

A Reference Grammar of the Puxi Variety of Qiang

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- This presentation outlines my research, which is an attempt to produce a lasting record of a dying language, the Puxi variety of the Qiang language.
- Beyond cultural preservation, this research provides empirical data for comparative research and the reconstruction of Proto-Qiang and Proto-Qiangic. By extension, this work has implications for the reconstruction of Proto-Tibeto-Burman and even Proto-Sino-Tibetan.

Outline:

- i. Introduction
- ii. Phonology
- iii. Morphology
- iv. Syntax
- V. Discourse

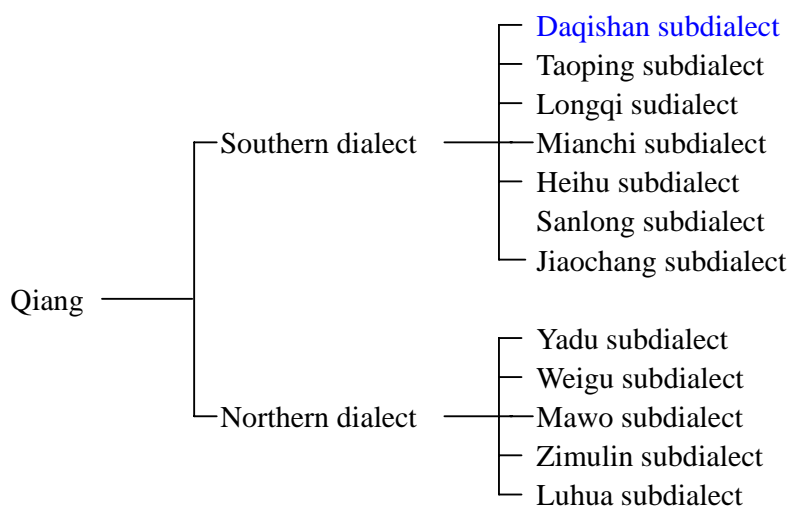
1. Introduction

Geographic position and Demographics

- Broadly speaking, there are 306,072 Qiang people in the Aba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture in the north-western part of Sichuan Province (四川阿壩藏族羌族自治州), China (2000 census).
- The Qiang language is spoken by about 80 thousand Qiang (羌族) and Tibetan people (藏族).
- The Qiang language belongs to the Qiangic sub-branch (羌語支) of Tibeto-Burman family (藏緬語族), Sino-Tibetan stock (漢藏語系).
- Puxi is a township located in the south-eastern part of Li County; hence the name of the dialect is essentially a geographic term.
- More than 2,000 people of the Qiang nationality(羌族), who mainly speak the Qiang language, live there.

Language and Dialects

- The Qiang language is divided into two dialects, the Northern dialect and the Southern dialect.
- The Puxi variety belongs to the Daqishan subdialect (大岐山土語).



2. Phonology

- The Puxi variety has no tones, but has a complex sound system:
- There are 33 consonants,
- The consonants can form 38 clusters.

Consonants: 33

	Bilabial	Dental	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar	Uvular
Voiceless stop	p	t			k	q
Aspirated stop	p ^h	t ^h			k ^h	q ^h
Voiced stop	b	d			g	
Voiceless affricate		ts	tʂ	tɕ		
Aspirated affricate		ts ^h	tʂ ^h	tɕ ^h		
Voiced affricate		dz	dʐ	dʑ		
Voiceless fricative	f	s	ʂ	ɕ		χ
Voiced fricative	(v)	z	ʐ	(ʑ)		ʁ
Nasal	m	n		ɲ	ŋ	
Lateral		l				
Approximant	(w)			(j)		

- Vowels: 12

	front	mild	back
high	i y		u/uʰ
mild	e/eʰ	ə/əʰ	o
low	a		ɑ/ɑʰ

Retroflex/non-retroflex:

- Among the 12 vowels, four show a retroflex and non-retroflex contrast.

<i>Non-retroflex</i>	<i>Retroflex</i>
<i>se</i> 'medicine'	<i>seʰ</i> 'willow'
<i>qa</i> 'family (classifier)'	<i>qaʰ</i> 'face'
<i>tsʰə</i> 'voice'	<i>tsʰəʰ</i> 'bone'
<i>χa-u</i> 'to get up'	<i>uʰ</i> 'to say'

Final consonants

- There are 14 final consonants, but the final consonants are not preserved Proto-Tibeto-Burman finals; the original Proto-Tibeto-Burman finals were entirely lost.
- The finals now found in the Puxi variety resulted from two syllables having merged, with the initial of the original second syllable becoming the final of the original initial syllable.

lop 'turnip' < *lo + pu* (< Ch. Loan)

χos 'fit, suit' < *χuo + sə* (< Ch. Loan)

n̥is 'bed' < *n̥i* 'sleep' + *sa* 'NOM'

tsaxl 'this month' < *tsa* 'this' + *xl̥* 'month'

Syllable structures:

- The minimum syllable type is a single vowel, such as the word /a/ 'one', or a syllabic nasal, such as /m̥/ 'fire'.

V *a* 'one'

Ç *m̥* 'fire'

- Syllable canon:

(C_{fricative}) (C_{initial}) (C_{fricative}) (V_{glide}) V (V_{glide}) (C_{fricative}) (C_{final})

- The initial consonant of the syllable can be any of the consonants.
- If there is a pre-initial or post-initial consonant, it must be a fricative.
- If there is a cluster final, the first consonant of the two must also be a fricative.

Examples:

CVVV *p^hiau* 'ticket'

CCVVCC *zguəxl* 'September'

CCCV *xpzə* 'vulva'

Stress:

- Stress sometimes falls on the first syllable, and sometimes occurs in the last syllable.

- If the last syllable within a polysyllable word is unstressed, its vowel is dropped or devoiced.

ne-tʂʰə ‘two hundreds’

qe-ŋi ‘all, entirely’

tʂʰas ‘sheets’ < *tʂʰa* ‘to lay out’ + *sa* ‘NOM’

quʂu ‘head scarf’

3. Morphology

- The Puxi variety of Qiang is agglutinative, and has both head marking and dependent marking.

Word classes:

- Open classes:
 - Nouns
 - Verbs
 - Adjectives (a subclass of state verbs)
- Closed classes:
 - Others, like adverbs, pronouns, numerals, classifiers, interjections and final particles are closed classes.

Pronouns:

- Puxi Qiang has a highly developed pronoun system with singular, dual, and plural in first, second, and third person.
 - The third person form developed out of the distal demonstrative pronoun.
 - There is no distinction between animate and inanimate in third person
 - but there is inclusive/exclusive distinction in the first person non-singular
 - and topic/non-topic distinction in first and second person singular

	Topic	Non-topic	Inclusive	Exclusive
1sg	ŋa/ŋa	qa/qo	-	-
2sg	no	kue	-	-
3sg	t ^h a-la	t ^h a-la	-	-
1dl	-	-	tsy-n	qa-n
2dl	kue-n	kue-n	-	-
3dl	t ^h e-n	t ^h e-n	-	-
1pl	-	-	tsy-la	qa-la
2pl	kue-la	kue-la	-	-
3pl	t ^h a-χa	t ^h a-χa	-	-

- Although topic pronouns *ŋa* and *no* can be used as actors, and may take the agentive marker *-i* or topic markers, but if the causee, an undergoer, a recipient, or a benefactive, and so on, occur in initial position to function as topics, they are represented by topic pronouns *ŋa* and *no*, as in (1):

- (1) a. *t^hala*_[TOPIC] *qo-zo* *kue-zo* *paŋi*
 3sg 1sg:NTP-DAT 2sg:NTP-DAT things
*ze-χtsuə-zə-i*_[COMMENT]

DIR-send-CAUS-CSM

‘S/he made me give you the thing / S/he made me give the thing to you.’

b. *ŋa*_[TOPIC] *t^hala-i* *paŋi* *kue-zo*
 1sg:TP 3sg-AGT thing 2sg:NTP-DAT

*ze-χtsuə-zə-i*_[COMMENT].

DIR-send-CAUS-CSM

‘I was made to give you the thing by him/her.’

c. *no*_[TOPIC] *t^hala-i* *paŋi* *qo-zo*
 2sg:TP 3sg-AGT thing 1sg:NTP-DAT

*ze-χtsuə-zə-i*_[COMMENT].

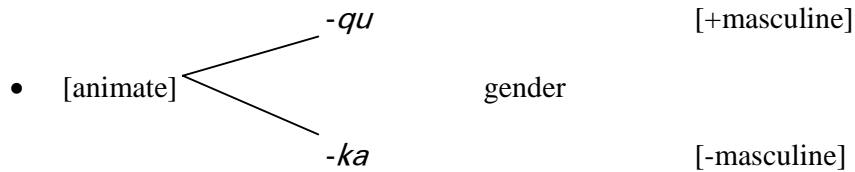
DIR-send-CAUS-CSM

‘You were made to give the thing to me by him/her.’

- In (1a) the third person singular *t^hala* functions as causer and topic, *qo* ‘I’ and *kue* ‘you’, both non-topic forms, are marked by the dative marker *-zo*, and *paŋi* ‘thing’ is the undergoer.
- In (1b) the causee, represented in (1a) by *qo*, appears in initial position as the topic, the topic form *ŋa*, and the causer *t^hala* is marked by the agentive marker *-i*.
- In (1c) the recipient, representing *kue* ‘you’ in (1a), appears in sentence-initial position to function as the topic, and is represented by the topic pronoun *no* ‘you’, while the causer is also marked by the agentive marker *-i*.
- In examples (1b) and (1c), even though the topic is not the actor, but the topic; causee or recipient, is represented by topic form *ŋa*, or *no*. I do not treat them as nominatives, but treat them as topic pronouns.

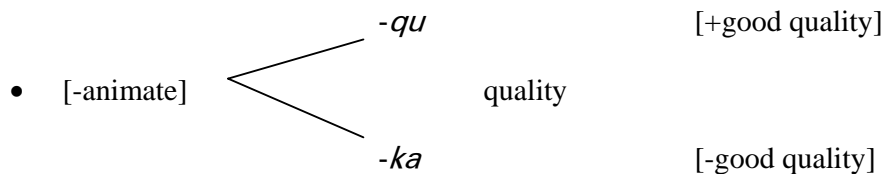
Nominal morphology:

- The suffixes *-qu/-ka* mark the gender or quality:
 - Gender marking:
 - If the suffixes *-qu/-ka* follow an animate item, they mark gender: The suffix *-qu* refers to ‘masculine’, and *-ka* refers to ‘feminine’



jy-qu ‘cock’ *jy-ka* ‘hen’
 chicken-MAS chicken-FEM

- Quality
 - The suffixes *-qu/-ka* express quality when they appear after an inanimate item: The suffix *-qu* marks a good quality of metals or utensils, and the suffix *-ka* indicates a poor quality of metals and utensils



- *Good quality:*

χtsi-qu ‘good quality sword’
 sword-MAS

Verbal morphology:

Person marking:

- Person marking with aspect:

Person	Prospective	Progressive (Unmarked)	Change of state
1	-ua	-j	-si
2	-uan (2sg) /-uən (2pl)	-n	-so(2sg)/-so(n) (2pl)
3	-u	-	-i

- There are three types of person marking forms with aspect.
- The person marking reflects only the person of the actor in the sentence.
- first person prospective is *-ua*, while the prospective of the second person singular is *-uan*, and the prospective of the second person plural is *-uən*. Third person prospective is *-u*.
- If the aspect is imperfective, i.e. progressive and habitual, the first person marking is the retroflexion of the root vowel, the second person marking is the suffix *-n*, and the third person is unmarked.
- The person markings are combined with the change of state aspect: first person change of state is *-si*, the change of state with the second person singular is *-so*, the change of state with the second person plural is *-son*, but in most cases, *-son* is optional, it is the same as the change of state with the second person singular *-so*. The third person change of state marking is *-i*.

Direction marking:

There are eight prefixes which mark the direction of the action relative to the speaker or relative to the physical surroundings of the action. The prefix *te-* means 'toward vertically up', *ə̀-* means 'toward vertically down', *y-* means 'toward upstream', *se-* means 'toward downstream', *kue-* means 'in', *χa-* means 'out', *ze-* means 'towards the center', and *da-* means 'outward from center'.

- *te-* 'toward vertically up'
- *ə̀-* 'toward vertically down'
- *y-* 'toward upstream'
- *se-* 'toward downstream'
- *kue-* 'in'
- *χa-* 'out'
- *ze-* 'towards the centre'
- *da-* 'outward from centre'

4. Syntax

Basic constituent order is:

- (i) NP+V (with one argument):
 - (2) *me'wu* *lu.*
 - rain [NP] come
 - It is raining.

- (ii) NP₁+NP₂+V (the most common order with two arguments):

- (3) *ŋa* *t^hala* *se'*
 1sg:TP [NP₁] 3sg [NP₂] beat:1sg
 I am beating him.

- The minimal structure of the noun phrase is a noun alone.

- Nouns can take one or more modifiers.

(1) GEN + N

(2) DEM-CL +N/N+DEM+CL

(3) N+Adj

(4) (Rel)+Adj+N+DEM+(NUM)-CL

(5) Adj+N+Rel+DEM+(NUM)-CL

- When the genitive modifies a noun, it always precedes the noun.
- When a demonstrative plus a classifier modifies the noun alone it follows or precedes the noun. The demonstrative plus classifier usually follows the noun when other modifiers also modify the noun.
- Adjectives follow the noun when they modify the noun alone, but when adjectives plus other modifiers modify the noun adjectives usually precede the noun.
- A relative clause may precede or follow the head of the noun phrase.

- The maximal structure of the noun phrase:

[*ŋa* *te-po-si*] *t^hunpa* *p^hu* *t^he* *χsi-la*
 1sg:TP DIR-buy-CSM:1sg blue clothing that three-CL
 those three pieces of blue clothing that I bought

- The minimal structure of a verb complex would be a verb that is unmarked.
- A verb can take one or more prefixes and/or suffixes.

(1) DIR+(NEG)+(CONT)+V

(2) PERMS+(CONT)+V

(3) PROH+(DIR)+(NEG) +V

(4) V+(CAUS)+(REP)+PROS:PM/CSM:PM+(HEARS)

- When there is a directional prefix, the negative prefix, and the continuative prefix together precede a verb, the negative prefix follows the directional prefix, and the continuative prefix follows the negative prefix.
- The 3rd person permissive prefix may occur in the same slot as the directional prefix.
- If there is a prohibitive prefix, then it always appears before the directional prefix and/or the negative prefix or the continuative prefix.
- When there is the causative suffix, the repetitive suffix, the change of state suffix, and the evidential suffix together follow a verb, the causative suffix follows the verb, the repetitive follows the causative suffix, and precedes the change of state suffix, and the evidential suffix occurs at the end of the verb complex.

The maximal structure of a verb complex is like:

ʒe-mi-pi-tʂ^he-zə-ts^hə-so-u.

DIR-NEG-CONT-drink-CAUS-REP-CSM:2sg-HEARS

I heard you had not (someone) drink again.

- Some state verbs may be nominalized by the (in)definite marking.

(4) *ts^hu* *ʒe-dze-i* *go,* *ɳi-lei* *mi-pa.*

meal DIR-eat-CSM LNK sleep-DEF NEG-do

After a meal, sleeping is not good for you. (lit.: Sleeping is not done.)

- (5) *ŋa (zɿmu) te-ʂe-tʂi te-tʂu-si,*
 1sg:TP dead.body DIR-die-INDEF DIR-see-CSM:1sg
tʰala ʂsazɰo-tʂi te-tʂu-i.
 3sg live-INDEF DIR-see-CSM
 I saw a dead (body), and s/he saw a live one.

General comparative construction

- When one referent is being compared with another, the NP representing the item being compared is a topic, and appears first in the clause.
- The NP representing the item which is the standard of comparison follows that of the item being compared.
- The general comparative construction is formed by adding the comparative marker *-so* after the standard.

- (6) *no tʰala-so ne-tsʰun bzu-n.*
 2sg:TP 3sg-COMP two-CL tall-2sg
 ‘You are two inches taller than him/her.’

Relative clause

- Relative clauses in the Puxi variety of Qiang can be quite complex.
 - We find that there are pre-head relative clauses, post-head relative clauses, and headless relative clauses.
 - There are two different nominalizers and one definite marking or indefinite marking used as relative clause markers; their choice depends on the semantic role of the head in the relative clause.

- Pre-head relative clause:

(7) [p^hu sən guə-m] kebzə
 dress red wear-NOM child
 ‘the child who wears a red dress’

- Post-head relative clause:

(8) k^hue [qa ə^l-χtsi-i] t^ha-zi
 dog 1sg:NTP DIR-bite-CSM that-CL
 ‘The dog that bit me’

- Headless relative clause:

(9) tepəi [petsu ke-m]∅ taŋ-la zə me?
 tomorrow Xuecheng Town go-NOM how.many-CL exist QUES
 ‘How many people will go to Xuecheng Town tomorrow?’

- Head-internal relative clause:

(10) ŋa [t^hαχa ts^hu te-pu-i t^ha-laqua]
 1sg:TP 3pl meal DIR-do-CSM that-CL
 qeŋi sɛ-dze-si.
 all DIR-eat-CSM:1sg
 I ate all the food that they cooked.

Complement clause

- Complementation is the ‘sentential complement’ type.
 - There are two types of complementation, one has no overt nominalization and one has one of the clitic nominalizers.

- Non-nominalized complementation:

(11) *ŋa* [*tʰala* *ʂe-ke*] *te-tɕu-si*.
 1sg:TP 3sg DIR-go DIR-see-CSM:1sg
 ‘I saw **him/her leave.**’/ ‘I saw that **s/he left.**’

- Nominalized complementation:

(12) *ʂa-tɕi* [*zə-sa*] *ʂi*, *ʂa-tɕi* [*ze-sa*] *mi-ʂi*.
 who-INDEF exist-NOM good who-INDEF exist-NOM NEG-good
 ‘Who may stay, and who may not stay (on the day of holding the funeral procession).’

(13) *ŋa* [*zedə tsi-m*] *te-tɕu-si*.
 1sg:TP book look.at-NOM DIR-see-CSM:1sg
 I saw someone was reading a book.

Pseudo-cleft construction

- There is no *it*-cleft or *wh*-cleft clause, but there is a pseudo-cleft construction.
- In the basic pseudo-cleft construction, a clause appears in initial position to function as the topic, and a noun occurs before the copula to function as narrow focus.

(14) [*nedʒe qo-zo* *ɛtɕindzi ze-zda-m*] *tʰala* *məi*.
 yesterday 1sg:NTP-DAT money DIR-give-NOM 3sg COP
 ‘The one who gave me money yesterday was **HIM/HER.**’

(15) *ŋa* [*zu tsa ŋi kue-lu-si-tɕi*].
 1sg:TP horse ride ADV DIR-come-CSM:1sg-INDEF
 ‘It was **on horse** that I came.’

5. Discourse

Discourse characteristics

- In narrative texts deictic elements are frequently used to mark changes in the scene.

- (16) *ɸepəi* *χa-dzo-zə-u,* *χa-dzo-zə-i* *go,*
 body DIR-sit-CAUS-HEARS DIR-sit-CAUS-CSM LNK
tʰal *zetse te-syisyi-u,*
 then day DIR-count-HEARS
zetse *te-syisyi-i* *go,*
 day DIR-count-CSM LNK
tsal *tʰa-tɕi* *ou-tɕi* *zəʔ*
 now that-CL where-CL exist

‘(They) make the dead man sit down, after making him sit down, and **then** choose an auspicious day. After choosing an auspicious day, **now** find out where he is?’

Discourse deixis:

- The demonstrative pronouns are used as markers of discourse deixis.

- (17) [*tsəʊua-lei* *anama* *ɸe-sa* *pə-i*],
 idiot-DEF how DIR-kill do-CSM
tʰi *χeχe* *da-vazə-tsʰə-i-u*
 that:CL talk.over DIR-begin-REP-CSM-HEARS
 ‘(The elder brothers) began to talk over **how to kill the idiot** again.’

- In example (17) the demonstrative *tʰi* ‘that’ does not refer to the referent *tsəvuɑ-lei* ‘the idiot’, but refers to the event *tsəvuɑ-lei anama ʒe-sa pə-i* ‘how to kill the idiot’.

Discourse anaphora:

The demonstrative pronouns are also used as anaphoric references in narrative, as in (18):

- (18) *ʒepəi ʒe-χuəla-ŋi [pʰu lo, tatʒe lo, ʒauji kʰoutai] lo, tʰa-ta da-tso-tso pɑ-zə ŋa.*
 body DIR-wash-ADV clothing PRT shoes PRT
 grave.bag PRT that-PL DIR-put.on-REDUP
 do-CAUS need
 ‘Having washed the body, **clothing, shoes, grave bag, these** need to be put on (the body).’

- In the example (18) the demonstrative plus the plural marker *tʰa-ta* ‘those’ refers to the previously mentioned referents *pʰu*, *tatʒe* and *ʒauji kʰoutai*.

Discourse structures

- There are special features with respect to quoted and indirect speech in narratives.
- As in (19a) and (19b), both direct quotes and indirect speech have the word *uʰ* ‘say’ or *vuɑʰ* ‘call, ask’ at the end of the clause.
- In direct quotes, the deictic reference is first person topic pronoun, whereas in indirect speech, the deictic reference shifts to the third person reflexive/emphatic

pronoun *mu* with the agentive marker.

(19) a. *t^hala* “*ŋa mi-lu-ua*” *u’* (Quoted speech)

3sg 1sg:TP NEG-come-PROS:1sg say

S/he says, “I will not come.”

b. *t^hala mu-i mi-lu-u* *u’* (Indirect speech)

3sg 3sg:REFL-AGT NEG-come-PROS say

S/he says *s/he* will not come.

- The pattern of the ‘tail-head’ construction is highly frequent in the narrative texts.
 - This is when the final verb of a clause or a verb complex which expresses the end of an event and marks the end of a discourse segment is repeated at the beginning of the next discourse segment, as in (20):

(20) *t^hal zetse te-syisyi-u,*

then day DIR-count-HEARS

zetse te-syisyi-i go,

day DIR-count-CSM LNK

tsal t^ha-tɕi ou-tɕi zəʔ

now that-CL where-CL exist

(They) **choose an auspicious day**. After **choosing an auspicious day**, now find out where he is?

(*kuela*) *tə-zba-son!*

Thank You!