

Negation in rGyalrong

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Summary

This paper outlines the morphological system of negation and related morphosyntactic phenomena in the Bola dialect of rGyalrong. rGyalrong is a Tibeto-Burman language spoken in the northwestern part of Sichuan Province, China. This language has long attracted the attention of scholars because it has strikingly similar, even identical, shapes to some lexical items of Written Tibetan. On the basis of this fact, some scholars regarded rGyalrong as representing a substratum of Old Tibetan. It is true that rGyalrong area and people have been under the strong influence of Tibet historically and culturally. However, Wolfenden and consequent researches revealed that the language has no direct genetic relation with Tibetan linguistically and that it shares common features with the Qiangic languages. On the other hand, however, rGyalrong shares some characteristics with several subgroups of the Tibeto-Burman family and thus is considered as one of the link languages which connect languages that have genetic relations among them. In this sense, a further approach to its typological features is indispensable.

Among the syntactic features of rGyalrong, its complex structure of verb phrase attracted scholars' attention for a long time. This is the reason why many Tibetologists tended to recognize the parallelism of rGyalrong's system to the prefixes of verb roots of Written Tibetan. Some people asserted that it is a reflex of Proto-Tibeto-Burman morphosyntax, and some others thought that it is a later development. Concretely, the verb phrase structure of this language can be generalized as:

VPfinal → P1- P2 - P3 - P4 - P5 - ROOT - (s) - S1

Negation is specified at the P1 position. P1 is the mood marker, which represents the speaker's attitude toward and judgment of the state and/or the other party. It may contain question, order, *negation*, supposition and optative.

In the previous works of this language, the negation marker was constantly mV-shaped. For instance, Lin (1993), the first comprehensive grammar of ICogtse dialect, describes two negation markers, *ma* (*mɛ*) and *mə*, explaining their distribution and functions. All the recent descriptions have followed Lin. However, I found *ja-* and *ji-*, beside *ma-*. This paper gropes for their synchronic usage and historical origin.

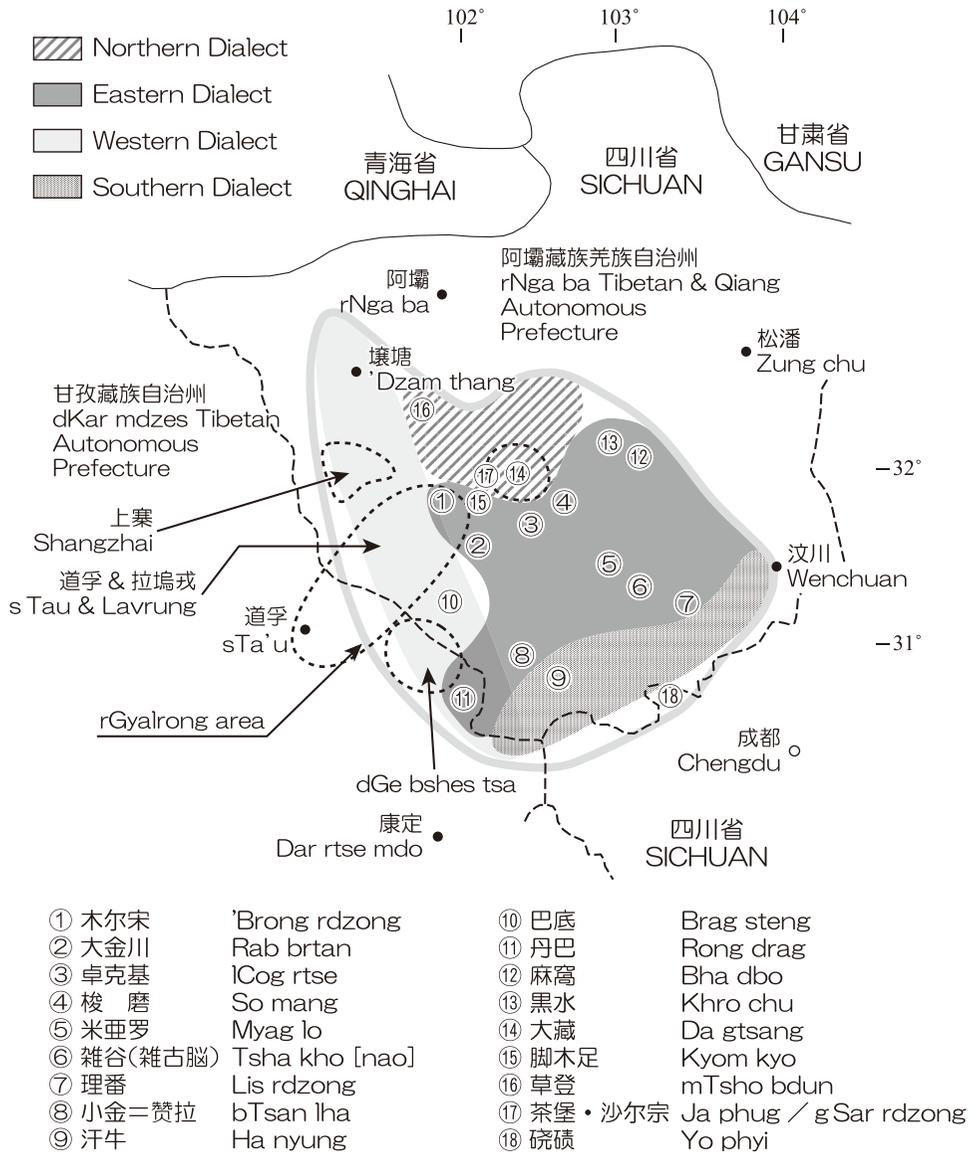
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关键词：嘉绒语、羌语支、否定辞、动词组、藏缅语

1. Introduction

rGyalrong is a Tibeto-Burman (TB) language that is spoken in the northwestern part of Sichuan Province, China; it is usually classified in the Bodish branch. This language has long attracted the attention of scholars. Some of them have regarded rGyalrong as representing a similar taxonomic level as written Tibetan (WT) because some of rGyalrong's lexical items are very close, even identical, to the WT orthography; others have tried to position this language as a link among TB languages in general because of its characteristic morphological components. In fact, it shares some characteristics with several subgroups of the Tibeto-Burman family and thus is considered to be one of the link languages connecting genetically related languages. While existing link languages are diverse in type, many still retain their archaic forms at different levels, and their descriptions are thought to be indispensable for the reconstruction of Proto-Tibeto-Burman.

The rGyalrong area has had close connections with Tibet, both historically and culturally. In particular, this area is known for its religious importance, as it served as a major shelter for Bon followers and produced many great Tibetan Buddhist scholars. Mainly for this reason, rGyalrong people borrowed many WT words, and those lexical shapes, along with Tibetan affixes, were incorporated into the rGyalrong language. That is why the rGyalrong language was once considered to represent an ancient form of Tibetan. However, Wolfenden (1929, 1936) and consequent studies have denied any direct genetic relation between Tibetan and rGyalrong based on the analysis of a larger inventory of collected lexical items, while discovering the fact that rGyalrong retains lexical forms and morpho-syntactic mechanisms as old as those of Proto-TB, and that a number of its grammatical characteristics (such as sophisticated pronominalization system) and their agreement can be thought to have been invented in later times. In addition, the theory that rGyalrong shares a common origin with the Qiangic languages, and not with Tibetan, is now widely accepted. These studies rely on two methods: the comparison of basic vocabularies and the analysis of verb structures and rGyalrong's typological characteristics in morphosyntax. The former is a generally used method in historical linguistic studies, while the latter is unique to TB studies, which helps us to recognize the typological features of syntax and the developmental role of a number of affixes in the VPs of rGyalrong. In rGyalrong, highly complex yet well-structured syntactic rules are at work, and these rules, in turn, provide important clues in the study of Proto-TB syntax. In this context, I would like to describe the negation system in the Bola dialect of rGyalrong.



Map Distribution of the rGyalrong dialects and rGyalrongic languages © Yasuhiko Nagano 2018

2. Outline of phonology

2.1 Syllable

The syllable canon of the Bola dialect of rGyalrong can be generalized as (C1)C_i(G)V(C_p) (C2), where the parenthesized portions are optional. C1 can be occupied by p-, t-, k-, r-, l-, s-, š-, m-, or n-. All the consonants shown in the next section, except fi, can stand at C_i. V stands for vowel, and G is glide, which includes -r-, -l-, -w- and -y-. The following may appear at (C_p): -p-, -t-, -k-, -ʔ-, -č-, -s-, -fi-, -m-, -n-, -ñ-, -l-, -r-, -w-, and -y-. C2 is -s or the pronominal suffix S1, including n, ñ, ñ̃, č, w, and y.

2.2 Consonants

Consonant phonemes are the following:

| | | | | |
|--------|-----------|--------|--------|------|
| p ph b | t th d | ʈ ʈh ɖ | k kh g | ʔ |
| | ts tsh dz | č čh ǰ | c ch j | |
| | s z | š ž | | h fi |
| m | n | | ñ | ñ̃ |
| | r | | | |
| w | l | | y | |

2.3 Vowels

Vowels are: /a, i, u, e, o, ə, ɐ/. Tones are not distinctive.

3. The general structure of the rGyalrong verb phrase

Since “negation” is closely related to the language’s VP structure, and its marker mainly appears in VPs, I would like to summarize the VP structure of rGyalrong. rGyalrong sentences are either simple or complex. Simple sentences have one verb complex that is necessarily the final one, while complex sentences have any number of non-final verb complexes and a final one. The structure is illustrated schematically as:

$$[(\text{NP})+\text{VP}_{\text{non-final}}]^n(\text{particle})[(\text{NP})+\text{VP}_{\text{final}}] (\text{AUX}) \quad (n=0, 1, \text{ or } 2)$$

VP_{non-final} is infinitive, where ka- prefixes action verbs while kə- appears with stative verbs.

A VP_{final} has the following general structure and it constitutes a word:

$$\text{VP}_{\text{final}} \rightarrow \text{P1-P2-P3-P4-P5-ROOT-(s)-S1}$$

P1 is the mood marker, which represents the speaker’s attitude toward and judgment of the state and/or the other party. It may contain question, an order, prohibition, “negation,” supposition, and optative.

P2 is the tense/aspect marker, which specifies the past/non-past distinction and the various aspects of motion that verbs express. For the sake of the past/non-past distinction, directive markers play important roles. Directive markers are descriptively tense markers, but historically, they seem to have been aspect markers.

P3 is the evidential marker, which indicates the information’s directness/indirectness and the mirativity of the utterance.

P4, pairing up with S1, represents a pronominal affix. P4 and S1 specify agreement.

P5 is the voice marker, as well as adverbial affixes of manners, indicating causative, repetitive, reciprocal, applicative, and some others.

The morpheme -s is a single derivative suffix to the root. It may appear between the root and S1 only with “process” verbs. It also marks the verb as being in the perfective.

The shape of the verb root is single. Lin (2000) and Prins (2011) claim that the past/non-past contrast is expressed by different root forms (different vowels or the existence of ʔ), but my present informant says that the roots of the past and of non-past are identical. Lin’s observation (1993) seems to be the same as mine.

4. Negation markers

Affixes in the P1 position are mood markers. These include question, negation, prohibition, and irrealis markers.

We have three negation markers: *ma-*, *ja-*, and *ji-*. *ma-* is the negation marker for the non-past or imperfect, while *ja-* and *ji-* mark the past or perfect. The distribution of *ja-* and *ji-* is closely related to the main verb’s volitionality; the stronger the volition, the more frequently *ja-* appears. In the case of prohibition, *ji-* is always used, while *ʔa-ji-* always appears in the negative optative.

(01) *wuʃo* *tsay* *to-ki-w=ren,* *məza* *tshonkhaŋ* *ma-čhe.*
 3s vegetable PST-buy-3=because 3s shop NEG-go

‘Because he buys vegetables, she doesn’t go to the shop.’

(02) *wuʃo* *tsay* *to-ki-w=ren,* *məza* *tshonkhaŋ* *ja-čhe.*
 3s vegetable PST-buy-3=because 3s shop NEG-go

‘Because he bought vegetables, she didn’t go to the shop.’

- (03) štə thə kə-nos kə-mak ĵi-čis.
 this what NOM-LKV NOM-LKVneg NEG-say

‘(He) didn’t say what it is nor what it is not.’

- (04) sce ĵi-ro-n.
 here NEG-come-2s

‘Don’t come here.’

- (05) təmu ʔa-ĵi-lat.
 rain IRR-NEG-fall

‘(I hope) it doesn’t rain.’

I have outlined negation in rGyalrong, including the recent morphological innovation, which has not hitherto been described.

In previous monographs, negation is always marked by *ma-*. In Lin (1993), the first reference grammar of the lCogtse dialect, it is asserted that adverbs of negation mainly modify verbs or adjectives, representing negation and/or prohibition. The adverbs Lin describes are *ma(mə)* and *mə*. The first of these indicates “the intent not to do something,” while the latter means “not yet finished doing something” or prohibition (Lin 1993: 312–313). Lin quotes the following:

| | |
|----------------|---------------------------|
| ŋa ma ki-ŋ. | “I don’t buy.” |
| mə mə zə-u. | “He doesn’t eat.” |
| no mə tə-pə-u. | “You don’t do (that).” |
| ta-pu mə mʃor. | “The child is not cute.” |
| ŋa mə pəŋ. | “I haven’t finished yet.” |
| wəjo mə za-u. | “He has not yet eaten.” |
| ŋa mə to-m. | “I have not hit him.” |
| ŋa mə mʃor. | “I was not beautiful.” |
| no mə tə-zə-u. | “Don’t eat.” |
| no mə tə-lət. | “Don’t hit.” |

My former informant, a native speaker of the lCogtse dialect who helped me in 1980–1981, used the system of negation that Lin (1993) describes. As I noted in Nagano (2003), negation is always marked with *ma-*, which is placed immediately before the VPfinal, VPnon-final, or auxiliary verb. This observation is common to all the existing monographs, including Lin (1993) and Nagano (2003). After 1985, when fieldwork in the rGyalrong area first became possible, however, we found that the younger generation used *ja-* and *ĵi-* as

well as *ma-*. Prins (2011), the most recent reference grammar for the Kyomkyo dialect, also describes the use of *ma-*, *mə-* and *ji-*.

We will describe here how these three markers, *ma-*, *ja-* and *ji-*, are used and how they are distributed. It seems to be a general tendency that *ja-* and *ji-* occur in the past tense or the perfective, while *ma-* appears in the non-past or imperfective. Let us examine them in detail.

4.1 Negation in the intransitive structure

The following examples show a typical contrast between *ja-/ji-* and *ma-*.

- (06) *wuʃo* *tsay* *to-ki-w=ren* *məza* *tshonkhan* *ja-čhe*.
 3s vegetable PST-buy-3=because 3s shop NEG-go

‘Since he bought vegetables, she didn’t go to the shop.’

- (07) *wuʃo* *tsay* *to-ki-w=ren* *məza* *tshonkhan* *ma-čhe*.
 3s vegetable PST-buy-3=because 3s shop NEG-go

‘Since he bought vegetables, she doesn’t go to the shop.’

It is grammatical to use *ji-čhe* instead of *ja-čhe* in (06), but it presupposes a special environment or condition where his purchase of the vegetables compels her not to go to the shop.

The following three sentences also contain an interesting contrast:

- (08) *wuʃo* *w-ərjap* *nə-sar* *w-ənkhu=y*,
 3s 3s:GEN-bride PST-draw 3s:GEN-after=LOC
maʃumaʃu *čhe* *səmuy {sə-mot=y}* *ja-čhe*.
 often *chang* place-drink=LOC NEG-go

‘Since he got married, he didn’t often go to bars.’

- (09) *wuʃo* *wərjap* *nə-sar* *w-ənkhu=y*,
 3s 3s:GEN-bride PST-draw 3s:GEN-after=LOC
čhe *səmuy {sə-mot=y}* *ja-to-čhe*.
chang place-drink=LOC NEG-PST-go

‘Since he got married, he never went to bars. (He stopped his custom of going to bars.)’

- (10) wuǰo w-ərjap nə-sar w-ənkhu=y,
 3s 3s:GEN-*bride* PST-draw 3s:GEN-*after*=LOC
 čhe səmuy {sə-mot=y} ma-na-čhe.
chang place-d*rink*=LOC NEG-PROG-go

‘Since he got married, he has not been going to bars (as a custom).’

These examples are parallel to (06) and (07) regarding the distinction between *ǰa-*, *ǰi-*, and *ma-*. (08) indicates that the protagonist refrained from frequenting bars, while (09) implies that he gave up his customary practice of going to bars. The affix *-to-* in (09) *ǰa-to-čhe* is a direction marker that indicates that the action takes place in an upward direction. This usage is similar to “up” in “to finish up” and “to eat up” in English, and the sentence (09) stands for his intent to flatly give up drinking. In these instances, the actions are based upon his intent, and therefore, *ǰi-* does not occur.

- (11) wuǰo kuru? zinkey {zinkam=y} ǰikthal {ǰa-yi-kə-thal}=tə
 3s Tibet area=LOC NEG-DIR-3s-go(past)=DEF
 thakčhot nə-ño.
 certain EVI-LKV

‘It is certain that he didn’t go to Tibet.’

The underlying form of this VP should be regarded as {*ǰa-yi-kə-thal*}, instead of {*ǰi-kə-thal*}, as the verb root *thal* always requires a directive *yi-*. *kə-*, a pronominal affix for the third person, is optional, and *yi-thal* is also grammatical.

- (12) wuǰo w-əmñak ǰa-mǰup w-əčhes, təmño no-pa-w.
 3s 3s:GEN-*eye* NEG-close 3s:GEN-*since* show PST-see-3

‘Since he could not sleep, he saw the show.’

- (13) wuǰo w-əmñak ma-mǰup w-əčhes, təmño pa-w.
 3s 3s:GEN-*eye* NEG-close 3s:GEN-*since* show see-3

‘Since he cannot sleep, he will see the show.’

The word structure *eye-close*) of the VP (*tə-*)*mñak mǰup* “to sleep” looks as if it is transitive, but it behaves intransitively. When we say “to close one’s eyes,” a causative marker should appear before *mǰup*.

The following is an example of the use of *ǰi-* for a natural phenomenon:

- (14) wuḷoyo tāmñama wastot ḷupa {ḷa-wu-pa} nə-mak.
 3p cultivation well NEG-3p>3-do EVI-LKVneg
 pewa təmu kəmča ḷi-lat.
 this year rain many NEG-fall

‘It is not that they did not cultivate well. It did not rain a lot this year.’

4.2 Negation in the transitive structure

The negation system of the ḷa-/ḷi-/ma- distinction is parallel to that of the intransitive structure. The following three groups of examples present a typical contrast:

- (15) wuḷo tama ko-pa=či, čhiṭe ḷa-lat.
 3s work PST-do=when car NEG-hit/do

‘When he worked, he didn’t drive a car.’

- (15a) wuḷo tama pa-w=či, čhiṭe ma-lat.
 3s work do-3=when car NEG-hit/do

‘He does not drive a car when he works.’

- (15b) wuḷo tama pa-w=či, čhiṭe ma-nə-lat.
 3s work do-3=when car NEG-PROG-hit/do

‘He usually does not drive a car when he works.’

- (16) wuḷo tama ḷa-pa-w=ren, wungra munadət {ma-wu-na-dət}.
 3s work NEG-do-3=since wages NEG-3p>3-PROG-give

‘Because he didn’t work, they have not paid him his wages.’

- (16a) wuḷo tama ḷa-pa-w=ren, wungra mudət {ma-wu-dət}.
 3s work NEG-do-3=since wages NEG-3p>3-give

‘Because he didn’t work, they will not pay him his wages.’

- (16b) wuḷo tama ḷa-pa-w=ren, wungra judət {ḷa-wu-dət}.
 3s work NEG-do-3=since wages NEG-3p>3-give

‘Because he didn’t work, they did not pay him his wages.’

- (16c) wuḷo tama ma-pa-w=ren, wungra mudət {ma-wu-dət}.
 3s work NEG-do-3=since wages NEG-3p>3-give

‘Because he doesn’t work, they will not pay him his wages.’

- (17) wuḷoyo štə w-əḷim nunphar {no-wu-nphar} ju-nphar {ḷa-wu-nphar}
 3p this 3s:GEN-house PST-3-sell NEG-3-sell

nutho? {nə-wu-tho?}.

PST-3-ask

‘They asked if (someone) sold this house or not.’

- (17a) wuḷoyo štə w-əḷim ka-nphar ma-nphar nutho? {nə-wu-tho?}.
 3p this 3s:GEN-house INF-sell NEG-sell PST-3-ask

‘They asked if (someone) would sell this house or not.’

- (18) wuḷo gyagar=y no-we no-ḷo=y, ḷa ja-mto-ḷ.
 3s India=LOC PST-come EVI-LKV=LOC 1s NEG-see-1s

‘Although he has already arrived in India, I haven’t seen him.’

- (18a) wuḷo gyagar=y no-we no-ḷo=y, ḷa ma-wardo-ḷ.
 3s India=LOC PST-come EVI-LKV=LOC 1s NEG-meet-1s

‘Even though he has arrived in India, I will not meet him.’

In these examples, the distribution of ḷa- and ma- is straightforward, and ḷi- never appears. However, ḷi- occurs with the same root, -mto-, in the following sentences:

- (19) štə w-ərmi kəci no-ḷo=y ḷi-mto-ḷ.
 this 3s:GEN-person where EVI-LKV=LOC NEG-see-1s

‘I didn’t see this person anywhere.’

- (20) məza thə-ke=tsə ja-mto-w.
 3s(she) what-one=CONJP NEG-see-3

‘She saw nothing whatsoever.’

Looking at the contrastive examples (18) through (20), the distribution of ḷa- and ḷi- seems to be related to volitionality. Let us examine ḷa- and ḷi-, which appear with verbs of cognition, judgment, and/or senses.

- (21) wuʃo sə w-əʃim ngu=y no-ñi-s jikšəñ {ji-kə-šə-ñ}.
- 3s who 3s:GEN-house in=LOC PST-stay-PFV NEG-1-know-1s

‘I didn’t know whose house he stayed in.’

- (21a) wuʃo sə w-əʃim ngu=y kə-ñi=tə makšəñ {ma-kə-šə-ñ}.
- 3s who 3s:GEN-house in=LOC INF-stay=DEF NEG-1-know-1s

‘I don’t know whose house he stays in.’

- (22) wu-tondak mə-nə-(tə-)šə-w?
- 3s:GEN-meaning Q-PST-(2-)understand-2s>3

‘Have you understood the meaning?’

- (22a) jikšəñ {ji-kə-šə-ñ}.
- NEG-1-understand-1s

‘I didn’t understand.’

- (23) wuʃo kupa w-əskat ma-šə-w=tə ɲa jikšəñ {ji-kə-šə-ñ}.
- 3s China 3s:GEN-language NEG-know-3=DEF 1s NEG-1-know-1s

‘I didn’t know that he did not understand the Chinese language.’

The verb šə “to know” usually requires ji- in the perfective. This verb is transitive, but taking the pronominalization pattern into account, only (22a) shows a transitive structure; the others have an intransitive pattern.

The verb čis “to say” takes ji- in the perfective. For instance:

- (24) wuʃoyo kupa=y kə-čhe-ñ kə-ɲos kə-mak ji-čis.
- 3p China=LOC 3-go-3p NOM-LKV NOM-LKV NEG-say

‘They didn’t say whether they would go to China or not.’

- (24a) wuʃoyo kupa=y kə-čhe-ñ kə-ɲos kə-mak ma-čis.
- 3p China=LOC 3-go-3p NOM-LKV NOM-LKV NEG-say

‘They will not say whether they will go to China or not.’

- (25) wuʃoyo štə thə kə-ɲos kə-mak ji-čis.
- 3p this what NOM-LKV NOM-LKVneg NEG-say

‘They didn’t say what this would be or not.’

- (25a) wuḷoyo štə thə kə-nos kə-mak ma-nə-čis.
 3p this what NOM-LKV NOM-LKVneg NEG-DIF-say

‘They won’t say what this is or not.’

The following three groups of examples show a good contrast for ja-/ji-/ma-:

- (26) wuḷo sce ma-we=tə ji-səso-n̄.
 3s here NEG-come=DEF NEG-think-1s

‘I didn’t think that he would not come here.’

- (26a) wuḷo sce ma-we=tə ma-nə-səso-n̄.
 3s here NEG-come=DEF NEG-EST-think-1s

‘I don’t think that he does not come here.’

- (27) wuḷoyo kor mupay {ma-wu-pa-y} ji-səso-n̄.
 3p aid NEG-3>1-do-1p NEG-think-1s

‘I didn’t think that they would not help us.’

- (27a) wuḷoyo kor mupay {ma-wu-pa-y} ma-nə-səso-n̄.
 3p aid NEG-3>1-do-1p NEG-EST-think-1s

‘I don’t think that they will not help us.’

- (28) štə w-əma kə-ra kə-mak=tə ja-səso-w.
 this 3s:GEN-work INF-need INF-LKV=DEF NEG-think-3

‘He didn’t think that this work was not important.’

- (28a) štə w-əma kə-ra kə-mak=tə ma-nə-səso-w.
 this 3s:GEN-work INF-need INF-LKV=DEF NEG-EST-think-3

‘He doesn’t think that this work is not important.’

- (29) wuʝo w-ərjap kə-sar ʝi-səso nə-ño=y,
 3s 3s:GEN-bride INF-pull NEG-think EVI-LKV=LOC
 wu-pəma-ʝis wu-sə-sar nə-ño.
 3s:GEN-parent-d 3p>3-CAUS-pull EVI-LKV

‘Even though he has not thought about marriage, his parents will make him marry.’

- (29a) wuʝo w-ərjap kə-sar ʝa-nə-səso nə-ño=y,
 3s 3s:GEN-bride INF-pull NEG-EST-think EVI-LKV=LOC
 wu-pəma-ʝis wu-sə-sar nə-ño.
 3s:GEN-parent-d 3p>3-CAUS-pull EVI-LKV

‘Even though he has not thought about marriage, his parents will make him marry.’

- (29b) wuʝo w-ərjap kə-sar ma-nə-səso nə-ño=y,
 3s 3s:GEN-bride INF-pull NEG-EST-think EVI-LKV=LOC
 wu-pəma-ʝis wu-sə-sar nə-ño.
 3s:GEN-parent-d 3p>3-CAUS-pull EVI-LKV

‘Even though he doesn’t think about marriage, his parents will make him marry.’

We see both ʝi- and ʝa- with the same root səso- “to think,” which connotes several grades of volitionality, covering “to remember” > “to consider” > “to regard” > “to dream” > “to hope.” In the examples above, we may hypothesize that ʝi- tends to appear in lower volitionality utterances, while ʝa- is for those of higher volitionality. The sentences (29) and (29a) are evidence for this. The estimative marker nə- appears in (26a) and not in (26); this also seems to be related to volitionality. It should be noted that the five sentences (28a) through (29b) show a transitive pattern in terms of pronominalization, while (26) and (26a) show an intransitive pattern.

4.3 Negation of adjectives

The following are typical cases of the negation of adjectives. However, I cannot give any clear-cut explanation for the co-occurrence of ʝa- and ʝi- in the past.

- (30) *tham žimpa-yo ñi-loto ja-sna.*
 now farmer-p 3p-production NEG-good

‘These days, the farmers’ production has not been good.’

- (30a) *tham žimpa-yo ñi-loto ma-nə-sna.*
 now farmer-p 3p-production NEG-DIF-good

‘In these days the farmers’ production is not good.’

- (31) *yiño tama jikskoy {ji-kə-skos-y}=tə žuñ=kə yiṭhul nə-pa-w.*
 1p work NEG-1-diligent-1p=DEF government=ERG punishment PST-do-3s

‘The government punished us for not having been diligent in work.’

- (31a) *yiño tama maks koy {ma-kə-skos-y}=tə žuñ=kə yiṭhul pa-w.*
 1p work NEG-1-diligent-1p=DEF government=ERG punishment do-3s

‘The government will punish us for not being diligent in work.’

4.4 Negation of auxiliary verbs

A general tendency is observed in which *ma-* appears in the non-past tenses, while *ja-* and *ji-* appear in the past; however, it is difficult to show any clear distribution for *ja-* and *ji-* in the negation of auxiliary verbs in the past. It may be possible to assert, however, that the negation used is related to the main verb’s meaning, transitivity, and volitionality.

4.4.1 The auxiliary verb *ra*

The auxiliary verb *ra* may occur with *ma-*, *ja-*, or *ji-*.

- (32) *domor təmu kəmcə no-lat w-əčhes, təmñā=y təji ja-ra.*
 last year rain many PST-fall 3s:GEN-since field=LOC water NEG-AUX

‘Because we had a lot of rain last year, we did not need to irrigate.’

- (32a) *domor təmu kəmcə no-lat w-əčhes, təmñā=y təji ka-lat ma-ra.*
 last year rain many PST-fall 3s:GEN-since field=LOC water INF-hit NEG-AUX

‘Because we had a lot of rain last year, we do not need to irrigate.’

- (32b) *domor təmu kəməča no-lat w-əčhes, təmñə=y təji ka-lat ma-nə-ra.*
 last year rain many PST-fall 3s:GEN-since field=LOC water INF-hit NEG-DIF-AUX

‘Because we had a lot of rain last year, we do not need to irrigate.’ (⇐ judgment based on experience)

- (33) *žuñ ñi-nbe=y ʰəl kəməča ka-dət ji-ra no-ño=y,*
 government 3p:GEN-for=LOC tax many INF-give NEG-AUX EVI-LKV=LOC

wu-zinkam yargyes kə-kte to-čhe.
 3s:GEN-country development(<WT) INF-big PST-go

‘Although (they) didn’t need to pay a high tax, the country developed a lot.’

- (34) *wujoyo ñi-šamdu ji-ra no-ño=y tuki {to-wu-ki}.*
 3p 3p:GEN-gun NEG-AUX EVI-LKV=LOC PST-3-buy

‘Although they didn’t need to buy guns, they bought (some).’

We have *ja-* in (32) and *ji-* in (33); from these examples, we may speculate that “to irrigate” involves a higher volitionality than “to pay tax.” In (34), we have no main verb, and *ji-* occurs more often in such cases.

4.4.2 The auxiliary verb *čha*

The auxiliary verb *čha* “to be able to” may co-occur with *ma-*, *ja-*, or *ji-*. The examples below indicate that in the past/perfect, *ja-* appears with a transitive verb, while *ji-* appears with an intransitive verb; *ma-* appears in the non-past/imperfect.

- (35) *kunʈen loto ka-sə-sna ja-čha.*
 commune production INF-CAUS-good NEG-AUX

‘That commune could not improve their production.’

- (35a) *kunʈen loto ka-sə-sna ma-čha.*
 commune production INF-CAUS-good NEG-AUX

‘That commune won’t be able to improve their production.’

- (35b) *kunʈen loto ka-sə-sna ma-nə-čha.*
 commune production INF-CAUS-good NEG-DIF-AUX

‘(It is predictable based on experience that) the commune won’t be able to improve their production.’

- (36) *ña loṕṭey {loṕṭa=y} ka-čhe ji-čha-ń.*
 1s school=LOC INF-go NEG-AUX-1s

‘I could not go to school.’

4.4.3 The auxiliary verb tso

The auxiliary verb tso “have time to do something” requires *ma-* in the non-past and *ji-* in the past. For instance:

- (37) *ña loṕṭey {loṕṭa=y} ka-čhe ji-tso-ń.*
 1s school=LOC INF-go NEG-AUX-1s

‘I had no time to go to school.’

- (38) *kə-nəndza ma-tso-ń.*
 INF-eat NEG-AUX-1s

‘I have no time to eat.’

- (39) *kə-nəndza ji-tso-ń.*
 INF-eat NEG-AUX-1s

‘I had no time to eat.’

4.4.4 The auxiliary verb yok

We have no example of the auxiliary verb yok “to be allowed” in the past tense.

- (40) *ña təjīm w-əngu=y ka-ngo mə-yok.*
 1s house 3s:GEN-in=LOC INF-go (upstream) Q-AUX

‘May I come into the house?’

- (40a) *ka-we ma-yok.*
 INF-come NEG-AUX

‘(You are) not allowed to come into.’

4.4.5 The auxiliary verb lo

The auxiliary verb lo “to be just about to do” takes *ma-* in the non-past and *ja-* in the past. We have no example of *ji-lo*.

- (41) wuḷoḷis j̄im ngu=y kə-čwat ʃa-lo.
 3d house in=LOC INF-go home NEG-AUX

‘They two were not about to go home.’

- (41a) wuḷoḷis j̄im ngu=y kə-čwat ma-lo.
 3d house in=LOC INF-go home NEG-AUX

‘They two are not about to go home.’

4.4.6 The auxiliary verb r̄ño

The auxiliary verb r̄ño may take ʃa-, ʃi-, or ma-, but it is a general tendency that “experience” is expressed in non-past structures. As a result, ma- appears frequently.

- (42) ṅa gyagar=y ka-čhe nə-r̄ño-ṅ no-ṅo=y,
 1s India=LOC INF-go PST-AUX-1s EVI-LKV=LOC
 nəčey kəmča ka-ṅi ma-r̄ño-ṅ.
 duration many INF-stay NEG-AUX-1s

‘I have ever been to India, but I haven’t stayed long.’

- (43) wuḷo kuru? zinka=y {zinkam=y} ka-čhe ma-r̄ño-w.
 3s Tibet area=LOC INF-go NEG-AUX-Non1

‘He has never been to Tibet.’

In contrast to (42) and (43), (42a) and (43a) are grammatical, but their respective meanings become “I have ever been to India, but I did not stay long (before some specific point of time)” and “He had never been to Tibet.” The appearance of ʃi- and ʃa- depends upon the person, but parallel examples are rare.

- (42a) ṅa gyagar=y ka-čhe nə-r̄ño-ṅ no-ṅo=y, nəčey kəmča ka-ṅi ʃi-r̄ño-ṅ.

- (43a) wuḷo kuru? zinka=y ka-čhe ʃa-r̄ño-w.

4.5 The distribution of ʃa- and ʃi-

The distribution of ʃa- and ʃi- is conditioned by the volitionality of the verbs, as seen in (29) and so on. The following sentences also provide good evidence for this:

- (44) wuʃo ka-we makčha {ma-kə-čha} mak. ma-we no-ńos.
 3s INF-come NEG-3-can LKVneg NEG-come EVI-LKV

‘It is not that he cannot come. He doesn’t (simply) come.’

- (45) wuʃo ka-we ʃikčha {ʃi-kə-čha} nə-mak. ʃa-we no-ńos.
 3s INF-come NEG-3-can EVI-LKVneg NEG-come EVI-LKV

‘It is not that he could not come. He didn’t come (by intent).’

- (46) wuʃo ʃi-we nə-mak. ʃa-we no-ńos.
 3s NEG-come EVI-LKV NEG-come EVI-LKV

‘It is not that he (simply) didn’t come. He didn’t come (by intent).’

In relation to the past root, we usually use *wi-* “to come,” but because the negation markers *ʃi-* and *ʃa-* are exclusively used for the past/perfect, *we-* is also acceptable in (45) and (46).

The following two examples illustrate the same contrast:

- (47) wuʃo khri=zə kə-mak ʃi-ndza-w.
 3s rice=than NOM-LKV NEG-eat-Non1

‘He didn’t eat anything but rice.’

- (48) wuʃo khri=zə kə-mak ʃa-ndza-w.
 3s rice=than NOM-LKV NEG-eat-3

‘He intentionally didn’t eat anything but rice.’

In (47), he did not eat because he was following his own will or taste, while in (48), he intentionally chose to eat rice only due to some external reason or situation.

To summarize, the following can be deduced:

- ① rGyalrong has three kinds of negation markers: *ʃa-*, *ʃi-*, and *ma-*.
- ② *ma-* is a negation marker for the non-past/imperfect, while *ʃa-* and *ʃi-* are used for the past/perfect, which matches Lin’s (1993) description of *mə-*.
- ③ The distribution of *ʃa-* and *ʃi-* is related to the verb’s volitionality. The stronger the volition, the more frequently *ʃa-* appears.
- ④ *ʃi-* is always used for prohibition.
- ⑤ In the negative optative, *?a-ʃi-* is used, in which *?a-* is an irrealis marker.

4.6 The origin of *ǰa-* and *ǰi-*

Since Wolfenden, there has been no description of *ǰa-* and/or *ǰi-*. Given that these negation markers are frequently used in my informant's parents' (who are presently in their late 70s) generation, the following explanation may be suitable:

- ① In the dialect's normative utterances, *ma-* was the only negation marker, but *ǰa-* and *ǰi-* were present in colloquial negative forms in the past/perfect.
- ② The marker *ma-* has a phonetically similar shape to the question marker *mə-*. To avoid collapse, a different phonetic shape was adopted.
- ③ According to Lin (1993), *ma-* was the negation marker for the imperfect, and *mə-* was used for the perfect. To avoid confusion between the two, *ǰa-* and *ǰi-* were created.

Prins (2011: 485–486) gives a slightly different and descriptive interpretation, reporting that *ma-* indicates the non-past, while *ǰi-* is tied to the past/perfective, and *mə-* indicates prohibition. However, the pattern's historical origin remains unknown.

In TB language groups, there are two main lines of negation: **mV-* and **tV-*. In most languages, one of the two is dominant, and the other is present as an archaism. Likewise, in rGyalrong, it seems possible that **tV-* became *ǰa-* after a pattern of historical change. Suzuki (2017) claims that the negation marker /*ka-*/ in Khams Tibetan originated from the question marker /*ka-*/ “where.” If this is taken as plausible, rGyalrong's *ǰa-/ǰi-* may be related to WT *ci-* or *ji-* “what, which.” Nevertheless, it remains unclear why *ǰa-/ǰi-* should be used for the past/perfective negation.

Examining other TB languages, we see no similar shape of negation in neighboring languages, such as Qiang, although we do find that Garo has *ja-*, which functions as negation marker. Burling (1961: 18) describes *-ja-* or *-gi-ja-* infixes and suffixes representing negation in VP, noting that *ku-ja-* means “not yet done” or behaves simply as a negation marker in the past tense. The latter seems important for clarifying the historical origin of the negation marker.

Although the frequency of occurrence is quite low, *ʔa-* does appear as a negation particle, separately from *ǰa-/ǰi-/ma-* as shown in the following example:

| | | | | |
|------|-------------|----------------------|---------------|----------------|
| (49) | <i>nəʃo</i> | <i>ʔa-nə-nak=tsə</i> | <i>menkor</i> | <i>mə-ndə.</i> |
| | 2s | NEG-IMPS-hurry=COND | train | NonV-go |

‘Unless you hurry, the train is going to depart.’

This *ʔa-* is very much like /*ʔa/* in /*ʔa-yin/*, meaning “no kidding” in modern colloquial Tibetan, but it seems improbable that it would have been borrowed. Rather, we must consider the parallelism to the irrealis marker *ʔa-* in the negative optative.

4.7 The prohibition marker

Prohibition is always marked by *ji-*. *ma-* never occurs.

- (50) *sce ro-we-n.*
 here DIR-come-2s

‘Come here!’

- (50a) *sce ji-we-n.*
 here NEG-come-2s

‘Don’t come here!’

- (50b) *sce ji-nbi-n.*
 here NEG-come(HON)-2s

‘Please don’t come here!’

- (51) *ka-pši ji-pa-w.*
 INF-sing NEG-song-2s

‘Don’t sing!’

- (52) *wužo mə-nə-ngo=zə, tama ji-sə-pa-w.*
 3s Q-NonV-sick=if work NEG-CAUS-do-NonI

‘If he is sick, don’t let him work!’

4.8 The negative optative

The negative optative is expressed as *?a-ji* + verb root, in which *?a-* is an irrealis marker. Refer to sentence (05) and the summary presented in Section 4.5. It is uncertain whether this irrealis marker is cognate to *?a-*, which nominalizes directives, or cognate to the negation marker at the PTB level.

5. Afterword

I have described the negation system in rGyalrong, including morphological innovation, which has not been described in previous monographs. In that respect, this small paper can contribute to TB linguistics. At the same time, however, we now have a lot of questions concerning this innovation. In order to answer those, we are expected to collect materials on negation in other dialects and analyze their typological and historical evolution.

Abbreviations

| | | | |
|-------|-------------------------------------|------|---|
| 1 | first person | IDEF | indefinite |
| 2 | second person | IMP | imperative |
| 3 | third person | IMPS | impersonal |
| d | dual | INF | infinitive |
| ex | existence | INS | instrumental |
| n | noun | INV | inverse |
| neg | negative | IRR | irrealis |
| p | plural | LKV | linking verb |
| s | single | LOC | locative |
| v | verb | NEG | negative/negation |
| < | originated from the right | NIF | new information |
| > | action going from the left to right | NOM | nominalizer |
| { } | underlying form | Non1 | non-first person |
| ABL | ablative | NonV | non-volitional |
| ABT | absolute tense | NP | noun phrase |
| ADVR | adverbializer | OPT | optative |
| ALA | agentless action | P | prefix |
| APP | applicative | PFV | perfective |
| ATT | attenuant | POS | possessive |
| AUX | auxiliary verb | PROG | progressive |
| CAUS | causative | PROH | prohibitive |
| COND | conditional | PST | past tense |
| CONJ | conjunction | Q | question |
| CONJP | conjunctive particle | S | suffix |
| DEF | definite | SFP | sentence-final particle |
| DIF | direct information | ST | Sino-Tibetan |
| DIR | directive/direction marker | TB | Tibeto-Burman |
| ERG | ergative | VP | verb phrase |
| EST | estimative | WT | written Tibetan |
| EVI | evidential | - | morpheme boundary |
| FOC | focus marker | = | constituent boundary one degree higher than “-” |
| GEN | genitive | | |
| HON | honorifics | | |

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