

Question 22: The house can't eat you

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This problem involves the Nung language of northeastern Vietnam, spoken by about a million people and related to the Thai, Lao, Isan, Shan, and Zhuang languages of Southeast Asia in the Tai-Kadai family. It is not related to Chinese, Vietnamese, Khmer, Hmong, Malay, or Burmese, so far as we know. In this problem, the Nùng Phạn Slinh variety of Nung will be used. Note that in this language, word order is fairly fixed.

Study the following sentences in Nung with their corresponding English translations.

For your information, the marks above vowels indicate tone and the length of the vowel. The hook on the u and o (ṵ and o̰) indicates a central vowel, while đ is pronounced like a 'd' (ordinary d is pronounced 'z!'). However, you do not need to know how to pronounce Nung in order to solve the problem, but you should reproduce the diacritic marks accurately in your answers.

Cáu ca vừhn nhahng kíhn.	I was about to continue to eat it.
Cáu cháhn slòng páy mi?	Do I truly want to go?
Cáu mi slày kíhn.	I don't have to eat it.
Cáu ngám hểt pehn tể.	I did it like that just now.
Cáu tan đohc hảnh mừng.	I only saw you.
Cáu vừhn nhahng bô sạhm tảnh hểt hơn.	I also continue to build the house alone.
Da kíhn!	Don't eat it!
Da khải hơn!	Don't sell the house!
Mừn chóng ca cháhn fải khải.	Then she truly was about to have to sell it.
Mừn mi cháhn đày non.	She truly can't sleep.
Mừn náhc-thày chóng bô sạhm kíhn.	Then she also just previously ate it.
Mừng náhc-thày slòng tảnh páy.	You wanted to go alone just previously.

E1. Translate the following into English: (12 points)

- (a) Cáu cháhn đày non. (2)
- (b) Da páy non! (2)
- (c) Mừn bô sạhm mi slòng hểt hơn mi? (4)
- (d) Mừn ngám bô sạhm páy hơn. (4)

E2. Translate the following into Nung. (18 points)

- (a) I wasn't about to eat it just previously. (4)
- (b) She didn't have to eat it alone like that just now. (5)
- (c) The house truly can't eat you. (4)
- (d) Then were you also about to go just previously? (5)