

## Re: How close is Vietnamese to Mandarin or Cantonese?

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*Source:* <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.lang/2005-05/msg00892.html>

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- *From:* "Peter T. Daniels" <[grammatim@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:grammatim@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx)>
  - *Date:* Fri, 20 May 2005 13:22:53 GMT
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benlizross wrote:

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> Peter T. Daniels wrote:

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>> Lee Sau Dan wrote:

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>>> >>>>> "benlizross" == benlizross <[benlizro@xxxxxxxx](mailto:benlizro@xxxxxxxx)> writes:

>>>>

>>>>> FYI, "typhoon" is [t'Oi22 fUN55] in Cantonese. So, if you

>>>>> think "typhoon" came from Cantonese, you not only have to

>>>>> explain the discrepancy in the final "n", but also the

>>>>> wrongly spelt diphthong in the first syllable.

>>>>>

>>>>> Can you point to any English word that ends with, or even

>>>>> contains, the sequence "oong" /uwN/? -- Peter T. Daniels

>>>>> [grammatim@xxxxxxxx](mailto:grammatim@xxxxxxxx)

>>>>>

>>>> benlizross> Is every little phonotactic gap like this assumed to

>>>> benlizross> be the result of a Rule of English Phonology? I

>>>> benlizross> believe the Aussies have /uN/ in "boong". (And maybe

>>>> benlizross> some sinophiles pronounce names like "Fung" and "Sung"

>>>> benlizross> that way.) Even if we imagine that /uwN/ is somehow

>>>> benlizross> impossible, would not /uN/ be a possible English form

>>>> benlizross> for the Cantonese word? FWIW OED has an 1806 citation

>>>> benlizross> in which the word is spelled <ty-foong>.

>>>>>

>>> I'm trying to explain to LSD that absence of /N/ in the English word

>>> does not require absence of /N/ in the source language. The /uN/

>>> sequence in the source language (for instance, Cantonese) should yield

>>> /uwn/ in English.

>>>>

>> What I'm questioning is whether you have a theory which predicts

>> exactly this outcome. And I don't see it so far.

There can't be a "theory" unless there's a pattern. What are some other [-uwN] words that have been borrowed by English? /uwN/ doesn't exist in English, so it has to come in differently. ("Boong" was mentioned here a few days ago -- as an insulting term for Australian native?, which makes

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it an oddity, an "expressive," if you will, outside normal phonology as "Bach" is.)

If, of course, Australian English has a plethora of words borrowed from Australian languages that end in -oong, then a new (Firthian) subsystem has arisen, and if "typhoon" had been borrowed in Australia from Cantonese in the last century or so, it probably would have been "typhoong."

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Peter T. Daniels grammatim@xxxxxxx

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• *Follow-Ups:*

- ◆ *Re: How close is Vietnamese to Mandarin or Cantonese?*  
◇ From: John Atkinson
- ◆ *Re: How close is Vietnamese to Mandarin or Cantonese?*  
◇ From: benlizross

• *References:*

- ◆ *Re: How close is Vietnamese to Mandarin or Cantonese?*  
◇ From: ekkilu
- ◆ *Re: How close is Vietnamese to Mandarin or Cantonese?*  
◇ From: Lee Sau Dan
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