators of shift. This paper evaluates different tools for assessing linguistic vitality and uses the Language Endangerment Index (Lee & Van Way in press) to assess Miqie language endangerment at the village level. Language shift information is essential in the description and documentation of a language, especially because the contexts in which the language is spoken may disappear faster than the language itself.

1. INTRODUCTION.[1] Language shift is the process by which a speech community in a contact situation gradually abandons one language in favor of another. Language shift, leading to language endangerment and eventually language death, is a growing occurrence across the globe, with nearly half of the world's 7,000 languages classified as endangered in the Catalogue of Endangered Languages (Campbell et al. 2013). The first step to assessing the vitality of an undocumented language is to identify the language(s) currently spoken by community members as well as the specific factors contributing to language shift and the rate of any shift. This takes into account Fishman's (1991) theoretical approach to language shift noting that the causal factors of shift and disruption of intergenerational transmission

are largely social. This paper reports on the linguistic vitality of Miqie, a Central Ngwi (Loloish) language spoken by about 8,000 members of the Yi ethnic minority group in central Yunnan Province, China. Not unlike other small ethnolinguistic groups in China, the Miqie are undergoing rapid language shift to the majority lingua franca, in this case, Mandarin Chinese. This field report outlines the social factors affecting Miqie's linguistic assimilation to Chinese and discusses the broader implications for language survey planning, linguistic vitality assessment, and language description.

2. LANGUAGE IN CHINA. With a population of 1.3 billion in the People's Republic of China (PRC), Han Chinese are the overwhelming majority ethnic group at 92 percent of the country's population. The remaining 107 million PRC citizens are classified in one of 55 government-recognized *shaoshu minzu* 少数民族 'ethnic minority group'. The Chinese term *minzu* 民族 'nationality' or 'ethnic group' was borrowed from the Soviet model used to delineate and classify groups that had a "common territory, a common language, a common economic life and a common psychological makeup which expresses itself in a common culture" (Stalin 1913:307). After the founding of the PRC in 1949, non-Han ethnic groups were given the opportunity to apply to the central government for status as an official minority. With over 400 groups applying, 54 groups were granted status as separate minorities by 1965, plus one more in 1979, bringing the total to the 55 national minority groups that the government officially recognizes today (Mullaney 2011).

Though minority population is small in comparison to the Han Chinese, the sheer amount of linguistic and ethnic diversity found within the 55 minority groups cannot be understated. Ethnologue lists 298 living languages currently spoken in China, including 10 language families: Sino-Tibetan, Tai-Kadai, Hmong-Mien, Austroasiatic, Turkic, Mongolic, Tungusic, Korean, Indo-European, and Austronesian. These non-Han ethnic minorities primarily live around China's border regions, where many of the same groups live across national borders to the north (Mongolia, Russia, and North Korea), northwest (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Pakistan), west (India, Nepal, Bhutan), and southwest (Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam).

While the minority classifications broadly divide self-proclaimed ethnolinguistic groups, the classifications are hardly definitive and often misleading of actual group/language relationships (Mullaney 2011). The classification process began as a large-scale language documentation project commissioned by the government in the late 1950s; however, no documents were published until after the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). The Cultural Revolution encouraged national unification through industrialization while forsaking traditional practices, so for two decades, the number of minority languages was politically frozen at 54 while the national Chinese language and culture were promoted. The language descriptions from 1950s surveys were finally published in 1978 and provided general overviews—basic phonology description, a brief grammar, and 1000-word dialect glossary—of 59 different languages, many of which became the proposed 'standard' for the various minority groups (Poa & LaPolla 2007). The extent to which current language surveys, language descriptions, and language conservation efforts can be carried out is limited by the political climate of particular regions. However, research on minority language and culture is largely encouraged in post-graduate education in Chinese universities and at government bureaus at national and provincial levels.

The language ecology of China is hard to generalize, as the nearly 300 languages of China are represented in highly differing contexts, defined by the regional history, politics, and cultural practices of the dozens of groups in any particular area. Using official

FIGURE 1. The major language groups of the People's Republic of China and Taiwan

government statistics with other linguistic and anthropological publications, Zhou (2003) estimates that less than 20 percent of the total minority population could speak Chinese[2] when the PRC was founded in 1949; however by the beginning of China's market-oriented economy in the 1980s, the percentage of Chinese-speaking minorities rose to an estimated 60 percent. This number is certainly on the rise, as minority-speaking populations are increasingly joining the Chinese-based market economy. Chinese is not just a lingua franca for small market towns, but it is the language of education, business, government, mass media, social media and any other situation for connecting with the broader society outside of a rural village or township setting. As many minority communities are bilingual in Chinese and a minority language, Huang (2000) proposes these are the communities at risk of shifting to monolingualism in Chinese. Figure 2 shows varying scenarios of language shift depending on the level of multilingualism in traditional minority areas (Huang 2000).

3. WHO ARE THE MIQIE? The Miqie are officially classified in the Yi minority group, which has a total group population of 8 million in China. The Miqie language [ISO 639-3:yiq] is classified in the Central Ngwi subgroup in the Ngwi (Loloish) branch of Tibeto-Burman (Bradley 2004). Miqie shows the most lexical similarity (and some mutual intelligibility) with the other Central Ngwi languages Eastern Lipo [ISO 639-3:lpo], Lolopo [ISO 639-3:ycl], and Lisu [ISO 639-3:lis]. The results of the survey described here indicate the Miqie group population to be around 13,000 in the core Miqie region, but with much fewer speakers, estimated at 8,000. Unlike some of the larger Yi groups that maintain visible cultural

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[2]For the purposes of this paper, 'Chinese' refers to the national language Mandarin Chinese, including the standardized *Putonghua* as well as the region-specific Mandarin dialects *fangyan*. The Chinese macrolanguage (Sinitic branch of the Sino-Tibetan language family) includes other Chinese languages such as Cantonese, Southern Min, Wu, Hakka, etc.; however, these are not addressed in this paper. When 'Chinese' is used to refer to people, this refers to the Han ethnic group.

Traditional Minority Area	monolingual in minority language	multilingual in minority languages	bilingual with Chinese as second language	bilingual with Chinese as dominant language
	↓SHIFT TO ↓	↓SHIFT TO ↓	↓SHIFT TO ↓	↓SHIFT TO ↓
	bilingual in minority language, adding Chinese	multilingual in minority language(s), adding Chinese	bilingual with minority language as less dominant language	monolingual in Chinese

FIGURE 2. Language shift situations in traditional minority areas in China (figure adapted from Huang 2000)

identity markers and whose language vitality is strong, the Miqie rarely receive a mention in literature on Yi culture and language. The Miqie are not widely known, even among provincial-level culture and language officials, despite the majority of Miqie villages being located less than two hours drive from the capital city, Kunming. Perhaps another reason for the unfamiliarity or lack of interest with the Miqie is that the group is locally regarded as *hanhua* 汉化 'Sinicized', culturally and linguistically assimilated into local Chinese culture.

The first mention of Miqie in Western linguistics literature is part of Bradley, Bradley & Li's (1999) language survey of the five-county region around Kunming. They identified nine Miqie villages in Luquan 禄劝县 and Lufeng 禄丰县 where the Miqie language is still spoken, and reported these villages are undergoing language shift, as all Miqie people can speak Mandarin but not all can speak Miqie. They also reported four villages in Anning County 安宁市 and Jinning County 晋宁县 where the Miqie language is moribund or no longer spoken (Bradley, Bradley & Li 1999). From this survey and other in-country contacts, Bradley (2004, 2007) estimated the population of the Miqie to be at least 30,000, with far fewer speakers than the population indicates, living in counties spread across Chuxiong Yi Autonomous Prefecture 楚雄彝族自治州 and surrounding prefectures to the west. However, the estimated population size and 'Miqie' locations beyond the core region of Luquan, Fumin, and Wuding counties (as well as Lufeng, Anning, and Jinning, which were not a part of this survey), do not likely refer to the same 'Miqie' group that this paper discusses.

The author is only aware of one other researcher, Yang Li Mei 杨丽美 (2007, 2009) who has published a study about the Miqie language. Yang's papers were published internally by the Chuxiong Institute for Yi Studies and are only accessible as hard copies in the government offices where the publications are kept. Yang, who grew up in a multilingual village setting with both Miqie and Lipo people, has an M.A. in linguistics from Minzu University in Beijing and works in preservation at the Chuxiong Prefecture Museum. Her two publications on Miqie are a ten-page description (basic wordlist, phonology and syntax) of her village's Miqie dialect (Yang 2007) and a brief description of language domains, multilingualism, and linguistic vitality of Miqie in her village (Yang 2009).

A main problem in finding previously published information about the Miqie is that there is not a standardized name for this group. A single group, as is the case with the different ethnolinguistic groups in China, can have a variety of group names by which they are referred: the *autonym* (the group name they call themselves, both in their own language and in Chinese) and the *exonym* (the group name when referred to by other groups, in other minority languages and in Chinese). In Chinese, different characters are used to reflect the

autonyms of the Miqie when referred to in-text: *miqi* 密期 [mi^{41}tɕʰi^{55}], *minqi* 民期 [min^{24} tɕʰi^{55}], and *miqie* 米切 [mi^{213} tɕʰiɛ^{55}]. Yang (2007, 2009) uses *micha* 密岔 [mi^{41}tʃʰa^{41}], as this is the group's name in Chinese. In English texts, Bradley refers to the group as 'Miqie', with name variations of 'Micha,' 'Minchia,' 'Mielang,' and 'Minglang.' Religious ethnographic encyclopedias available online split 'Micha' and 'Michi' into two ethnic groups but additional information is not provided. The complexities of the group *ethnonym* (both autonym and exonym) can attest to the complexity of group identity and show that there is not a standard group name or language variety, and neither is there enough information available to understand the intra- and inter-group relations.

In this paper, the group name Miqie will be used to refer to both the people and the language of the group that calls themselves [mi^{55}tɕʰi^{21}] and [mi^{55}tɕʰe^{21}]. 'Micha' is what the Miqie people call themselves when speaking Chinese, it is also the group name that local Han and other minorities groups use when speaking Chinese. The Miqie people do not contest their classification in the Yi minority. However, they recognize that their language is most similar to Eastern Lipo [lpo], a Central Ngwi language whose speakers are classified in the Lisu minority in this central region of Yunnan and classified as Yi further west in the prefecture and elsewhere.

4. SURVEY METHODOLOGY. This field report is of a survey on the Miqie language carried out by the author and her research partner, Li Jing 李晶, over the course of five weeks in summer 2012 and over several weeks in early 2013. The motivation to survey Miqie came from the lack of available information about this group and language, as the only readily available materials were Bradley's survey reports on language endangerment in the area (such as, Bradley, Bradley & Li 1999; Bradley 2004), and these contain only a brief summary of Miqie's existence and its varying levels of endangerment across several villages. The goal of the survey presented here was to investigate the linguistic and sociolinguistic situation of the Miqie ethnolinguistic group in this particular region, as a survey is the first step toward any future documentation work on this language or in this region (Blair 1990).

4.1 SURVEY REGIONS. Upon arriving in Yunnan, the first survey points were the Miqie villages identified by Bradley in Madi Village Administration 麻地村委会 in Fumin County 富民县, located on the highway from Kunming 昆明市 to Luquan 禄劝县成. From this point, the survey expanded to include the four-county border area of NW Fumin County, SW Luquan Yi and Miao Autonomous County 禄劝彝族苗族自治县, SE Wuding County 武定县, and NE Lufeng County 禄丰县. Wuding and Lufeng are under Chuxiong Yi Autonomous Prefecture's jurisdiction, while Fumin and Luquan are under Kunming's jurisdiction. The county seats of Wuding and Luquan are only eight kilometers apart, despite being under two different prefecture jurisdictions (Figure 3).

Bradley, Bradley & Li (1999) reported that the Miqie are an extremely scattered group and can be found across Chuxiong Prefecture in Yongren 永仁县, Nanhua 南华县, and Dayao 大姚县 counties, as well as in Dali 大理白族自治州, Lincang 临沧, and in northern Pu'er 普洱, formerly known as Simao 思茅. However, these areas were not a part of their survey. Their survey also identified a 1954 archival record from the *shibie* classification process that also references Micha who live in Pingzhang Township of Xinping County (Mullaney 2011).

Interestingly, a book published in Chuxiong featuring various Yi songs contains a sketch map of Yi 'branches' 支系, and Miqie (米切) is identified as one of the Yi groups (Zhou
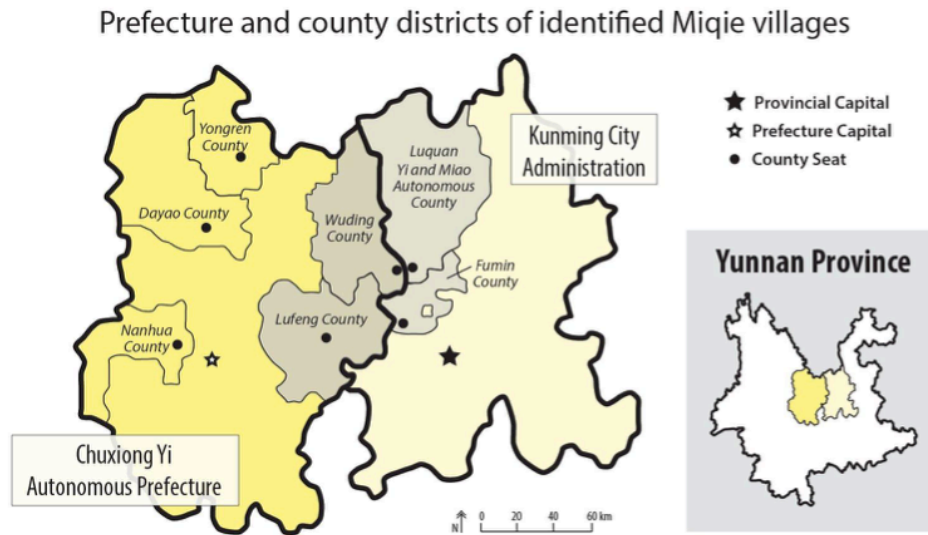
FIGURE 3. Four-county region of identified Miqie villages, with reference to Yongren, Dayao, and Nanhua counties where Miqie villages were previously reported, however not found in this survey.

1989). The map locates Miqie areas in Wuding, Yongren, and Dayao counties of Chuxiong Prefecture (see Figure 4), however only Wuding Miqie are represented as consultants in the songbook. This map was considered in the present survey as potential Miqie village locations, but only Miqie in Wuding county were confirmed. Conversations with local Yi and non-Yi officials in Yongren (not visited), Dayao, as well as Nanhua, did not produce any leads to Miqie in these areas—the closest group name we found was Misha, referring to different Lalo Yi groups. This of course does not discount whether or not Miqie live there, however, this survey shows clearly that the core Miqie region is primarily Wuding County in northeastern Chuxiong prefecture with limited villages in Luquan, Fumin, and Lufeng.

4.1.1 QUESTION OF THE 'MIQIE REGION.' The history of the Yi and migration patterns over the past two millennia are disputed, but researchers agree that the groups now classified as Yi—who share similar history, culture, and language—originated somewhere in the mountainous region of Sichuan and Yunnan or the Guizhou plateau. The subsequent migration patterns were highly divergent, following various river valleys and plains in this region (Harrell 2001). The Miqie in this survey do not have any recent migration stories or a common origin story, but some elders could estimate their village settlement dates by the oldest tombstone *mubei* 墓碑 in their village, up to 300–400 years old. One clue to Miqie history and origins could be in the group name 'Micha', the Chinese name for the group (see §3). The Lalo people, also a Central-Ngwi speaking group, have a regional autonym 'Misha-pa' or 'Misa-pa'—where 'pa' is the suffix for 'person'—referring to the ancient administrative unit Mengshe 蒙舍, whose traditional homeland is in Dali's Weishan 巍山彝族回族自治县 and Nanjian counties 南涧彝族自治县 (Yang 2010). The phonetic similarity of 'Micha' to 'Misha/Misa' as a group autonym could lead to some of the confusion about where the

Miqie locations indicated in Chuxiong songbook
original sketch map printed in Zhou (1989)

FIGURE 4. Sketch map (Zhou 1989) with added emphasis on reported Miqie village areas, among other Yi groups in Chuxiong Yi Autonomous Prefecture. Non-Yi groups, including Han and other minorities, are not represented on the map. The present survey confirmed Miqie villages only in Wuding County.

Micha (Miqie) people live now as well as give some insight into where the group may have migrated from. While previous publications report that the Miqie are a widely scattered group, this survey shows that there is a core region where the Miqie currently live.

5. MIQIE VILLAGES. This survey identified 42 Miqie villages within a 600 mi^2 (966 km^2) region that is referred to in this paper as the "core Miqie region." This region spans four counties as shown in Figure 3—Luquan, Fumin, Wuding, and Lufeng—with the largest Miqie presence in Wuding County. Although this survey did not identify any specific Miqie villages in Lufeng, there are certainly a few there, as attested by several survey participants in southern Wuding county and personal communication with David Bradley. Not included in the map or survey are the four Miqie villages in Jinning and Anning counties identified by Bradley & Bradley (2002).

This survey did identify one village in Wuding County's Gubai Village Administration that self-identifies as Micha, but their autonym is *Geipo* [ke^{55}p^{h}o^{21}] 'star people' in their Central Ngwi dialect. Their language is highly mutually intelligible with the neighboring Miqie, differing only slightly in tone and some lexical items. Village elders report that the Geipo and Miqie settled together in this village area at least 300 years ago.

The following chart (Table 1) shows the names of the Miqie villages identified in the present survey, their administrative units, and the population[3] of each village. Highlighted villages were visited during this survey. See Appendix 1 for this list in Chinese.

TABLE 1. Miqie villages identified in Kunming and Chuxiong Prefectures. Shaded village names indicate those visited during the course of the survey.

Prefecture Administration	County	Township	Village Administration	Village	Pop
Kunming	Fumin	Luomian Yi and Miao Autonomous Township	Madi	Shangcun	272
				Xiacun	201
				Shaocun	214
	Luquan Yi and Miao Autonomous County	Pingshan Jiedao Subdistrict	Liwa	Xiashihuiyao	195
			Chahe	Damituo	521
				Qinglongqing	326
			Xiaojing	Xicun	494
			Diduo	Pingtian	144
				Bailike	155
				Yangtang	112
		Tanglang Township	Yangzaocun	Yangzaocun	104
		Cuihua Township	Xinhua	Shanglaowu	282
Chuxiong Yi Autonomous Prefecture	Wuding County	Shishan Township	Yoaying	Shuiduifang	143
			Puxi	Yangliuhe	446
				Dashiban	83

Continued on next page

[3]The village populations were obtained in 2014 on the Yunnan Government Website *Yunnan Shuzi Xiangcun* 云南数字乡村 'Yunnan Village Numbers' at www.ynszxc.gov.cn.

Prefecture Administration	County	Township	Village Administration	Village	Pop
			Puxi	Xincun	110
				Zhongcun	158
				Baisha	257
			Shude	Shudecun	364
			Gubai	Xiagubai	431
				Luomian	236
				Yangjiacun	314
				Shanju Dacun	348
		Shishan Township	Xincun	Xincun	114
				Dacun	171
				Hujiacun	134
				Yanziwo	105
			Yangjiu	Yangjiucun	612
Chuxiong Yi Autonomous Prefecture	Wuding County		Heming	Nanshancun	215
				Maidishan	344
			Yizidian	Bizu	127
				Nuomizha	174
				Daxinzhuang	185
			Tangjia	Qingtou	174
			Laotao	Shedian Xiaocun	131
				Maichacun	158
		Gaoqiao Township	Dacun	Maichacun	465
			Huaqiao	Yangliuhe	293
				Yongtao Xiacun	147
				Yongtao Zhongcun	192
				Wodu Xincun	397
				Wodu Dacun	705

The region is mountainous with elevations between 5000–7500 feet (1524–2286 meters). These mountains and valleys are a part of the Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau 云贵高原, while in the western prefectures in Yunnan the elevations are much higher, as they are part of the Hengduan Mountain system 横断山脉. Figure 5 shows the location of the Miqie villages identified. The map only shows the Miqie villages, but there are hundreds of other villages located in the same region, primarily the villages of Han, other Yi groups and Miao. Miqie village populations range from 83 to 705, with an average village population of 258.

The number of households per village is roughly the village population divided by four, as a typical household includes three generations.
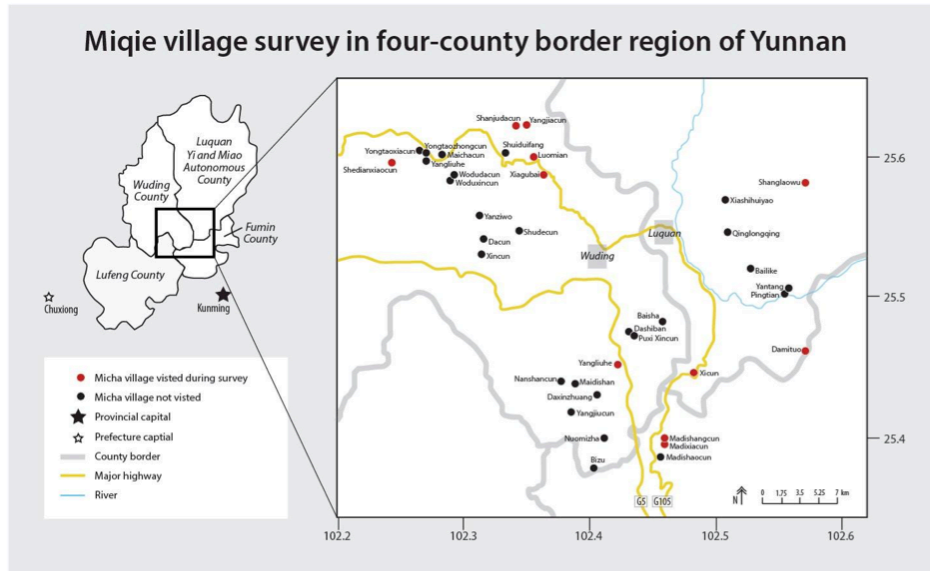

FIGURE 5. Location of Miqie villages identified in survey

5.1 QUESTIONNAIRES AND INTERVIEWS. The questionnaire used in this survey was a modified version of a sociolinguistic questionnaire created by SIL linguists doing similar survey work with other ethnolinguistic groups in Southwest China. The 40 questions were modified to reflect the Miqie situation. For example, questions detailing traditional script and bilingual education were omitted since the Miqie have neither of these. The questions addressed topics concerning individual and village demographics, origins of the village and the Miqie people, language use in different domains, intergenerational transmission, education and work opportunities, and traditional Yi practices such as singing, storytelling, embroidery, and religion. The questionnaire was completed interview-style—with the author, research assistant, and two to six village members at a time. Group interviews are more comfortable and culturally appropriate, and the answers to the questions were arrived at by consensus. The group participants in a particular interview did not appear to disagree on the general trends of language use and shift in a village, and many shared personal experiences that corroborated the group consensus. While per-family experiences of language shift differ, the results presented in this paper express the group interview participants' opinions about the village as a whole.

A 300-word basic wordlist was also completed at each survey site for further work on dialectology and classification of Miqie among other Ngwi languages. Wordlists and interviews were recorded using the built-in microphone of a Zoom H2 digital recorder in 16-bit/44.1kHz WAV format, and wordlists are archived in *Kaipuleohone*, the University

of Hawai'i's digital ethnographic archive.[4] Not all interviews were recorded, depending on the noise level of the interview setting and whether the participants were comfortable being recorded. Because the recorded interviews contain identifying information throughout the interview, these were not submitted to the digital archive.

6. SURVEY RESULTS AND ANALYSIS. The survey results and analysis presented here are the compilation of the interview questionnaire results and the author and research assistant's observations while visiting the Miqie villages. Supplemental background information was obtained through library research and personal communication with many local government officials and NGO workers in the region.

6.1 CORE MIQIE REGION AND CONTACT SITUATION. The core Miqie region identified in this survey is a much smaller area than previously thought. The Miqie in the 42 villages named by participants do not necessarily have contact with each other, nor are they necessarily familiar with the location of other Miqie villages. The Miqie villages may be clustered together in groups of 2–4, and any given village may have a particular village in a different township where marriage between Miqie is common. Therefore relatives may be familiar with these specific locations and unfamiliar with other villages in the township. Because the Miqie villages are spread out among villages of different ethnicities, the level of contact with other groups is high, and Chinese is the lingua franca. The most prominent groups in this area include Han Chinese, Nasu, Lipo, and A-Hmao. Other groups in the Miqie core region and surrounding areas include Lolopo, Hmong, Honi, and Sanie. Table 2 is a summary of these groups' names, languages, and general language status.

Of the Ngwi languages spoke in this region, Nasu (Northern Ngwi) has the highest status and most government support in both Luquan and Wuding counties. Lipo and Lolopo (Central Ngwi) are languages represented by roughly half a million people with numerous dialects spread across northern and central Yunnan Prefecture (Lewis et al. 2014). With larger population numbers, language use of these varieties is vigorous at best, but threatened and endangered in many contact situations with Chinese and more prestigious Ngwi varieties, like Nasu. A handful of Honi (Southern Ngwi) villages are found in Wuding County, though the majority of this population is located in Southern Yunnan. Sanie, a severely endangered Northern Ngwi language spoken in the Kunming area, has a similar population size with the Miqie and similar patterns of language shift under intense contact (Bradley 2005). The Hmongic languages spoken in the area have vigorous use, more so than many Ngwi languages, as the A-Hmao and Hmong villages are more remotely located and have less contact with Chinese and fewer intermarriages overall. These groups all are represented in the same area where Miqie villages are interspersed, but their level of contact with Miqie varies—the most with Han Chinese, then Lipo.

The 11 Miqie villages (Table 3) visited in this survey vary in population size and social situation, and the author believes that this variation is representative of the Miqie situation as a whole.

6.2 INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSMISSION. Disruption of intergenerational transmission is widely regarded as the primary factor in language shift (Fishman 1991). The main thing to note about the Miqie situation is that the rate of intergenerational transmission varies from

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[4]Wordlists and selected materials are archived in Kaipuleohone's *Katie Gao Collection—Languages of China* http://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/handle/10125/33422.

TABLE 2. Ethnolinguistic groups in the Miqie core region and surrounding areas.

Group name (autonym)	Ethnicity *Minzu* 民族	Group name in Chinese	Language classification	Language name in Ethnologue	Language Status in Ethnologue
Han	Han	Han 汉	Sinitic, Mandarin, Southwest dialect	Mandarin [cmn]	National
Miqie	Yi	Micha 密岔	Tibeto-Burman, Ngwi-Burmese, Ngwi, Central	Miqie [yiq]	Shifting
Geipo	Yi	Micha 密岔	Tibeto-Burman, Ngwi-Burmese, Ngwi, Central	–	–
Lolopo	Yi	Bai Yi 白彝 'White Yi'	Tibeto-Burman, Ngwi-Burmese, Ngwi, Central	Lolopo [ycl]	Vigorous
Lipo	Lisu	Lisu 傈僳	Tibeto-Burman, Ngwi-Burmese, Ngwi, Central	Lipo [lpo]	Threatened
Nasu	Yi	Hei Yi 黑彝 'Black Yi'	Tibeto-Burman, Ngwi-Burmese, Ngwi, Northern	Wuding-Luquan Yi [ywq]	Developing
Sanie	Yi	Minglang 明朗 or Bai Yi 白彝 'White Yi'	Tibeto-Burman, Ngwi-Burmese, Ngwi, Northern	Sanie [ysy]	Moribund
Honi	Hani	Hani 哈尼	Tibeto-Burman, Ngwi-Burmese, Ngwi, Southern	Honi [how]	Vigorous
A-Hmao	Miao	Hua Miao 花苗 'Flowery Miao'	Hmong-Mien, Hmongic, Chuanqiandian	Large Flowery Miao [hmd]	Developing
Hmong	Miao	Bai Miao 白苗 'White Miao'	Hmong-Mien, Hmongic, Chuanqiandian	Chuanqiandian cluster Miao [cqd]	Developing

village to village. Of the 11 villages visited during this survey, seven reported that Miqie is the first language that children learn and that parents and grandparents generally use Miqie when speaking to children (Table 4).

Interview participants on behalf of the village were clear to point out that the L1 of the children is largely dependent on the makeup of the family unit. Intermarriage is accepted and common for Miqie, however, the percent of intermarried families differs per village. In villages such as Damituo and Shanju Dacun, there is no question that children will speak Miqie because the village is more than 90 percent ethnic Miqie and the language

TABLE 3. The 11 Miqie villages included in this survey, by county

	Village	County
1	Madi Shangcun	Fumin
2	Madi Xiacun	Fumin
3	Damituo	Luquan
4	Shanglaowu	Luquan
5	Xicun	Luquan
6	Luomian	Wuding
7	Shanju Dacun	Wuding
8	Yangjiacun	Wuding
9	Xiagubai	Wuding
10	Shedian Dacun	Wuding
11	Yangliuhe	Wuding

TABLE 4. Reported L1 of children in the Miqie village

	Village	*Reported L1 of children in village*		
		Miqie	Miqie & Chinese	Chinese
1	Madi Shangcun	x		
2	Madi Xiacun	x		
3	Damituo	x		
4	Shanglaowu	x		
5	Xicun			x
6	Luomian			x
7	Shanju Dacun	x		
8	Yangjiacun	x		
9	Xiagubai			x
10	Shedian Dacun	x		
11	Yangliuhe		x	

is still spoken by all generations. Non-ethnic Miqie who marry into these villages will learn enough Miqie to understand basic conversation and speak some simple phrases. However, in other villages, like Luomian, intermarriage is more prevalent and Miqie is not the primary language used in the village. Han, Lipo, and Hani—men and women, though more often women—have married into Luomian village, and Chinese is used regularly between neighbors and in the family unit. Only one village, Yangliuhe, reported that children acquire

Miqie and Chinese simultaneously. This is likely family-specific, especially if Han-Miqie intermarriage is becoming more common in a village that is primarily Miqie-speaking.

While all villages reported that some families are intermarried, the villages with the most intermarriages—Xicun and Xiagubai—are the villages where language shift to Chinese is nearly or already complete. Xicun, a large beautiful village with white-washed houses and paintings of traditional Yi festivals, is located off the main highway G108 between Kunming and Luquan (Figure 6). The village leader and elder who participated in the interview said Miqie has not been spoken in the village for 3–4 generations, and while the village as a whole identifies as 'Yi,' they have not identified as 'Miqie' in nearly 100 years. The elder said only a few current villagers are aware of this previous identity. In Xiagubai, the village ethnic makeup is about 50 percent Yi and 50 percent Han. Similar to Xicun, many of the older Yi in Xiagubai do not identify as Miqie, though perhaps their grandparents or great-grandparents did. Recently, some Miqie-speakers from nearby villages (like Shanju Dacun, Yangjiacun, and Luomian) have married into both Yi and Han families in Xiagubai. However these women report that they speak only Chinese to their children and only switch to speak Miqie when talking with others from their hometown.

FIGURE 6. Xicun, located off the China National Highway G108 from Kunming to Luquan, only identifies as 'Yi', as the Miqie language hasn't been spoken here for several generations.

Intermarriage with Han and Lipo is not new among the Miqie, but it has become more prevalent with the major government and economic reforms since the mid-1900s. Also, as the economy of China has rapidly developed since the Reform and Opening Up in the late 1970s, minorities in rural areas have been able to join the market economy by leaving for much of the year to work hard labor jobs in the towns and cities in order to send money back to their families who are maintaining the farms.

In situations of intermarriage where a Han person marries into a Miqie village, there is no social expectation that they will learn to speak Miqie, as all Miqie-speakers are also bilingual in the local Mandarin dialect. However many of these Han report that they at least understand some Miqie when it is spoken and can also speak some simple words and phrases. Lipo, on the other hand, is also a Central Ngwi language and is to some degree mutually intelligible with Miqie.[5] Miqie-Lipo intermarried families report that the Miqie

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[5]The degree to which Lipo and Miqie are mutually intelligible is not clear without further research among different dialects of Lipo and Miqie alike. Overall, the languages share over 50 percent basic vocabulary and differ very little in grammar construction. Because the Miqie and Lipo have lived in contact with each other for several centuries and have a similar history, the mutual intelligibility may be as much of a product of close contact and intermarriage as it is these languages' genetic relationship.

person speaks Miqie while the Lipo speaks Lipo, both of whom can understand but not speak the other language. Children who grow up in Miqie-Lipo households in Miqie villages are likely to be passively bilingual in Lipo. Miqie children not exposed to Lipo in the home report that they do not understand much of Lipo. Other non-mutually-intelligible Ngwi languages spoken by a few who marry into a Miqie village—though less common than Han and Lipo—include Nasu (Northern Ngwi) and Honi (Southern Ngwi). Like Han-Miqie intermarriages, these families say they speak mainly Chinese in the home.

Some Miqie men and women marry outside their village, most commonly to Han and Lipo people. Because Miqie is never used as a lingua franca in any situation outside of a majority-Miqie village, when Miqie men or women marry outside their village, they generally do not use Miqie in their new village. In a Lipo village, the Miqie person might still speak Miqie because the Lipo can understand, however Lipo is a wider-spoken language and more useful to learn to understand and speak. However, when a Miqie person marries a Han person, and lives in a Chinese-speaking village or moves to the town or city, the chances are even lower that their child will learn to speak or understand Miqie—especially if the child is raised by their Han grandparents.

Intermarriage seems to be the primary 'disrupting' factor in intergenerational transmission, but the survey interviews also revealed a different kind of transmission disruption. There are cases where some families consciously choose to speak/practice Chinese with their children so that they will be more prepared when they begin school at four or five years old. In the villages where Miqie is reported as the primary L1, these children are quickly immersed in Chinese in preschool or elementary school, as Chinese is the language of instruction and the common language among all the different ethnic groups who attend a local school. Some children struggle more than others when adapting to this all-Chinese environment, and many parents believe that the local minority language could be a hindrance to the child learning Chinese. It is not uncommon then, if a family speaks mainly Chinese in the home, yet the village as a whole still primarily uses Miqie, then the children will acquire both languages, though their dominant language is likely to be Chinese.

6.3 DOMAINS OF LANGUAGE USE

6.3.1 MARKET. The Miqie villages in the survey shared similar experiences regarding language use in different domains, especially concerning Chinese as the lingua franca. Market days are held once a week, the largest being in the county seat (i.e., Wuding town or Luquan town), and many townships hold their own market days as well. Miqie villagers travel to their nearest market town for different reasons; for some it is more convenient than others, depending on accessibility to the main roads and availability of transportation. Market days involve Miqie farmers taking their fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, textiles, and other goods to town to sell, or if not selling, then going to buy goods or equipment to take back to their village. The only situation when Miqie would be spoken in the market town is if two Miqie people who know each other meet; otherwise, Chinese is spoken. Other ethnic groups who come to town on market day have the same situation. However, the women in some groups have ethnic clothing accessories or hairstyles that immediately identify them with fellow members of their group—such as Nasu women's black or navy blue headdress or A-Hmao women's distinct twisted bun worn on the top of the head. Because Miqie do not have such clothing, interactions in Miqie are restricted to others who are already known to the speaker.

6.3.2 EDUCATION. Some of the interview participants were primary school teachers and were able to give insight into Miqie children's school situation. Children usually start kindergarten (not required) or first grade at ages 4–6, and education is required through middle school (grade 9). None of the villages surveyed had a kindergarten *you'eryuan* 幼儿园 in the village itself, but several had a primary school near the village administration government offices. Children from all the villages in a particular village administration will attend the primary school, and it is common that many minority children are not able to speak Chinese when they first start school. The teachers said that usually the A-Hmao children have the hardest time adjusting because they rarely hear Chinese in their villages, but that the Miqie children, even if they don't speak Chinese, can usually understand some. Teachers are required to speak only Chinese in the classrooms. However, sometimes a minority-language-speaking teacher accommodates children who are in their first few years of primary school. This rarely happens for Miqie children because there are so few Miqie teachers in the primary schools.

Beyond primary school, children attend and board at the middle school in the township or county seat. Because a middle school may have upward of 300 students, Miqie students usually have only a few fellow Miqie students. Many students graduate middle school and return to their village to work, but if they decide to attend high school or trade school, the only options are in the county seat or in Kunming. Education in this part of Yunnan is exclusively in Mandarin Chinese with emphasis on English as a foreign language. Teenage Miqie students who are away at school only have the opportunity to speak Miqie when talking with their family on the phone or when returning to their village during holidays. Of all the schools located in the core Miqie region, there is no sanctioned bilingual education or language classes in any ethnic minority language.

6.3.3 OTHER DOMAINS. In many language shift situations, it is common that language use may shift as a whole to a majority language yet is retained in specific domains related to tradition, like songs, chants, and ceremonies. However in the case of Miqie, the language is not retained in these domains. The Yi as a whole are known for their *jiuge* 酒歌 drinking songs, and drinking and singing is certainly a part of Miqie society, especially for festivals like New Year's Spring Festival 春节 and the Torch Festival 火把节, as well as weddings and other celebrations. Miqie sing these popularized Yi songs in Chinese or in another Ngwi language they are familiar with—mostly Lipo, but sometimes Nasu/Nuosu, as local media might produce MP3s of these 'Standard Yi' songs. In the villages surveyed, no one reported that songs are sung in Miqie. As one interview participant from Madi Village Administration said, "Songs don't sound good in Miqie, that's why we sing in Lisu [Lipo]." This not only indicates possible language attitudes toward the use of Miqie, but also the lack of a typical traditional domain where minority languages are often used.

The Miqie, like the other Central Yi groups of north-central Yunnan (Lipo and Lolopo namely), have been assimilated and living among Han Chinese since the establishment of the *tusi* 土司 military jurisdiction rule in the Yuan and Ming dynasties over 400 years ago (Harrell 2001). The Miqie do not retain many ceremonial traditions associated with more conservative Yi groups, but rather do not follow a particular religion but take part in the more syncretistic religious practices typical of the area: a blend of Buddhism-Daoism-Confucianism and local folk practices. The Miqie included in this survey report that they have or know of a Miqie *bimo* or shaman, a religious leader more prominent in Northern and Southern Yi groups. A small percentage of Miqie are Christians, an influence from early 20th century missionaries and large numbers of Lipo, Nasu, and A-Hmao Christians.

Chinese is the primary language of religious practices for the Miqie as they have essentially adopted local Han practices.

Of the 11 villages surveyed, there was one 80-year-old elder in Yangjiacun who had been trained in the traditional chanting of the *Chamu*, a series of Yi creation myths. The elder said that his chanting was imperfect and he had not recited the stories in many years. He also was not aware of any other Miqie who had been trained to chant the creation stories or any other ceremonial passage. Fluent in Miqie, Lipo, and Chinese, the elder could not directly translate the chants into spoken Miqie, Lipo or Chinese as he said he was trained to memorize the specific sounds of the chant (much of which he could not remember). The Miqie people in the room listening to his chant said they had not heard this traditional chant in many years and also could not understand the language of the chant. The elder could explain the general meaning of the chant in spoken Miqie, however he could not provide a direct translation. This domain of traditional language and knowledge is more active in other Yi groups, however for the Miqie it has largely disappeared.[6]

6.3.4 MIGRANT WORKERS. Migrant workers are not a 'domain' of language, but are a significant category of the Miqie population, and the practice of *dagong* 打工 (leaving the village to find seasonal manual labor in a large town or city) affects the current and future vitality of the language. The interviews included questions about the number and demographics of villagers who *dagong*, and the responses indicate that during the year, as many as 20–40 percent of the village population may be away to *dagong*. Besides Kunming, villagers may even travel as far away as Xinjiang, Guangdong, and Shanghai, especially to find work in factories. Both men and women ages 16 to 30 are the most common age group who move away for work. While this kind of work allows the migrant workers to send funds home to their parents in the village, it disconnects this middle generation from the elderly and children who are active Miqie speakers in the village. The Miqie interview participants varied in their answers regarding the language use of the workers who return home to the village. Depending on their own experience with a relative or neighbor, some said there was no difference in the person's Miqie language ability from when they left to when they returned, others said the person's Miqie accent changed slightly, and some respondents said the worker speaks more Chinese upon returning home. The variation in responses indicate that there is likely to be individual variation in the degree to which *dagong* affects Miqie use, variation that may depend on the work situation, length of time away from the village, and personal choices about language use. Sometimes a Miqie migrant worker is married in the city and does not move back to the village, and within their nuclear family, Miqie is not likely to be transmitted to the next generation. Overall, when villagers leave the village to *dagong*, their exposure to Miqie decreases from hearing it every day to virtually hearing none. This situation is not unique to the Miqie, but is similar among the different ethnic groups in the region. However because Miqie is more advanced in language shift than some other groups, the large migrant worker population is likely to have a greater effect on the village makeup and future speakers of Miqie.

6.4 VILLAGE LOCATION AND LINGUISTIC VITALITY. Bearing in mind that the linguistic vitality of Miqie depends on the village and appears to range from 'vital,' with all generations speaking the language (as in Shanju Dacun), to 'extinct,' with no speakers of the language

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[6]The author recorded several of these chants, 1–3 minutes each, which are archived in the *Katie Gao Collection— Languages of China* in University of Hawai'i's digital ethnographic archive Kaipuleohone (kaipuleohone.org).

for several generations (as in Xicun), there are additional factors that can be taken into consideration. For example, the physical location of the village appears to have an effect on the social factors affecting language shift, such as intermarriage, education, and work availability. Of the 11 villages visited during the survey period, five were easily accessed from the main road by public bus, two were accessible by private vehicle where road conditions are fairly good, and five were accessible by private vehicle (like a motorcycle or tractor) on poor road conditions (Table 5). These categorizations were determined by the author's experience traveling to these villages.

TABLE 5. Village accessibility to a main road and reported intergenerational transmission

	Village	**Accessibility of village to a main road**			Reported intergenerational transmission
		LEVEL 1	**LEVEL 2**	**LEVEL 3**	
		Easy access to main road; accessible by public bus	**Accessible by private vehicle; acceptable road conditions**	**Accessible by private vehicle; poor road conditions**	
1	Madi Shangcun	x			Some children speak Miqie
2	Madi Xiacun	x			Some children speak Miqie
3	Damituo			x	All children speak Miqie
4	Shanglaowu		x		All children speak Miqie
5	Xicun	x			No speakers of Miqie

Village accessibility to a main road is key to a village's economic development, which is something that was expressed several times by survey participants. When villagers can access the market town, they can buy and sell goods much more easily, children can have better opportunities in school, and there are more opportunities for contact with other groups, including potential business partners and eligible spouses. These factors are, unfortunately, also reasons that Miqie language use is shifting to Chinese, as speaking fluent Chinese has clear economic advantage over speaking Miqie. Table 5 also shows there may be a correlation between rate of intergenerational transmission and the location of the village to the main road. The villages with easy access by public bus (1, 2, 5, 6, 10) show the greatest degrees of language shift while the villages not as accessible and with poor road conditions (3, 7, 8, 9, 11) report that all children in the village can speak Miqie. Further research is needed to corroborate this observation.

The road accessibility factor affecting language shift is becoming more evident as larger highways and expressways are being built through traditional village areas. For example, Map 4 shows the location of the villages in the survey region, including two main highways,

G108 and G5. At the time of this survey in 2012–2013, G5 was not complete, so traveling to Wuding from Kunming was routed through Luquan, which could be a 2–3 hour drive. Now, at the writing of this paper, the G5 highway is completed: a towering concrete expressway through the mountains which cuts the trip to less than one hour. Major road projects like this allow the people living in traditional village areas to have work opportunities on the construction of the road itself as well as the benefits of access to cities, education, and employment once the road is finished. This economic opportunity unfortunately is at the expense of minority languages, which lose priority once villagers have convenient access to life outside.

7. ASSESSING LINGUISTIC VITALITY

7.1 (EXPANDED) GRADED INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSMISSION SCALE. Beginning with Fishman's (1991) Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS), there have been several different indices proposed for assessing the linguistic vitality of a particular language, with the purpose to better categorize and compare different levels of language endangerment. GIDS and its successor Expanded-GIDS (Lewis and Simons 2010) are single-table assessment tools that use a 0–8 scale with descriptions for each level, taking intergenerational transmission, domains of use, literacy, and political status into consideration (Table 6). Because Miqie is not a written language, it automatically is categorized at 6a 'Vigorous' and below, however, the immediate problem when using this scale is that a different level could be applied to different villages and assessing Miqie as a whole cannot fit into a category. For example, Luomian village might be labeled as 7 'Shifting' while Xicun's situation could be considered 10 'extinct'.

7.2 UNESCO'S NINE FACTORS. The UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Unit's ad hoc committee of linguists took a more detailed approach to assessing language vitality (UNESCO 2003). The UNESCO scale proposes nine determining factors, each graded 0–5, that are scored together to assess the linguistic vitality and degree of language endangerment in a given community. These nine factors (Table 7) are adaptable to local situations, but in any case, the assessment scale assumes that a small-scale language-use survey has been conducted at the local level. Opposite to EGIDS, the higher rating indicates a more viable language while a lower rating indicates a higher degree of endangerment. UNESCO's assessment scale adds factors concerning language attitudes and existing documentation that EGIDS does not address, though this raises the question of whether documentation is an actual factor in language vitality. This nine-factor method of assessing linguistic vitality is used to rate the level of endangerment in the Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger.[7]

In 2011, the Chinese Academy for Social Sciences (CASS) provided feedback on UNESCO's method for assessing vitality (UNESCO 2011). For example, determining the proportion of speakers of a specific language within the total population (Factor 3) is problematic for China because of how the population is counted. Official population counts do not differentiate beyond the macro ethnic group category, and because there are still many unreported and undescribed languages in more remote areas of the county, providing an estimate to speaker numbers and proportion of speakers is quite difficult. Concerning Factor 7 about the government's position toward minority language use, CASS suggests there

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[7] http://www.unesco.org/culture/languages-atlas/.

TABLE 6. Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (Lewis & Simons 2010)

Level	Label	Description
0	International	The language is used internationally for a broad range of functions.
1	National	The language is used in education, work, mass media, government at the nationwide level.
2	Regional	The language is used for local and regional mass media and governmental services.
3	Trade	The language is used for local and regional work by both insiders and outsiders.
4	Educational	Literacy in the language is being transmitted through a system of public education.
5	Written	The language is used orally by all generations and is effectively used in written form in parts of the community.
6a	Vigorous	The language is used orally by all generations and is being learned by children as their first language.
6b	Threatened	The language is used orally by all generations but only some of the child-bearing generation are transmitting it to their children.
7	Shifting	The child-bearing generation knows the language well enough to use it among themselves but none are transmitting it to their children.
8a	Moribund	The only remaining active speakers of the language are members of the grandparent generation.
8b	Nearly Extinct	The only remaining speakers of the language are members of the grandparent generation or older who have little opportunity to use the language.
9	Dormant	The language serves as a reminder of heritage identity for an ethnic community. No one has more than symbolic proficiency.
10	Extinct	No one retains a sense of ethnic identity associated with the language, even for symbolic purposes.

TABLE 7. UNESCO's nine factors for assessing language vitality and endangerment. These factors are each scored 0–5 based on descriptors found in UNESCO (2003).

Factor 1	Intergenerational Language Transmission
Factor 2	Absolute Number of Speakers
Factor 3	Proportion of Speakers within the total population
Factor 4	Trends in Existing Language Domains
Factor 5	Response to New Domains and Media
Factor 6	Materials for Language Education and Literacy
Factor 7	Governmental and Institutional Language Attitudes And Policies, including Official Status and Use
Factor 8	Community Members' Attitudes Toward their own Language
Factor 9	Amount and Quality of Documentation

should be a scoring difference between governmental policies that exist versus existing policies that are enforced. Given the diverse ethnolinguistic situation in China, governmental policy toward minority languages is largely subjective and is applied (or not applied) differently in different areas among different minority groups. In the case of Miqie, there is not a specific policy that protects or promotes this small language. However, in autonomous pre-

fectures or counties—like Chuxiong Yi Autonomous Prefecture and Luquan Yi and Miao Autonomous County—there is more government support for minority language development, but this support is mostly focused on traditional script translation and development. The Miqie speak a Central Ngwi/Yi language, which like other related languages like Lipo, Lolopo, and Lalo, do not have a traditional script and are not mutually intelligible with Nasu, a Northern Yi language, on which the Chuixiong Yi standard script is based (Bradley 2001).

CASS also proposed three additional factors that play a significant role in the assessment of minority languages in China (Table 8). For regions like Yunnan that have high levels of linguistic diversity, whether these languages are concentrated, mixed, or scattered among other groups will affect how a likely a language is maintained. Factor 12 also deals with geography, as many of China's minorities also live outside of China's national borders. For example, Kazakh, Hmong/Miao, and Lisu all have a large presence in border nations as well some international immigrant populations. Finally, Factor 11, linguistic variation within a language should also be considered for assessing vitality. While this may be more of a political concern about China's 'language' vs. 'dialect' terminology, it's likely that a language with more internal variation is more susceptible to language shift because there may not be an accepted standard variety in use.

TABLE 8. Three additional factors added by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences for assessing linguistic vitality and endangerment in China (UNESCO 2011)

Factor 10	Distribution of the language community: concentrated, mixed (living together with other ethnic groups), scattered (the more concentrated a community is, the safer the language)
Factor 11	Degree of internal variation of the language: more variation, lower vitality
Factor 12	Distribution of languages transnationally (transnational languages, according to many studies, tend to be better preserved)

Assessing Miqie's vitality is problematic for some of the reasons that CASS brought up. Regardless, the population of Miqie is a tiny percentage whether you look at their group population within China as a whole or at the 8 million population of the Yi macro ethnic group. Factor 10 is perhaps the most telling and speaks to the variation in levels of language endangerment shown in this survey. The Miqie are not a concentrated group, but rather are interspersed with other ethnic groups and even scattered to the extent that most people in one Miqie village don't know about the existence of the majority of other Miqie villages. According to CASS's assessment, the more scattered the group, the less 'safe' the language is.

7.3 LANGUAGE ENDANGERMENT INDEX (LEI). The newest scale for assessing language vitality, the Language Endangerment Index (LEI) was developed for the Endangered Languages Catalogue (ELCat), represented online by the Endangered Languages Project[8] (Lee & Van Way 2014). LEI is unique from other assessment scales because it weighs the Intergenerational Transmission score twice as much as the other factors. This follows Fishman's (1991) thesis that intergenerational transmission is not just a factor of language shift but *the primary* factor—absolute number of speakers, speaker number trends, and domain usage are not necessarily defining elements to language shift, but they are indicators. LEI also

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[8]www.endangeredlanguages.com.

takes into account that information for each factor may not be available for a particular language, so the final score also denotes the 'level of certainty' for the degree of endangerment listed in the catalogue. LEI scores the four factors on a 0–5 scale, where 0 is 'safe' and 5 is 'critically endangered.' Table 9 is a summary of the factors and descriptions of the scores.

TABLE 9. The Language Endangerment Index (LEI) factors and score descriptions (Lee & Van Way 2014).

	5 **Critically Endangered**	**4** **Severely Endangered**	**3** **Endangered**	**2** **Threatened**	**1** **Vulnerable**	**0** **Safe**
Factor 1: Intergenerational Transmission	There are only a few elderly speakers.	Many of the grandparent generation speak the language, but the younger people generally do not.	Some adults in the community are speakers, but the language is not spoken by children.	Most adults in the community are speakers, but children generally are not.	Most adults and some children are speakers.	All members of the community, including children, speak the language.
Factor 2: Absolute Number of Speakers	1–9 speakers	10–99 speakers	100–999 speakers	1000–9999 speakers	10,000–99,000 speakers	> 100,000 speakers
Factor 3: Speaker Number Trends	A small percentage of the community speaks the language, and speaker numbers are decreasing very rapidly.	Less than half of the community speaks the language, and speaker numbers are decreasing at an accelerated pace.	Only about half of community members speak the language. Speaker numbers are decreasing steadily, but not at an accelerated pace.	A majority of community members speak the language. Speaker numbers are gradually decreasing.	Most members of the community speak the language. Speaker numbers may be decreasing, but very slowly.	Almost all community members speak the language, and speaker numbers are stable or increasing.
Factor 4: Domains of Use	Used only in a few very specific domains, such as in ceremonies, songs, prayer, proverbs, or certain limited domestic activities.	Used mainly just in the home and/or with family, and may not be the primary language even in these domains for many community members	Used mainly just in the home and/or with family, but remains the primary language of these domains for many community members.	Used in some non-official domains along with other languages, and remains the primary language used in the home for many community members.	Used in most domains except for official ones such as government, mass media, education, etc.	Used in most domains, including official ones such as government, mass media, education, etc.

The LEI is similar to UNESCO's nine factors as it provides descriptions for factors and subsequently a total score, which can then be compared to other languages and language situations. However, each of LEI's factors reflect a specific level of endangerment and a level of certainty if information isn't available. The formula for the final score and the score interpretations are shown in Table 10. The following section will use this method to assess Miqie's level of endangerment with the new information provided by this survey.

TABLE 10. LEI formula for evaluating level of endangerment and score interpretation (Lee & Van Way 2014)

LEI Formula:
Level of endangerment = [(intergenerational transmission score x 2) + absolute number of speakers score + speaker number trends score + domains of use score] / total possible score based on number of factors used x 100

Language Endangerment Index	Level of Certainty *based on available evidence*
81–100% Critically Endangered	25 points possible (100% certain)
61–80% Severely Endangered	20 points possible (80% certain)
41–60% Endangered	15 points possible (60% certain)
21–40% Threatened	10 points possible (40% certain)
1–20% Vulnerable	5 points possible (20% certain)
0% Safe	

7.4 ASSESSING MIQIE'S LEVEL OF ENDANGERMENT USING LEI. The Language Endangerment Index is an appropriate tool to use for assessing both the level of endangerment at the village level and, by taking an average of those scores, the Miqie language as a whole. Using the LEI's criteria summarized in §7.3 and in Lee & Van Way (2014), each village can receive a separate score in the four factors—intergenerational transmission, absolute number of speakers, speaker number trends, and domains of language use—leading to a more accurate assessment than a researcher simply choosing an assessment level from a defined list. Table 11 is a list of the 11 villages included in this survey with endangerment scores for each factor and an overall score for level of endangerment.

Of the 11 villages, the level of endangerment is *Threatened* for six, *Endangered* for three, *Critically Endangered* for one—with an additional village labeled as *Extinct* where no scoring was possible because the language is not spoken by any generation in any domain. Taking an average of the remaining 10 villages, the overall score is 42%, which by LEI's divisions, is categorized as *Endangered*. The scoring is consistent with the author's subjective assessment of language endangerment in these villages, where it is the most critically endangered in Xiagubai and maintained the best (though still threatened) in the more remote villages of Shanju Dacun, Yangjiacun, and Damituo.

8. DISCUSSION & IMPLICATIONS. The villages included in this survey exhibit various levels of linguistic vitality depending on specific social factors within and around the village, as well as the physical location of the village itself. Intermarriage and relative accessibility to a major road seem to be the primary indicators of the degree of language shift. Miqie

TABLE 11. The 11 Miqie villages included in the survey evaluated using the Language Endangerment Index.

Village	Intergenerational Transmission	Absolute Number of Speakers	Speaker Number Trends	Domains of Use	Level of Endangerment
	Factors of Endangerment				
(1) Madi Shangcun	1 Vulnerable	3 Endangered	2 Threatened	3 Endangered	(40) THREATENED
(2) Madi Xiacun	1 Vulnerable	3 Endangered	2 Threatened	3 Endangered	(40) THREATENED
(3) Damituo	0 Safe	3 Endangered	1 Vulnerable	3 Endangered	(28) THREATENED
(4) Shanglaowu	0 Safe	3 Endangered	2 Threatened	3 Endangered	(32) THREATENED
(5) Xicun	NA	NA	NA	NA	(–) EXTINCT
(6) Luomian	2 Threatened	3 Endangered	3 Endangered	4 Severely Endangered	(56) ENDANGERED
(7) Shanju Dacun	0 Safe	3 Endangered	1 Vulnerable	3 Endangered	(28) THREATENED
(8) Yangjiacun	0 Safe	3 Endangered	1 Vulnerable	3 Endangered	(28) THREATENED
(9) Xiagubai	3 Endangered	5 Critically Endangered	5 Critically Endangered	5 Critically Endangered	(84) CRITICALLY ENDANGERED
(10) Shedian Dacun	1 Vulnerable	3 Endangered	2 Threatened	3 Endangered	(40) ENDANGERED
(11) Yangliuhe	1 Vulnerable	3 Endangered	2 Threatened	4 Severely Endangered	(44) ENDANGERED

villages share a similar situation to one another in that the speakers do not use Miqie outside their village, and so the rate of language shift is accelerated as more Miqie families are adopting Chinese as the primary language of the family. Whether a result of intermarriage, educational/job incentives, or moving to a city, the shift to Chinese is largely due to economic reasons, and for some Miqie people there is seemingly little or no benefit to retaining the Miqie language. Survey participants expressed both positive and negative attitudes toward the fact that many Miqie children are not learning to speak their language, but the most common comment and overall impression was that language shift is just a natural phenomenon and the way modern society is progressing. While some concerned parents and grandparents make a conscious effort to maintain the use of Miqie in the home, there is not an overwhelming concern at a village level that this situation needs to be addressed.

This field survey report draws a number of important questions to the forefront of linguistic vitality assessment. First is the question of 'community,' a term often used in language documentation work to refer to a particular group of minority-language speakers. However, in a semi-scattered population situation such as the Miqie, there is not necessarily a sense of community between villages, especially if they are not in contact or are not

aware that the other exists. The term 'speech community' is problematic in sociolinguistics, as it has been used in the sociolinguistic literature to reference both small and large groups, geographically and/or socially bound (Patrick 2002). Because the total Miqie population lacks a unified community, both geographically and socially, it is fitting to discuss the sociolinguistic factors of language shift at a micro (village and family) level and consider these factors when drawing generalizations of the group as a whole. Assessing linguistic vitality should also be addressed at a more micro level when the information is available and when planning a language survey. The LEI assessment tool provides a way to assign scores for various levels of endangerment in four different factors that are indicators of language shift in any language or geographic region. This tool allows for assessment both at the macro and micro level, as this report shows that an individual score can be given for each village.

Language shift information is not only important for comparing crosslinguistic endangerment situations, but it also should be central in the planning of future documentation of a language. As a language survey is the first step toward a larger descriptive project, the results of this survey emphasize that the documentation of sociolinguistic information regarding language use in different contexts—including multilingualism, ethnography, speaker identities, language competencies, etc.—are of great importance to understanding the language and speakers of the language (Childs, Good & Mitchell 2014). Language shift is often due to rapidly changing socioeconomic conditions. In the case of Miqie, these conditions include the building of a new road, school, or factory. These socioeconomic changes affect villages at different rates and different times, and consequently the language becomes extinct one village at a time. Without adequate documentation, information regarding the social context in which the language is spoken (and not spoken) will disappear even faster than the language itself.

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APPENDIX 1. MIQIE VILLAGES POPULATIONS AND ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS

州市	县	乡镇	村委会	村子	人口
昆明市	富民县	罗免彝族苗族自治乡	麻地	上村	272
昆明市	富民县	罗免彝族苗族自治乡	麻地	下村	201
昆明市	富民县	罗免彝族苗族自治乡	麻地	哨村	214
昆明市	禄劝彝族苗族自治县	屏山街道办事处	砚瓦	下石灰窑	195
昆明市	禄劝彝族苗族自治县	屏山街道办事处	岔河	大弥拖	521
昆明市	禄劝彝族苗族自治县	屏山街道办事处	岔河	青龙箐	326
昆明市	禄劝彝族苗族自治县	屏山街道办事处	硝井	西村	494
昆明市	禄劝彝族苗族自治县	屏山街道办事处	地多	平田	144
昆明市	禄劝彝族苗族自治县	屏山街道办事处	地多	白栎棵	155
昆明市	禄劝彝族苗族自治县	屏山街道办事处	地多	盐塘	112
昆明市	禄劝彝族苗族自治县	汤郎乡	羊槽村	羊槽村	104
昆明市	禄劝彝族苗族自治县	翠华镇	新华	上老悟	282
楚雄彝族自治州	武定县	狮山镇	吆鹰	水碓房	143
楚雄彝族自治州	武定县	狮山镇	铺西	杨柳河	446
楚雄彝族自治州	武定县	狮山镇	铺西	大石板	83
楚雄彝族自治州	武定县	狮山镇	铺西	新村	110
楚雄彝族自治州	武定县	狮山镇	铺西	中村	158
楚雄彝族自治州	武定县	狮山镇	铺西	白沙	257
楚雄彝族自治州	武定县	狮山镇	恕德	恕德村	364
楚雄彝族自治州	武定县	狮山镇	古柏村	下古柏	431
楚雄彝族自治州	武定县	狮山镇	古柏村	罗免村	236
楚雄彝族自治州	武定县	狮山镇	古柏村	杨家村	314
楚雄彝族自治州	武定县	狮山镇	古柏村	山居大村	348
楚雄彝族自治州	武定县	狮山镇	新村	新村	114
楚雄彝族自治州	武定县	狮山镇	新村	大村	171
楚雄彝族自治州	武定县	狮山镇	新村	胡家村	134
楚雄彝族自治州	武定县	狮山镇	新村	燕子窝	105
楚雄彝族自治州	武定县	狮山镇	羊旧	羊旧关	612
楚雄彝族自治州	武定县	狮山镇	贺铭	南山村	215
楚雄彝族自治州	武定县	狮山镇	贺铭	麦地山	344
楚雄彝族自治州	武定县	狮山镇	椅子甸	毕租	127
楚雄彝族自治州	武定县	狮山镇	椅子甸	糯米喳	174
楚雄彝族自治州	武定县	狮山镇	椅子甸	大新庄	185
楚雄彝族自治州	武定县	狮山镇	唐家	箐头	174
楚雄彝族自治州	武定县	高桥镇	老滔	赊甸小村	131
楚雄彝族自治州	武定县	高桥镇	老滔	麦岔村	158
楚雄彝族自治州	武定县	高桥镇	大村	麦岔村	465
楚雄彝族自治州	武定县	高桥镇	花乔	杨柳河	293
楚雄彝族自治州	武定县	高桥镇	花乔	永兆下村	147
楚雄彝族自治州	武定县	高桥镇	花乔	永兆中村	192
楚雄彝族自治州	武定县	高桥镇	花乔	窝堵新村	397
楚雄彝族自治州	武定县	高桥镇	花乔	窝堵大村	705

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