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Typology of Language Changes of Chinese Induced by Contacts with Tibetan

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提要 四川倒话、甘肃白龙江流域方言、青海五屯话均为受到藏语强烈影响的汉语变体。本文拟就这三种变体所共有的语法特征进行归纳，提出汉语与藏语接触时所发生的语言演变的类型。文章归纳出的特征如下：(a) 基本结构为宾-动式；(b) 具有后置格标记；(c) 复数标记可用于非指人名词后；(d) 数量定语后置于中心语。此外，倒话和五屯话还均有以下两点特征：(e) 形容词定语后置于中心语；(f) 具有主观-客观对立的情态范畴。

1. Introduction

In the northeast region of Tibetan plateau, now belonging to the Chinese provinces of Qinghai (青海), Gansu (甘肃) and Sichuan (四川), there has been repeated contact between Bodic-speaking groups and Sinitic-speaking groups. As a consequence, there are some Chinese varieties that are heavily influenced by Tibetan¹⁾.

This paper attempts to provide a typology of language changes in Chinese due to contact with Tibetan. The typology serves to examine the formative processes of

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1) Tibetan is generally divided into three major dialects: Amdo, Kham and Lhasa. Among them, Amdo and Kham are related to the present study.

Chinese varieties which experience language contact but of which detailed historical backgrounds are still unknown.

2. Materials

The present study is completely based on second-hand data²⁾. In this paper we deal with the following three varieties as examples of Tibetan-influenced Chinese (henceforth “TIC”) :

- The Dao (倒) variety of Chinese (henceforth “Dao”) : a Chinese variety strongly influenced by Khams Tibetan, spoken in Ganzi(甘孜) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan Province. The source for Dao in this paper is from Yixiweisa(2004), thus far the most systematic description of the variety.
- The Bailongjiang (白龙江) river basin dialect of Chinese (henceforth “Bailongjiang”) : a Chinese dialect influenced by Khams (and partially by Amdo) Tibetan, spoken in the Bailongjiang river basin in Gansu Province³⁾. The Bailongjiang examples in this paper are from Mo (2004), the only study of the dialect to date.
- The Wutun (五屯) variety of Chinese (henceforth “Wutun”) : a Chinese variety spoken in Tongren (同仁) County, Huangnan (黄南) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province. The variety is influenced both by Amdo Tibetan and by Mongolic languages (in particular, Bonan), and the former is superior

2) In this connection, this paper is not consistent in the notation method of examples.

3) About the geographic definition of the Bailongjiang river basin, see Mo (2004), pp. 1-2.

to the latter⁴). In this paper, data for the variety are taken from Janhunen et al. (2008) and Sandman (2016).

The following figure shows the geographic distribution of the languages mentioned above :



Figure. 1 Map of the languages mentioned in section 2

3. Typological Features of TIC

This section describes some typological features of TIC. All features mentioned below are distinct from Standard Chinese and are common to Tibetan⁵).

3.1 SOV Word Order

The basic word order in Standard Chinese is SVO (subject-verb-object). On the

4) Janhunen et al. (2008), p. 22, Sandman (2016), p. 2. To borrow Janhunen et al. (2008 : 22)'s phrase, Wutun "might be characterized as a Tibetanized form of Chinese with Altaic features".

5) Since considerable phonetic differences are existed between Amdo and Khams (e. g. Amdo has plenty of consonant clusters while Khams does not ; Khams has tone while Amdo is atonal, etc.), we presume that there may be few phonetic features common to all TIC. Thus, the present study focuses exclusively on the grammatical aspect.

other hand, as in Tibetan⁶⁾, TIC sentence structure is predominantly SOV, though other orders have also been observed. Here are some examples :

- (1) 我 学生 ṣl⁴. (Dao. Yixiweisa 2004 : 81)
 1SG student COP
 “I’m a student.”
- (2) 我 饭 吃 lo. (Dao. ibid. : 59)
 1SG meal eat PRF
 “I’ve eaten meal.”
- (3) 谁 我 女儿 打 了? (Bailongjiang. Mo 2004 : 153)
 who 1SG daughter hit PRF
 “Who has hit my daughter ?”
- (4) 警察 小偷 抓 下 了。 (Bailongjiang. ibid. : 154)
 police thief catch COMP PRF
 “The police have caught a thief.”
- (5) je agu gejhai-de ana pa-ze-lío. (Wutun. Janhunnen et al. 2008 : 70)
 this girl oneself GEN mother help do PRF
 “This girl helps her own mother.”
- (6) ngu she-ge sha-gu-lío. (Wutun. Sandman 2016 : 192)
 1SG snake REF kill COMP PRF
 “I’ve killed a snake.”

This feature, however, is of little use as a device in which to clarify the historical

6) The following are Tibetan examples of SOV structure :

- (a) Amdo Tibetan : ŋi sa-mə si-taŋ. (Gesangjuman and Gesangyangjing 2002 : 236)
 1SG meal ate AUX “I ate meal.”
- (b) Kham Tibetan : kho⁵⁵ tsha⁵⁵pa⁵⁵te⁵⁵ŋge⁵³. (ibid. : 141)
 3SG newspaper read (past) PRT “He read a newspaper.”

backgrounds of contact-experienced Chinese varieties, because SOV word order is also a feature common to Mongolic-influenced Chinese (henceforth “MIC”)⁷).

3.2 Postpositional Case Marking

In Standard Chinese, word order and prepositions signal the grammatical function of the word in a sentence. In TIC, such functions are generally expressed by means of postpositional case markers as in Tibetan⁸. We give some examples of TIC postpositional case markers :

- (7) 我 di 腰杆 昨年 dɛ 好 lɔ-se. (Dao. Yixiweisa 2004 : 68)

1SG GEN hip last-year ABL good PRT COP

“My hip has been good since last year.”

- (8) 爸爸 ki 酒槽子 ki 马 喂 di-jiu³-li. (Dao. *ibid.* : 65)

father ERG draff INST horse feed PROG EXV OBJ

“My father is feeding a horse with draff.”

- (9) 狗 ki 他 ɣɛ 咬 Ɂ-lɔ. (Dao. *ibid.* : 21)

dog ERG 3SG DAT bite COMP PRF

“The dog has bitten him.”

7) Following Kawasumi (2018 : 65-66), the typological features of MIC are summarized below :

- a. The normal word order is SOV.
- b. Postpositional case markers are used.
- c. Converb-like elements are used.
- d. The use of plural markers is expanded.
- e. Adverbials generally precede negatives.
- f. The existential verb “有” can be used to express a definite noun at a location.

8) The following are Tibetan examples of postpositional case markers :

- (a) Amdo Tibetan : ɲa la-sha-ne joŋ-ne. (Gesangjumian and Gesangyangjing 2002 : 190)

1SG Lhasa ABL come PRT “I came from Lhasa.”

- (b) Kham Tibetan : mɔ¹³ tʂa⁵⁵xi⁵⁵ le⁰ kɔ¹³ kɛ⁵⁵si⁵⁵ ɲge⁵³. (*ibid.* : 150)

3SG Tashi DAT cloth wear PRT PRT “She is putting clothes on Tashi.”

Examples (7) – (9) contain various case markers used in Dao. “*de*” in (7) is an ablative case marker. The example (8) illustrates the use of “*ki*”. It is an ergative-instrumental case marker, which is used both in ergative function to indicate animate intentional agents of transitive sentences and in instrumental function to indicate instruments⁹. “*ʂe*” (<Chinese 上 *shang* “upon ; above”¹⁰) indicates dative case (as in 9) and locative case (as in 17 in section 3.4)¹¹.

In Bailongjiang, the postposition “*啦*” (←Khamts Tibetan dative marker “*le~la*”¹²), which also has the variant “*阿 [za]*”, is used in order to mark an indirect object, as in (10) and (11) :

(10) 我 他 啦 电话 早 打 过了。(Bailongjiang, Mo 2004 : 154)

1SG 3SG DAT telephone already call COMP PRF

“I’ve already called him up.”

(11) 他 我 阿 五十 块钱 借 了。(Bailongjiang, ibid. : 156)

3SG 1SG DAT 50 RMB lend PRF

“He had lent 50 RMB to me.”

The following are the examples of Wutun postpositional case markers. In Wutun, “*la*” (origin unknown) indicates ablative case (as in 12) and “*liangge*” (<Chinese 两个 *liǎngge* “two”¹³) indicates comitative and instrumental cases (as in 13 and 14)¹⁴.

9) “*de*” and “*ki*” in Dao have obviously been motivated by language contact with Khamts Tibetan. Yixiweisa (2004 : 65, 68) points out that Khamts Tibetan also has the ablative case marker “*-de*” and the ergative-instrumental case marker “*-ki*”.

10) Yixiweisa (2004), p. 77.

11) For more details on the case markers in Dao, see Yixiweisa (2004), pp. 63-69.

12) Mo (2004), pp. 154-155. See also the example (b) in footnote 8.

13) Janhunen et al. (2008), p. 60.

14) For the other case markers used in Wutun, see Janhunen et al. (2008), pp. 56-65.

- (12) aga dadada gguan-la lai-liao. (Wutun. Janhunene et al. 2008 : 60)
 elder-brother just temple ABL come PRF
 “Elder brother just came from the temple.”
- (13) ngu ngu-de tixang-liangge qhi-zhe. (Wutun. Sandman 2016 : 57)
 1SG 1SG GEN younger-brother COM go PROG
 “I’ll go together with my younger brother.”
- (14) gu-jhege hahua-liangge daimo wan-di-li. (Wutun. *ibid.* : 58)
 3 PAUC Chinese INST performance do PROG OBJ
 “They are performing in Chinese.”

As indicated in footnote 7, MIC also uses the postpositional case markers, and all MIC have the element which marks a direct object (namely the accusative marker)¹⁵. On the contrary, in the previous studies mentioned in section 2, we cannot find the description about the postpositional accusative markers. This point might reflect the fact that Tibetan is not a nominative-accusative language but an ergative-absolutive language.

3.3 Expansion of the Use of a Plural Marker

In Standard Chinese, the plural marker “们 *men*” can only be used with personal nouns (e. g. 人们 “persons”, 选手们 “players”, *狗们 “dogs”, *书们 “books”). In TIC, the use of plural markers is expanded beyond the marking of personal nouns to include animate nouns and even to inanimate nouns. Let us observe some examples (the plural markers are underlined) :

15) Here we give two MIC examples (Kawasumi 2018 : 60-61) :

(a) 我 xa 他 打 了。(The Xining [西宁] dialect, Qinghai Province)

1SG ACC 3SG hit PRF “He has hit me.”

(b) 儿子 每 行 疾快 唤觉 起来。(The Secret History of the Mongols [《元朝秘史》]. Vol. 2)
 child PL ACC quickly wake up “Wake children up quickly.”

(15) Dao : 人 ɛie (<Chinese 些 *xiē* “some”¹⁶⁾) “persons”, 牛 ɛie “cows”, 花 ɛie “flowers”, 山 ɛie “mountains” (Yixiweisa 2004 : 62)

Bailongjiang : 茶们 “teas”, 玻璃们 “windowpanes”, 日子们 “days”, 房子些¹⁷⁾ “houses” (Mo 2004 : 41, 43)

Wutun : ren-dera (origin unknown) “persons”, lhakang-dera “temples” (Janhunet al. 2008 : 56)

The expansion of the use of the plural markers might be explained by the language contact with Tibetan¹⁸⁾. In Tibetan, any kind of noun can be marked by the plural suffixes as follows :

(16) (a) Amdo Tibetan : lap-heha teha-wo “liars”, hta-teha-wo “horses”, hwe-teha-teha-wo “books” (Gesangjumian and Gesangyangjing 2002 : 218)

(b) Khams Tibetan : tʂi¹³ ʋi⁵³ nã⁰ “children”, ta⁵³ nã⁰ “horses”, tea⁵⁵ kha⁵³ nã⁰ “things”, kə¹³ nã⁰ “clothes” (ibid. : 122)

3.4 Numerals Follow the Modified Noun

In Standard Chinese, numerals precede the noun they modify. In contrast, numerals in TIC follow the modified noun. Let us observe some examples¹⁹⁾ :

16) Yixiweisa (2004), p. 77.

17) The plural marker “些” is used in the lower reaches of Bailongjiang river basin. (Mo 2004 : 43)

18) However, the source of the number marking system in Wutun remains as a matter to be discussed further. As stated in footnote 7, this feature is also common to MIC, therefore, it may be said that the system has developed due to language contact with Bonan.

19) As illustrated by the examples (17) – (20), the convergence of classifiers might also be seen as a typological feature of TIC (cf. Standard Chinese [Classifiers are boldfaced] : 三头牛 “three cows”, 一本书 “a book”, 两匹马 “two horses”, 两个男人 “two men”). It is worthwhile examining the subject more closely.

(17) 我们家 ǝ牛 三个 有。(Dao, Yixiweisa 2004 : 53)

1PL home LOC cow three CL EXV

“There are three cows in my home.”

(18) 我书 一个 买了。(Bailongjiang, Mo 2004 : 153)

1SG book one CL buy PRF

“I’ve bought a book.”

(19) nga-ha ma liang-ge yek. (Wutun, Janhunnen et al. 2008 : 55)

1SG DAT horse two CL EXV

“I have two horses.”

(20) awo liang-ge yida zhan-she-ma-li. (Wutun, Sandman 2016 : 64)

man two CL together stand RES RES OBJ

“Two men were standing together.”

This feature is likely to be due to Tibetan influence, because numerals in Tibetan are used after the modified nouns as in (21) :

(21) (a) Amdo Tibetan : ndzi-dok teək

rice CL one “a grain of rice”

(Gesangjumian and Gesangyangjing 2002 : 250)

(b) Khams Tibetan : tʂi¹³yi⁵³ sũ⁵⁵ (ibid. : 159)

child three “three children”

3.5 Adjectives Follow the Modified Noun

In Bailongjiang, adjectives precede the modified nouns, the same order as Standard Chinese. In Dao and Wutun, on the other hand, adjectives can be used post-nominally as in (22) and (23) :

- (22) 布 黄黄di 个 有。(Dao. Yixiweisa 2004 : 53)

cloth yellow CL EXV

“I have a piece of yellow cloth.”

- (23) ngu hu yak-la~la-de-ge mai-lío. (Wutun. Sandman 2016 : 102)

1SG flower beautiful INC INC GEN REF buy PRF

“I bought a very beautiful flower.”

This feature, too, could be an influence by Tibetan in which adjectives follow the modified nouns as in (24) :

- (24) (a) Amdo Tibetan : me-tok hkar-ro

flower white “white flower”

(Gesangjumian and Gesangyangjing 2002 : 223)

- (b) Khams Tibetan : tea⁵⁵kha⁵³ ja¹³mo⁵³ (ibid. : 154)

thing good “good thing”

3.6 Subjective and Objective Perspectives

Perspective marking is a typological feature characteristic of the Bodic languages. It is a category that divides statements into two contrasting types : those belonging, and those not belonging, to the personal sphere of the speaker. The two types are identified as representing the subjective and objective perspectives, respectively²⁰. These

20) The following are examples of Lhasa Tibetan. (Lee-Smith and Wurm 1996 : 895)

(a) mi di jago du.

man this good has “I believe this man is good.” (subjective perspective)

(b) mi di jago ree.

man this good is “This man is generally known to be good.” (objective perspective)

It should be noted that, under the strong influence of Tibetan, some Mongolic languages (e. g. Bonan, Monguor etc.) also have this characteristic.

perspectives are also present in Dao and Wutun²¹).

In Dao, each perspective has some distinct markers. Here we just quote two examples from Yixiweisa (2004 : 26)²² :

- (25) 他 ki 茶 喝 k'v-sl。
 3SG ERG tea drink PROG SUBJ
 “He is drinking a tea.” (subjective perspective)
- (26) 他 ki 茶 喝 k'v-se。
 3SG ERG tea drink PROG OBJ
 “He is drinking a tea.” (objective perspective)

According to Yixiweisa (2004 : 26), the example (25) indicates a high degree of certainty about the event, while the example (26) expresses the lack of commitment to the event²³.

Wutun subjective and objective perspectives are expressed by “-yek” (←Tibetan ཡོད *yod*²⁴ “to be”) and “-li” (origin unclear) respectively. Compare the following examples :

- (27) ngu huan xhe-di-yek. (Sandman 2016 : 207)
 1SG food drink PROG SUBJ
 “I’m eating.”
- (28) ni huan xhe-di-li. (ibid.)
 2SG food drink PROG OBJ
 “You’re eating.”

21) Judging from the description given in Mo (2004), Bailongjiang does not share this feature.

22) Yixiweisa (2004 : 55-56) analyzes that “sl” is etymologically identical with Chinese 是 *shi* “to be”, and “se” might be derived from “sl”.

23) For the other perspective markers used in Dao, see Yixiweisa (2004), pp. 55-60.

24) The phonetic forms of ཡོད in modern Tibetan are as follows : Amdo [jot], Kham [jɔʔ²³¹], Lhasa [jɔʔ¹³²]. (Gesangjumian and Gesangyangjing 2002 : 202, 104, 28)

(29) gu huan xhe-di-li. (ibid.)

3SG food drink PROG OBJ

“S/he is eating.”

As illustrated by the examples (27) – (29), in Wutun, subjective perspective is typically used with the first person in statements, while objective perspective is typically used with the second and third person in statements, though other cases have also been observed²⁵⁾.

4. Concluding Remarks

This paper discussed a typology of language changes of TIC. Based on the argument so far, we can provide the following six features :

- (a) The basic word order is SOV.
- (b) Postpositional case markers are used.
- (c) The use of plural markers is expanded.
- (d) Numerals follow the modified noun.
- (e) Adjectives follow the modified noun.
- (f) Subjective and objective perspectives are present.

Among them, features (a) and (c) are common to MIC. Feature (b) is also shared with MIC, but as mentioned in the last paragraph of section 3.2, there is a significant difference between two groups : MIC has the accusative marker while TIC lacks it. The latter three features are specific only to TIC.

25) As for this point, see Sandman (2016), pp. 216-224.

Symbols and Abbreviations

1	1st personal pronoun	INST	instrumental
2	2nd personal pronoun	LOC	locative
3	3rd personal pronoun	OBJ	objective
ABL	ablative	PAUC	paucal
ACC	accusative	PL	plural
AUX	auxiliary verb	POST	postposition
CL	classifier	PRF	perfect
COM	comitative	PROG	progressive
COMP	complement	PRT	particle
COP	copula	REF	referential
DAT	dative	RES	resultative
ERG	ergative	SG	singular
EXV	existential verb	SUBJ	subjective
GEN	genitive	<	internally from
INC	incompletive	←	externally from

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