

Chapter 2

Overview, Methodology, and Data Source Details

This chapter gives a general overview of the research, and discusses the overall methodology and data source details.

2.1 General overview

Cross-dialect variation between Kyirong, Yòlmo, and SST was investigated by comparing these three varieties in selected areas of the lexicon, pronunciation, grammar, and semantics.

2.2 Overall methodology

The process of determining cross-dialect variation in the selected areas of the lexicon, pronunciation, grammar, and semantics involved the following steps: **Step one:** literature review¹⁶; development of the research question and methodology; **step two:** selection of instruments for data collection; **Step three:** selection and rewriting of the narrative text; **Step four:** review of existing grammars and RWT/Yòlmo texts; consultation with grammar authors; meeting with helpers from the various speech communities; and making field trips (November 2008-November 2010). As data was collected, it was put in the appropriate categories of the lexicon, pronunciation, grammar, and semantics sections. When sufficient data was collected, it was analyzed; **Step five:** development of conclusions.

With respect to sentence examples, a certain methodology has been followed in order to identify cross-dialect variation. Each set of sentence examples may be preceded by an ILLUSTRATION statement, the LINGUISTIC FEATURE in focus, a list of CONSTANTS, and a VARIABLE. CONSTANTS are the features which do not change within a set of sentence examples, and the VARIABLE is the feature which changes within the set. Typically, the VARIABLE is being examined in order to determine its relationship with the LINGUISTIC FEATURE, a relationship which may reveal cross-dialect variation. Furthermore, where feasible, the linguistic feature is highlighted with bold font in the IPA. Finally, each sentence example has a caption which contains the sentence number and a brief description.

¹⁶ The results of the literature review have been kept in a separate document. These results are available for review.

2.3 Data Collection Instruments

This section discusses the data collection instruments which were used in this research:

Helpers: the main helpers are Lakpa and Migmar (Kyirong), and Phurjangbo and Tsering (Yòlmo). There have been many secondary helpers in Rasuwa District.

Word list: the 100 core word wordlist developed by Mann (2004:14-16) is a hybrid of five wordlists: Mainland Southeast Asia (MSEA) 281 and 436, Matisoff 209, Swadesh 100 and 200.

Existing grammars, glossaries, and dictionaries

Standard Written Tibetan

Das, Sarat Chandra, Graham Sandberg and Augustus William Heyde. A Tibetan-English Dictionary.

Jäschke, Heinrich August. Tibetan English Dictionary - with Special Reference to the Prevailing Dialects.

Standard Spoken Tibetan

Roerich, George and Tse-Trung Lopsang Phuntshok. Textbook of Colloquial Tibetan.

Tournadre, Nicolas and Sangda Dorje. Manual of Lhasa Tibetan.

Goldstein, Melvyn C. English-Tibetan Dictionary of Modern Tibetan.

Kyirong

Huber, Brigitte. The Lende Subdialect of Kyirong Tibetan: a Grammatical Description with Historical Annotations; Huber, Brigitte. Tone in Kyirong Tibetan: A conservative phonological development. Huber's work is based on Lende, a sub-dialect of Kyirong. For a brief discussion of Kyirong-Lende differences, see Bielmeier 1982:45.

Yòlmo

Hari, Anna Maria and Chhegu Lama. 2004. Dictionary: Yòlmo - Nepali - English. Kathmandu: Central Department of Linguistics, Tribhuvan University; Hari, Anna Maria. unpublished. Yòlmo Grammar Sketch.

Existing texts: Shanghai 1933 (RWT literary), Leh, Ladakh 1948/1968 (RWT literary), Kathmandu 2009 (semi-literary), and Kathmandu 2000 (Yòlmo colloquial). All texts are written in the Tibetan ü-chen script (འུ་ཅེན་) except the Yòlmo text, which is written in a modified form of the Devanāgarī script (देवनागरी).¹⁷

¹⁷ During the research process, RWT became relevant as a data collection instrument once it was realized that there are significant lexical and grammatical similarities between RWT, Kyirong, and Yòlmo. RWT, to a certain extent, mirrors the Kyirong and Yòlmo speech varieties, and therefore provides written Tibetan (ü-

Rewritten text: text rewriting as a data collection instrument has been described by Ronald Sim (1991). The text which was used for the rewriting is referred to in the thesis as ‘the narrative’ to distinguish it from other texts which have been utilized.¹⁸ The narrative is from Luke 15.11-32 (the Lost Son). Narrative lines 1 to 2d are in the body of the thesis, and remaining lines are in Appendix I. Note that, while in the location of the thesis where a narrative line appears, it may exemplify only one cross-dialect variation, the same line may be referred to in other areas of the thesis.

Lines of the narrative (1-2d) have been written in the literary form (RWT), and in the three spoken varieties, SST, Kyirong, and Yòlmo. The grey-tone lines are the spoken varieties written in the IPA¹⁹. Below the IPA line is a morpheme-by-morpheme gloss. Kyirong has been written in two lines: KD-1 is an adaptation from SST, and KD-2 is an adaptation from Yòlmo. The adaptations from SST and Yòlmo were done by a Kyirong speaker, changing only what is not correct in Kyirong. KD-2 has an additional grey-toned line which is Written Kyirong (ü-chen script).²⁰ The narrative lines included in the body of the thesis are,

“There was a father who had two sons. The younger son said, “Father, give me my part of the inheritance!” The father then distributed the wealth to the sons...”

chen) examples of lexical items and phrase-level grammatical features that exist in both spoken varieties. Neither Kyirong nor Yòlmo are written in ü-chen.

¹⁸ Other texts referred to in thesis: 1) existing texts: listed in ‘Existing texts’, 2) translated texts: the Kyirong epic (Genesis 1-4), John 1, Mark 5.1-17.

¹⁹ *Italics* font style has been used only for IPA words which appear in body text.

²⁰ Regarding Written Kyirong, Lakpa consistently modifies the WT spelling of words to conform to **Kyirong pronunciation**. Words beginning with: 1) a bilabial initial consonant cluster, e.g., to open (FUT); Lakpa writes བེ (KD: *pé:*) instead of WT བེེ (SST: *tɛ̀ɛ̀*); 2) a vowel which is realized as a glottal stop, e.g., འོང > འོང་; 3) vowels which are front rounded in SST but not in Kyirong. Furthermore, certain morphemes are spelled according to **Kyirong grammar**, e.g., the Kyirong copula #3b. *-jīŋgɛ̀*: is made up of two syllables, *jī:* (ཡིན་) + *gɛ̀* (མཁན་). The second syllable མཁན་ is written by Lakpa as མཁས་ or མཁན་ - when writing the morpheme in the context of a verb, she writes མཁས་, and in the context of a noun, she writes མཁན་. See the Kyirong epic.