Title	Historical relationship among three non-Tibetic languages in Chamdo, TAR
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Citation	Proceedings of the 51st International Conference on Sino-Tibetan Languages and Linguistics (2018)
Issue Date	2018-09
URL	http://hdl.handle.net/2433/235308
Right	
Type	Conference Paper
Textversion	author

# Historical relationship among three non-Tibetic languages in Chamdo, TAR

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1   Introduction

Chamdo Municipality is located in the east of the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR). Three counties in this municipality have at least three non-Tibetic, yet Tibeto-Burman language islands surrounded by various dialect groups of Khams Tibean, i.e.:

- **Lamo**: Spoken in the west of Dzogang County, along the Nujiang River.

- **Larong sMar**: Spoken along the Lancangjiang River of Dzogang and sMarkhams County.

- **Drag-yab sMar**: Spoken in the southern half of Drag-yab County.

Changdu Diquzhi (2005:819) mentions three special *dialect*s (Dongba, Rumei, and Zesong) within Chamdo, which correspond to the three languages above.
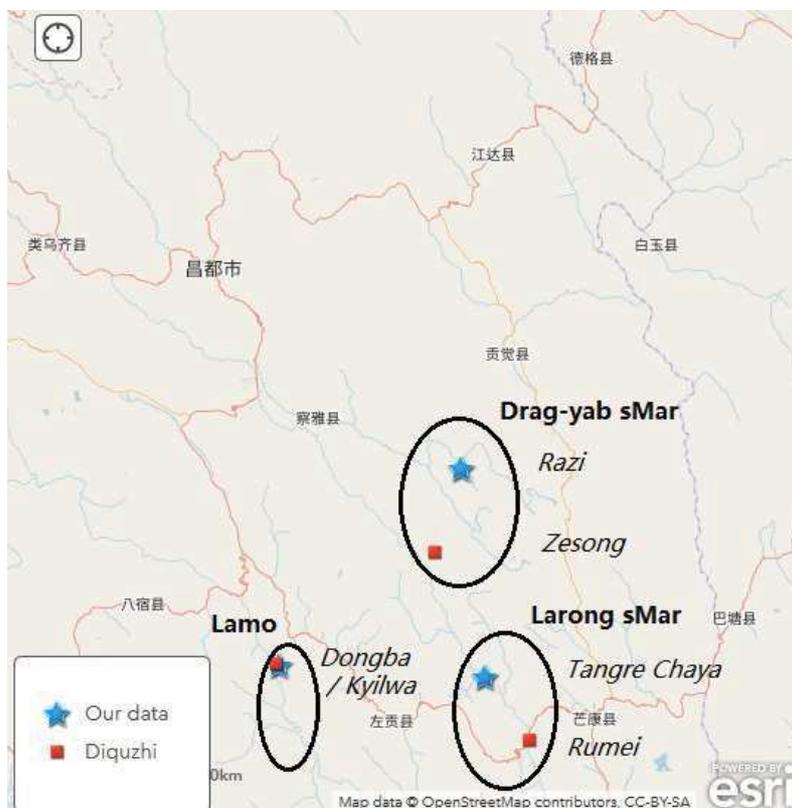
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See Tashi Nyima and Suzuki (forthcoming) for more detailed information of the geographical distribution and sociolinguistic background of each language. Our previous descriptions (Suzuki & Tashi Nyima 2016, 2017) primarily discussed the case of Lamo, and did not pay special attention to the two other languages.

This article examines whether these three languages are mutually related, if so, how they are related. For this purpose, it attempts to outline a historical context to the languages and their speakers, including a brief cultural history of the language territories. To that end, the paper, which is based primarily on Tibetan historical literature, studies under what, similar or different, historical circumstances these languages have come into being in the first place. More importantly, a comparison of cognates should be investigated. However, due to a long-term heavy influence of surrounding Tibetic languages, they have received a massive number of Tibetic loanwords even in the category of core lexical items, and hence search for cognates is to some extent difficult.

We will posite Lamo as a centre of the discussion since it is the mother tongue of the second author, who is the source of all the data concerning Lamo. The other languages' data were collected and recorded by two of us as well as Tibetan members of the project (JSPS Grant-in-Aid, No. 17H04774). We have already obtained lexical data more than ten varieties of the three languages in total.

We principally use data of the following varieties:

- Kyilwa dialect of Lamo (native language of the second author).

- Tangre Chaya (sMarkhams) and Phagpa (mDzogang) dialects of Larong sMar.

- Razi dialect of Drag-yab sMar.

Before an analysis, an overview of the sound structure of the three languages is provided in the next page. This article's analysis is just regarding initials of around 600 words; rhymes and suprasegmentals are excluded. Note that the objective of the article is not to reconstruct proto-forms but to examine a mutual relationship among the languages.

2   Sound system: A brief look

2.1   Lamo (Kyilwa dialect)

Syllable structure: $^\text{C}$CGV.

Consonantism: /pʰ, p, b, tʰ, t, d, ʈʰ, ʈ, ɖ, kʰ, k, g, qʰ, q, ɢ, ʔ, tsʰ, ts, dz, tɕʰ, tɕ, dʑ, s, z, ʂ, ɕ, ʑ, x, ɣ, χ, ʁ, h, ɦ, m, m̥, n, n̥, ɳ, ɳ̊, ŋ, ŋ̊, ɴ, ɴ̥, l, l̥, r, w, j/.

Prenasalisation and preaspiration appear as a preinitial. Glides are /w/ and /j/.

Vocalism: /i, e, ɛ, a, ɑ, ɔ, o, u, ɯ, ʉ, ə, ɵ/.

They have creaky and nasalised c In erparts. Marginally, one can find some secondary articulations: retroflexed /ɚ/ and velarised /əˠ/.

Suprasegmentals: high (ˉ) and rising (´)

A tone bearing unit (TBU) is first two syllables of each word. An apostrophe (') appearing between first and second syllables denotes that the second syllable is out of TBU.

2.2   Larong sMar (Tangre Chaya dialect)

Syllable structure: $^\text{C}$CGV

Consonantism: /pʰ, p, b, tʰ, t, d, ʈʰ, ʈ, ɖ, kʰ, k, g, qʰ, q, ɢ, ʔ, tsʰ, ts, dz, tɕʰ, tɕ, dʑ, s, z, ɕ, ʑ, x, ɣ, χ, ʁ, h, ɦ, m, m̥, n, n̥, ɳ, ɳ̊, ŋ, ŋ̊, ɴ, ɴ̥, l, l̥, r, w, j/.

Prenasalisation and preaspiration appear as a preinitial. Glides are /w/ and /j/.

Vocalism: /i, e, ɛ, a, ɑ, ɔ, o, u, ɯ, ʉ, ə, ɵ/.

They have creaky and nasalised counterparts.

Suprasegmentals: high (ˉ) and rising (´)

A tone bearing unit (TBU) is first two syllables of each word. An apostrophe (') appearing between first and second syllables denotes that the second syllable is out of TBU.

2.3   Drag-yab sMar (Razi dialect)

Syllable structure: $^\text{C}$CGV

Consonantism: /pʰ, p, b, tʰ, t, d, ʈʰ, ʈ, ɖ, kʰ, k, g, qʰ, q, ɢ, ʔ, tsʰ, ts, dz, tɕʰ, tɕ, dʑ, s, z, ɕ, ʑ, x, ɣ, χ, ʁ, h, ɦ, m, m̥, n, n̥, ɳ, ɳ̊, ŋ, ŋ̊, ɴ, ɴ̥, l, l̥, r, r̥, w, j/.

Prenasalisation and preaspiration appear as a preinitial. Glides are /w/ and /j/.

Vocalism: /i, e, ɛ, a, ɑ, ɔ, o, u, ɯ, ʉ, ə, ɵ/.

They have creaky and nasalised counterparts.

Suprasegmentals: high (ˉ) and rising (´)

A tone bearing unit (TBU) is first two syllables of each word. An apostrophe (') appearing between first and second syllables denotes that the second syllable is out of TBU.

3 Analysis of cognates

Lamo, Larong sMar, and Drag-yab sMar to some extent share similar word forms which are uncommon to Tibetic languages. Note that we find dialectal variations within each language; however, here we do not consider this issue.

3.1 Sound correspondences

Table 1 displays some word forms shared by all of the three languages with the same initial.

Table 1: Cognates with the same initial

No.	Meaning	Lamo	Larong sMar	Drag-yab sMar	Correspondence
(1)	bitter	⁻qa qʰɛ	⁻qʰa	´qʰa pu	/qʰ/ : /qʰ/ : /qʰ/
(2)	cry	´qo	´qo̦	´qə	/q/ : /q/ : /q/
(3)	earth	´ⁿdzo̦	´ⁿdzɑ	´ⁿdza	/ⁿdz/ : /ⁿdz/ : /ⁿdz/
(4)	eat	⁻ⁿdzə	⁻ⁿdzə	⁻ⁿdzə	/ⁿdz/ : /ⁿdz/ : /ⁿdz/
(5)	house	⁻tɕi	⁻tɕo	´tɕẽ	/tɕ/ : /tɕ/ : /tɕ/
(6)	blood	⁻se	⁻se	⁻sɛ	/s/ : /s/ : /s/
(7)	needle	´ʁɑ	´ʁɑ	´ʁɑ	/ʁ/ : /ʁ/ : /ʁ/
(8)	cow	´ŋʉ	´ŋʉ	´ŋu	/ŋ/ : /ŋ/ : /ŋ/
(9)	wait	⁻ɦli̦	⁻ɦle	⁻ɦli	/ɦl/ : /ɦl/ : /ɦl/
(10)	horse	´re	⁻re	´re	/r/ : /r/ : /r/

We consider that these examples are basic native words which can be regarded as evidence that they are in a closer relationship with each other.

Table 2 displays several cognates with slight differences in their initial depending on languages.

Table 2: Cognates with some differences

No.	Meaning	Lamo	Larong sMar	Drag-yab sMar	Correspondence
(11)	salt	⁻tsʰo	⁻ⁿ̥tsʰə	⁻tsʰə	/tsʰ/ : /ⁿtsʰ/ : /tsʰ/
(12)	six	´tɕi	´tɕʰu	⁻tɕʰu	/tɕ/ : /tɕʰ/ : /tɕʰ/
(13)	meat	´tɕʰi	⁻ⁿ̥tɕʰi	´ⁿ̥tɕʰə	/tɕʰ/ : /ⁿ̥tɕʰ/ : /ⁿ̥tɕʰ/
(14)	you	⁻nə	⁻ɲe	⁻ɲa	/n/ : /ɲ/ : /ɲ/
(15)	seven	⁻ņi	´ņi	⁻ɲ̥e	/n̥/ : /n̥/ : /ɲ̥/
(16)	hand	´lu	⁻ⁿdi	´ⁿde	/l/ : /ⁿd/ : /ⁿd/
(17)	butter	⁻jwo̦ˆ	⁻wa	´we	/jw/ : /w/ : /w/
(18)	head	⁻wo̦	⁻wo̦	´ʁo̦	/w/ : /w/ : /ʁ/
(19)	eye	⁻mə' do	⁻ɦɲi	⁻ɲə	/m/ : /ɦɲ/ : /ɲ/
(20)	nose	⁻nʉ	⁻ɲ̥u	⁻na rə	/n/ : /ɲ̥/ : /n/
(21)	tongue	⁻ʰlə	⁻ⁿdə̦	´ᵐda	/ʰl/ : /ⁿd/ : /ᵐd/
(22)	tooth	´xʉ	´ʰli	´xɯ	/x/ : /ʰl/ : /x/
(23)	milk	´χo̦	⁻ʰlo̦	ᵡlo̦	/χ/ : /ʰl/ : /ᵡl/
(24)	moon	⁻le	⁻ɦli	⁻ɦla̰ jḭ	/l/ : /ɦl/ : /ɦl/

These examples presents differences as follows:

- between Lamo and the others: (12), (13), (14), (16), (17), (18), (19), (21), (23), (24)

- between Larong sMar and the others: (20), (22)

- between Drag-yab sMar and the others: (15)

Although we find differences of initials among the three languages, we cannot rule out what regular phonological correspondences are, and it is thus still difficult to consider the genetic vicinity only with the data in Table 2. At least based on the current data, we find that Lamo tends to have a different phonetic development from the others.

3.2 Lexical features

Due to the strong, long-term influence of surrounding Khams Tibetan dialects, it is already difficult to find many cognates which are common to the three languages. However, we can find several important lexical differences in native words, for instance, in Table 3 (including a few Tibetic loans):

Table 3: Different roots among three languages

No.	Meaning	Lamo	Larong sMar	Drag-yab sMar
(25)	mouth	⁻ⁿ̥tɕʰu to (T)	´mu	´ɕi
(26)	foot	⁻si' ka	´ⁿgɯ	⁻pʰə ⁿdɯ
(27)	liver	⁻se	⁻je	⁻ⁿ̥tɕʰĩ ᵐbi (T)
(28)	laugh	⁻ʱgɛ (T)	´ⁿ̥tsʰə	⁻ʁə̰
(29)	sleep	⁻nə ʱgɯ	´jṵ	´nə mḛ
(30)	child	⁻no no	⁻ⁿ̥tʰe	´ɲa
(31)	take	´le	´ɣi	⁻tɕʰõ
(32)	search	⁻xɯ	⁻ʱz̃ɔ	´ɲə ŋo
(33)	forget	´nɛ tʰa	⁻ʱmɛ	´ɣə ʱmu se
(34)	sky	⁻ʱnɑ (T)	⁻ŋo	´mo
(35)	sun	⁻nə	´ɲi	´ɲi me (T)
(36)	red	⁻ʱma' ʱma (T)	⁻nḛ nḛ	⁻ⁿdja̰

There are probably more Tibetic loans in Table 3; for example, the Drag-yab sMar form of (30) might be a Tibetic loan. However, we still need a confirmation of the sound correspondence when a language borrowed Tibetic words.

Tables 4, 5, and 6 display examples in which two of three languages share a common root.

Table 4: Lamo roots different from the other two languages

No.	Meaning	Lamo	Larong sMar	Drag-yab sMar
(37)	body hair	⁻ʰpu (T)	´mɔ̰	´mo̰
(38)	urine	⁻qo	´pi	´bi
(39)	look	⁻ʈu	´ŋi	´tʰa ŋɛ̃
(40)	person	´mə	⁻ŋʉ nɛ̰	⁻ʱŋɯ' ɳ̥i
(41)	male	⁻no	´zə	´zə
(42)	daughter	´nu mo	´m̥e	´m̥ə
(43)	road	⁻tɕə	⁻rɛ	´ra
(44)	fear	⁻ʱlɛ	⁻ʱɣe	´ɣe
(45)	be born	⁻no ᵐbə	´ⁿdzə	´ⁿdzɑ
(46)	go	⁻xɯ	⁻ⁿ̥tʰɔ̃	⁻ⁿ̥tʰɛ̰̃
(47)	shout	⁻kə' ɕi	⁻rɛ	´rɛ̰
(48)	four	⁻lə̰	´ʱɣə (T)	´ʱɣe (T)
(49)	eight	⁻ʱdʑə (T)	´ɕe	⁻ɕa
(50)	ten	´ʁɑ	⁻ʔa qõ	´ɦa̰ ʁõ
(51)	twenty	´ɳe qɑ	´nɑ	´nɑ

Examples (48) and (49) are noteworthy, for (48) displays that only Lamo maintains a native form whereas (49) shows that only Lamo borrowed a Tibetic form although these two words are in the same category: numerals.

Note that several examples of verbs in Drag-yab sMar, such as (39) and (46), show a person-marking (nasalisation of a vowel for the 1st person; for controllable verbs), which totally lacks in Lamo.

Table 5: Larong sMar roots different from the other two languages

No.	Meaning	Lamo	Larong sMar	Drag-yab sMar
(52)	be sick	⁻ŋo	´nɵ̰	´nɛ ŋa
(53)	rain	´mo	⁻tsu	´mo

Note that example (52) in Drag-yab sMar shows a person-marking (-a vowel for the 1st person; for noncontrollable verbs), which are not attested in Lamo and Larong sMar.

Table 6: Drag-yab sMar roots different from the other two languages

No.	meaning	Lamo	Larong sMar	Drag-yab sMar
(54)	wear	´to ᵑgʉ	⁻ᵑgu	´qe
(55)	wind	⁻mɛ̰	´ŋɑ mi	´ʱdʑa ɦgə rə
(56)	wipe	⁻nə ɕə	⁻ɕɛ̰̃	´xɔ̰

Tables 4, 5, and 6 show that Lamo's word forms are more diverse than the others. To sum up, Lamo has experienced relatively independent development on lexical features.

4 Concluding remarks

- Lamo, Larong sMar, and Drag-yab sMar share not a few lexical forms with each other.

- Cognates with a slight difference in initials or vowels are also existent.

- It is still difficult to rule out sound correspondences among them.

- Different roots in each language for a given word are also found.

- From a viewpoint of lexicon, the three languages are in a close relationship.

- Lamo is more diverse in lexical features among the three languages.

- Existence of many Tibetic words makes a comparison complicated.

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