

Tichurong-Tibetic influence in the grammar of Kaike (Nepal)

Scholars generally agree that the Tamangic (Tam.) languages are closely related with Tibetic (Tib.), and that Kaike and Ghale are closely related with the Tam. languages, but no one has substantiated these assumptions beyond assessing the (percentage of) basic vocabulary which the involved languages share (e.g., Glover 1971; Nishi 1982; Honda 2008, 2014). Investigating the sentence-final suffixes of Kaike, the present paper demonstrates that this language was heavily influenced by Tichurong (Tich.), the Tib. variety which all Kaike speakers are also fluent in (Regmi 2012), and at the same time supports the idea that Kaike has a Tam. core.

Kaike *V-ce*, for instance, indicates a future action planned by the speaker, as exemplified in (1). Given that this suffix is used in the exact same way in Tich., see example (2), while the only *-ce* found in other Tam. languages refers to completed events, as in (3) from Nar-Phu, it appears safe to assume that Kaike *-ce* was borrowed from Tich.

(1) Kaike (Regmi 2013: 95)

ŋa ŋ^hikə woi-ce
1sg later go-PROSP
'I will go later.'

(2) Tichurong Origin Story (our own recordings), line 41

ta tsuu ki-ce? di mide gaŋpo sōö-ce in-ɬo neä-ta
now how do-PROSP this mide all kill-PROSP EQ-POT said-now
'So what should we do? We might have to kill all these *mide* (better known as *yetis* in the west), they said.'

(3) Nar-Phu (Noonan & Hildebrandt 2003: 549)

hota=se tū-ce phi tū mumû
3SG=ERG stay-CONV speak stay be:PRES
'Having sat down, he sits speaking.'

Kaike *-ji*, on the other hand, indicates that an event may or may not take place in the future, as exemplified in (4). This suffix likely derives from the verb *n(y)i* meaning 'go', which is found in Tam. languages such as Western Tamang (Taylor 1973: 162) and Nar-Phu (Noonan & Hildebrandt 2017: 537), but not in Tich. or any other Tib. variety. However, the way this suffix is used in Kaike is an exact copy of how the synonymous verb *ɬo* 'go' is used in Tich., see example (2) above, and other Tib. varieties such as Ladakhi (Koshal 1979: 192).

(4) Kaike (Watters 2006: 313):

ŋa naptse woi-ji
I tomorrow go-POT
'I might go tomorrow.'

The investigation of further suffixes supports the idea that Kaike is a Tam. language that has been heavily influenced by Tich.: Kaike *-pa* is used in the same ways in Western Tamang (see Mazaudon 2017: 474, 482, 486, etc.) and other Tam. varieties and thus appears to have been inherited from Proto-Tamangic. The 'disjunct' past marker *-bo*, by contrast, likely derives from Tich. *po* 'went', and the 'perspectivizing' *-ta* from the synonymous suffix found in Tich. and other Tib. varieties such as Purik (see Zemp 2018: 707–710).

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