

The uses of 'pa, pe, pə and pu' in the Puxi variety of Qiang

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Introduction:

- The Puxi variety of Qiang is spoken in Puxi Township, Li County, Aba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province, China.
- It has about 2,000 speakers.
- The Puxi variety of Qiang belongs to the Daqishan subdialect of the Southern dialect of Qiang.
- It is mutually intelligible with other varieties within the Daqishan subdialect, but mutually unintelligible with other subdialects in the Southern dialect or the Northern dialect.

1. *pu* / *pə*, meaning 'to do'

In general, the basic meanings of *pu* and *pə* are 'to do something', for examples:

Elicitation from wordlists:

<i>zama pu</i> 'to be courteous' guest do	<i>dzə pu</i> 'to work' thing do
<i>mazie pu</i> 'to snore' snore do	<i>dza pu</i> 'to laugh at someone' joke do

Elicitation from the grammar questionnaires or texts:

- (1) *təi pu-i*.
house do-CSM
'(They) are building the house.'
- (2) *təi te-pu-zə-i*.
house DIR-do-CAUS-3sg:CSM
'The house is / being built.'

<i>p^hu pə</i> 'to make clothes' clothes do	<i>ʂtu ʂtu pə</i> 'to play hide and seek' hide hide do
<i>a t^hye pə</i> 'to sneeze' sneeze do	<i>duə qɑ' pə</i> 'to make fun of' ghost face do

- (3) no ŋi-dzua pə-n?
 2sg what-CL do-2sg:PRES
 ‘What are you doing?’

The polysyllabic loanwords from South-western Mandarin must take native morpheme *pu* to indicate ‘to do something’:

- | | | | |
|---------------|---------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| sousu pu | ‘to perform an operation’ | ʂen ^h an pu | ‘to bring to trial’ |
| operation do | | judge do | |
| paumin pə | ‘to enroll, to register’ | minlin pə | ‘to issue an order’ |
| enrollment do | | order do | |

The morpheme *pə* is used in different contexts to encode different meanings:

A. *pə* occurs in ‘doing something simultaneously’ to express some states or situations which are going-on at the same time, as in (4)-(7):

- (5) t^hala ts^hu pi-dze-pə tiansə pi-tsi-pə.
 3sg meal (DUR)-eat-do TV (DUR)-look-do
 ‘He eats while watching the TV.’
- (6) t^hala pi-tsi pi-tsi-pə ŋi te-dza-i.
 3sg DUR-look at DUR-look at-do ADV DIR-smile-CSM
 ‘He smiled while reading (it).’
- (7) ŋa dzo ʂenta ə^l-ʂtu-pa ŋi dzuə-ə^l.
 1sg door behind DIR-hide-do ADV sit-1sg:PRES
 ‘I sat hiding behind the door.’
- (8) k^hue χtʂiχtʂi-pa ŋi ə^l-ke-i.
 dog bite:RECIP-do ADV DIR-go-3sg:PERF
 ‘The dog chewed (it) while going (down).’

B. *pə* also occurs in some contexts to indicate ‘should’, ‘ought to do’, or ‘it is time to do something’, (9)-(16):

- (9) pesi ŋa-i təi əya-sa pə-i.
 today 1sg-AGT house broom-NOM do-CSM
 ‘I should clean the floor today/it is time that I clean the floor.’
- (10) pesi zeme χeχe-sa pə-i.
 today speech talk-NOM do-CSM
 ‘We have to meet today/It is time for us to have a meeting.’

- (11) *tepəi tsyla p^hitə^hiu χli-sa pə-i.*
 tomorrow 1pl:INCL basketball play-NOM do-CSM
 ‘We ought to play basketball tomorrow.’
- (12) *tubzj qa ɣuɑ^ʔ ŋa ke-sa pə-i.*
 elder-brother 1sg:NTP call 1sg:TP go-NOM do-CSM
 ‘My elder brother is calling me, I have to leave.’
- (13) *tša-gu kebzə zeme ze^ʔ məi pɑ-i/pə-i.*
 this-CL child speech speak can do-CSM
 ‘This child can speak now.’
- (14) *ŋi-dzua pə-sa pəi.*
 what-CL do-NOM do-CSM
 ‘What is to be done?’
- (15) *anaŋ pə-sa pə-i/pi.*
 how do-NOM do-CSM
 ‘What should I do?’
- (16) *zəŋti ze-sa pə-i, sɑbzj p^ha^ha-təi tɛ-pu-i.*
 dinner eat-NOM do-CSM sister phapha-DEF DIR-do-PERF
 ‘It is time to have dinner, sister cooked phapha (corn noodle).’
- (46) *tʂutʂu (y) mi-dze pə-i.*
 chicken NEG-eat-become-CSM
 ‘The chickens are not eating.’

2. *pɑ* encodes ‘to be on going states or situations’

In Puxi variety of Qiang *pɑ* indicates ‘to do something’ or ‘states or situations that are on going’. It usually combines with change of state maker *-i*, perfective maker *-i*, *-sɑ*, *-si*, or co-occurs with iterative verbs, modal verb, and adverb to express the following different meanings:

A. *pɑ* appears in ‘to be about to do something’, it seems to express stative situation which is about to be on going, for examples in (17)-(19):

- (17) *ɣle ku-sa pɑ-kuetsə-i.*
 wheat harvest-NOM do-be about to-CSM
 ‘The wheat is about to be harvested.’
- (18) *patsu χa-pɑ-kuetsə-i.*
 flower DIR-blossom/do-be about to-CSM
 ‘The flowers are about to blossom.’

B. *pa* co-occurs with repetitive verbs in reciprocal constructions to encode events which are on going, (20)-(24):

- (20) t^hen (dzu) mama-pa.
3dl each other love:RECIP-do
'They love each other.'
- (21) t^haxa dzu didi-pa.
3pl each other beat:RECIP-do
'They are beating each other.'
- (23) tsyla şenta (dzu) ʋaʋa-pa-sə.
1pl:INCL later (each other) help:RECIP-do-go
'We will help each other in the future.'
- (24) k^hue ne-zi xtsixtsi-pa.
dog two-CL bite:RECIP-do
'The two dogs are biting each other.'

C. *pa* may co-occur with modal verbs or adverbs to express deontic modality, for example, it also may occur in negative imperative construction, as in (25)-(27):

- (25) ŋa pesi itin la ʋe a-zi te-t^hi-pa-ua.
1sg today must TOP fish one-CL DIR-catch-do-1sg:PROS
'I must catch a fish today.'
- (26) no t^hala tse-şe-pa-so.
2sg 3sg PROHIB-beat-do-2sg:PST
'Don't you beat him.'
- (27) t^hala tɕiu kue-lu taŋ-t^ho mi-pa.
3sg home DIR-come long-time NEG-do
'It is not long time since she came home.'
- (19) pesi şute kue-mi-lu-pa-i.
today Shude DIR-NEG-come-do-PST
'Shude will not come today.'

D. *pa* indicates 'to be regarded as, act as'

bzj pa 'to be a matchmaker' dzua-pa 'to be a soldier'
big be regarded as soldier-do

- (28) ŋa/ŋa qe^l dzua pa-si.
1sg:TP before soldier do-1sg:PST
'I was a soldier before.'

- (29) *peti dzua pa-m taŋ-la zə me?*
 now soldier be regarded as-NOM how many-CL have QUES
 ‘How many people join in the army now?’

E. *pa* co-occurs with change of state maker or perfective maker to express the state which has been changed, i.e. ‘to recover, to succeed, to win’:

- (30) *tʰala zɔ̌e te-pa-i tsʰu dze da-vazə-i.*
 3sg disease DIR-do-CSM meal eat DIR-begin-CSM
 ‘He has recovered from the illness, and can have a meal.’

- (31) *dzə te-pa-i.*
 thing DIR-do-PERF
 ‘to win, to succeed in something’

pa used to do something, now want to quit/have quit, or used to not have something, but now have something. It expresses change of state/situation, (36)-(39):

- (36) *ŋa tsal ʂənta ie mi-tʰe-pa-si.*
 1sg this after cigarette NEG-smoke-do-1sg:PST
 ‘I will quit smoking in the future.’

- (37) *ŋa qeʼ ie tʰe-si peti-go*
 1sg before cigarette smoke-1sg:PST now-LOC
mi-tʰe-pa-si.
 NEG-smoke-do-1sg:PST
 ‘I smoked cigarettes before, but I don’t smoke any more.’

- (38) *tse qeʼχa tian me-ŋa-i peti-go*
 this before electronic NEG-exist-PST now-LOC
te-ŋa-i/te-ŋa-pa-i.
 DIR-exist-do-CSM
 ‘There was no electricity before, but now there is electricity.’

- (39) *tse qeʼχa uʼ bzj me-ŋa-i peti-go*
 this before road big NEG-exist-PST now-(LOC)
te-ŋa-i/te-ŋa-pa-i.
 DIR-exist-do-CSM
 ‘There was no highway in the past, but now there is highway.’

- (40) *amie-lei a-sisi kuekue tʂʰə pa-i*
 mother-DEF one-CL:CL more more thin do-CSM
 ‘Mother has become thinner and weaker.’

- (32) ts^hu ʃe-dze-i go, zga-lei mi-pa,
meal DIR-eat-PST LINK run-DEF NEG-do
at̥it̥i gegu-lei pa
slow walk-NOM do
'After you ate, running is not good for you, but walking is good for you.'
- (33) ts^hu ʃe-dze-i go, ni-lei mi-pa
meal DIR-eat-PST LINK sleep-NOM NEG-do
'After meal, sleeping is not good for your (health).'
- (47) no kue-lu taŋ-pu pa-so me?
2sg DIR-come how many-CL become-2sg:PERF QUES
'How long have you been staying here?'
- (48) tutsu d̥o ʃenta da-ʃtu-pa ŋi pudzo-i
Brother door behind DIR-hide-do ADV basket-INSTR
ə¹-tsua-pa-i, q^hua-li k^hənk^he-ta ə¹-guate-pi-i.
DIR-cover-do-CSM demon-DEF hole-LOC DIR-drop-become-PERF
'The brother hid behind the door and covered himself with a basket, ...the demon dropped into the hole.'

F. *pa* expresses 'to forget about it, don't worry about it' (lit: stop it, cut it out)

- (34) no t^han mi-qe-so, pa-i.
2sg thus NEG-can-2sg:PST stop-CSM
'If you can not do thus, forget about it.'
- (35) no te-mi-t̥əu-so go, pa-i.
2sg DIR-NEG-see-2sg:PST LINK stop-CSM
'If you have not seen (it), forget about it.'

The morphemes, *pa* and *pa* are lexicalized, which are bounded with other morphemes to encode some lexical meanings:

t̥ ^h e pa	'to support'	tsya pa	'run against'
χa-t̥ ^h i pa	'slip to one side'	χuχula pa	'to be grooming'
tsosto pa	'to make up'	χpati pa	'to shiver'
ʃtu pa	'to hide'	susu pa	'to train'

3. *pe* and *pi*, meaning 'to become'

- (41) zapie ʃe-p^hzi pe-i.
leather DIR-tear become-CSM
'The leather become torn.'

(42) t^hαχa qo-zo ts^huə mi-dze-pa-zə an-si
 3pl 1sg:ACC-DAT meal NEG-eat-do-CAUS several-CL
 pa-i.
 become-CSM
 ‘They have not let me eat for a few days.’

(43) pesi tɕi-χau (pe-i) pesi zguə
 today how much-CL (become-CSM) today nine
 (pe-i/məi).
 (become-CSM/COP)
 ‘What day is it today? It is ninth.’

pi appears in negative existential constructions to express the change of situation or states:

(44) dze-sa me-ηa-pi-i.
 eat-NOM NEG-exist-become-CSM
 ‘(We) have run out of food.’

(45) m̩ t^hα-χo-ta z̩mam mi-zə-pi-i.
 ox that-PL-LOC cattle NEG-exist-become-CSM
 ‘The cattle have disappeared among those oxen.’

Summary:

- (1) In the Puxi variety of Qiang *pu*, *pə*, *pa*, *pa*, *pe* and *pi* can be concluded into three verbs: *pu* and *pə* is the one verb which has two forms in terms of its specific context. *pa* and *pa* is also one verb, but it has two forms. *pe* and *pi* is one verb.
- (2) The meanings of *pu* and *pə* is ‘to do something.’
- (3) The meanings of *pa* and *pa* are ‘to be on going state’ or ‘to change of state’.
- (4) *pe* and *pi* expresses change of states-become.

