

On the Languages of the Jingpo Nationality*

Dai Qingxia

Dept. of Languages and Literatures of the Minority Nationalities
 Central Institute for Nationalities, Beijing

Translated by Randy J. LaPolla
 Institute of History & Philology, Academia Sinica

This article discusses certain characteristics of language use among the Jingpo (Kachin) nationality, with a view towards exploring how social factors have influenced language use and development in an ethnic group that uses several languages.

1. The subgroups of the Jingpo nationality and their languages

The people of the Jingpo nationality live mainly in Luxi (潞西), Ruili (瑞麗), Longchuan (隴川), and Yinjiang (盈江) counties of the Dehong (德宏) Dai and Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture in Yunnan Province. They number about 100,000. The Jingpo nationality can be divided into five subgroups: the Jingpo (景頗), the Zaiwa (載瓦), the Leqi (勒期), the Lang'e (浪峨), and the Bola (波拉). The following is a chart summarizing the names by which each group addresses itself and the other group:

	Jingpo	Zaiwa	Leqi	Lang'e	Bola
Jingpo	tʃiŋ ³¹ phoʔ ³¹	a ³¹ tsi ⁵⁵	lǎ ³¹ ʃi ⁵⁵	mǎ ³¹ zu ³¹	pɔ ³¹ lo ³¹
Zaiwa	si ⁵⁵ tuŋ ⁵⁵	tsai ³¹ va ⁵¹	lǎ ³¹ tʃhi ⁵⁵	lǎ ³¹ laŋ ⁵¹	pǎ ³¹ lo ³¹
Leqi	phuk ⁵⁵ vu ⁵¹	tsai ³¹ vu ⁵¹	lǎ ³¹ tʃhi ⁵¹	laŋ ³¹ vu ⁵¹	pǎ ³¹ lo ⁵¹
Lang'e	phauk ⁵⁵ vɔ ³¹	tsa ³⁵ vɔ ³¹	lǎ ³¹ tʃhik ⁵⁵	lo ³¹ vɔ ³¹	pǎ ³¹ lo ³¹
Bola	phauk ³¹ va ³¹	ti ³¹ va ³¹	lǎ ³¹ tʃhi ³⁵	lõ ³¹ va ³¹	pǎ ³¹ la ⁵⁵

The Jingpo people have a strong sense of national identity. Not only is each member of the nationality aware of the particular subgroup to which s/he belongs, but s/he is also clear about the subgroup affiliation of everyone s/he knows. To outsiders they refer to themselves as the Jingpo, but among themselves they like to use their subgroup names, considering themselves

* The materials used in this paper were kindly provided by Duoshe Yongtang (toʔ³¹ ʃi³¹ joŋ⁵⁵ thaŋ⁵⁵), Kong Zaoruo (tʃǎ³¹ khuŋ³³ tsau³¹ zo³³), Kong Zhi'en (tʃẽ³¹ khǝ³¹), and Zha Duo (tʃa³¹ to³¹). I would like express my gratitude to them, as well as to two of my graduate students, Liu Juhuang and Fu Ailan, who went with me to do the fieldwork for this paper and assisted in some of the work.

members of distinct ethnic branches. This division into branches is one of the important characteristics of the Jingpo, and it has played a key role in the history of the nationality.

The members of the various branches live in geographically overlapping areas. The Jingpo and Zaiwa, the most populous subgroups, occupy large areas. The Xishan (西山) district in Luxi county, the Zhanxi (盏西) district in Yinjiang county, and the Dengjia(等戛) area in Ruili county are inhabited by the Jingpo. The Leqi, Lang'e and Bola subgroups have smaller populations, and their communities are generally limited to the size of single villages. Most areas have mixed populations; only a few villages are inhabited entirely by people of a single subgroup. In a multi-subgroup village, usually one subgroup is recognized as the main subgroup. Yinqian township (引欠) in the Santaishan (三台山) district of Luxi county is a typical multi-subgroup township. Every village in this township is inhabited by people from several different subgroups, but within each of these villages one subgroup predominates. For example, the Zaiwa are considered the main subgroup in Bangwa (邦瓦) village, the Lang'e predominate in Yinqian village, the Leqi predominate in Guanglin (广林) village, and the Bola outnumber the others in Kongjia (孔家) village. There are also a few villages containing different groups in relatively equal proportions. In villages inhabited by people from different clans, families often include people of different clans.

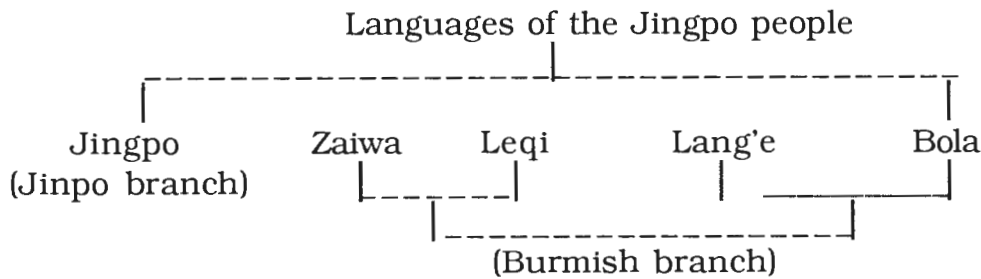
The various subgroups within the Jingpo nationality have similar economic systems and modes of production, similar marriage and funeral customs, similar styles of dress, and similar religions. Although the Jingpo subgroups may have developed out of different proto-groups historically, they gradually came to resemble one another through a long period of contact, and developed into a single nationality. The differences among the subgroups are mainly manifested in their languages; each subgroup has its own distinct tongue, and the line which separates the subgroups is the same as the one that separates the languages.

As to the classification of the five languages, it is my opinion that they all belong to the Tibeto-Burman sub-family of Sino-Tibetan, but to two different branches within Tibeto-Burman. The Jingpo language belongs to the Jingpo branch, while the Zaiwa, Leqi, Lang'e, and Bola languages belong to the Burmish branch. Jingpo is unlike the other four, in that it has many characteristics different from those of the Burmish languages. For example, Jingpo bilabial and velar consonants not only have palatalized forms, but also have retroflex forms; the majority of simple words are disyllabic and have a reduced first syllable; there are few measure words, and even these are not required when nouns are counted as individual units; causatives are marked by adding a prefix to the simplex form; there are numerous predicate particles which inflect to express mood, person, number, and direction.

Morphologically the language is rich, including morphophonemic alternation, reduplication, and affixation. Even more important, many words in Jingpo are not cognate with words in the other four languages. Also the rules of sound correspondence between cognates in Jingpo and the other languages are quite irregular, and there are only a few examples of each sound correspondence. The following are examples of some of the non-cognates:

gloss	Jingpo	Zaiwa	Leqi	Lang'e	Bola
man	mǎ ³¹ fa ³¹	pju ⁵¹	pju ³¹	pju ³¹	pju ⁵⁵
nose	lǎ ⁵⁵ ??	no ⁵¹	nu ³³	no ³¹	na ⁵⁵
tongue	fiŋ ³¹ ??	fo ⁵¹	ju ³³	fo ³¹	fa ⁵⁵
bee	lǎ ³¹ ??	pjǒ ³¹ jaŋ ³¹	pju ³³	pjǒ ³⁵ jǒ ³¹	pja ³¹
eagle	kǎ ³³ ??	??	tsɔn ⁵¹	tsum ³¹	tsɔn ⁵⁵
bear	tsap??	vam ⁵¹	wɔm ³¹	vɛ̃ ³¹	vɛ̃ ⁵⁵
monkey	wo??	mju ³¹	mjuk ³¹	mjauk ³¹	mjau ³¹
tree	phun ⁵⁵	sik ⁵⁵	sək ⁵⁵	sək ⁵⁵	sək ⁵⁵
house	n??	jum ⁵¹	jo ³³	jam ³¹	jam ⁵⁵
needle	sǎ ⁵⁵ ??	ap ⁵⁵	ŋap ⁵⁵	ŋɛ ³⁵	ŋɛ ⁵⁵
one	lǎ ⁵⁵ ŋal ⁵¹	za ³¹	ta ³¹	ta ³¹	ta ³¹
old	tiŋ ³¹ la ³³	maŋ ³¹	ma:ŋ ³³	mǒ ³⁵	mǒ ³¹
deep	suŋ ³¹	nik ³¹	nək ³¹	no ³¹	na ³¹
new	n ³¹ nan ³³	a ³¹ sik ⁵⁵	a ³¹ sək ⁵⁵	sək ⁵⁵	sək ⁵⁵
many	lo ³⁵	mjo ³¹	mjo ³³	mjo ³⁵	mja ³¹
high	tso ³¹	mjaŋ ⁵¹	mjaŋ ³³	mjo ³¹	mjo ⁵⁵
ascend	luŋ ³¹	to ³¹	to:ŋ ³¹	to ³¹	ta ³¹
cry	khzap ³¹	ŋau ⁵¹	ŋau ³¹	ŋuk ³¹	ŋau ⁵⁵
wear	phun ⁵⁵	vut ³¹	vut ³¹	vɛ ³⁵	vɛ ⁵⁵
sell	tut ³¹	uŋ ³¹	vɔŋ ⁵⁵	auŋ ³⁵	auŋ ⁵⁵

Zaiwa, Leqi, Langsu, and Bola are close to Burmese and Achang, all belonging to the Burmish branch of TB, and all sharing characteristics not found in Jingpo. These languages share many cognates, but monolingual speakers of different languages have difficulties communicating with each other. The main differences in the languages involve sound correspondences and the use of different lexical items; there are few grammatical differences. Whether the differences should be considered language differences or dialect differences is not yet clear. As for the relationships between the different languages of the Burmish branch, Zaiwa is closer to Leqi, while Lang'e is closer to Bola, and Zawai and Leqi are closer to Achang, while Lang'e and Bola are closer to Burmese. The following table illustrates the genetic relationships of the languages of the Jingpo people:



2. Characteristics of language use within the Jingpo nationality

Two noteworthy aspects of language use by members of the Jingpo nationality are its stability and concurrence. Stability here refers to the fact that people of different subgroups prefer to use their own languages. As a result, a rich body of linguistic materials and literature, such as poems, stories, proverbs, and maxims, have developed in each language. Concurrence refers to the fact that besides the language of their own subgroup, many members of the Jingpo nationality can use the languages of two or three other subgroups with facility and without confusing them with their own language. Naturally, the people in mixed communities show higher concurrent language use than those in areas where only one subgroup is represented.

The choice of which language to use when members of two different Jingpo subgroups meet is not arbitrary. Rules involving social setting, generation, age, sex, and occupation govern the choice of language use. In the following section, we analyse some important social settings and study the use of various subgroup languages by members of the Jingpo nationality.

In the family: Many Jingpo families include people from different subgroups. In such families, the language used by each member is stipulated by tradition. The children belong to their father's subgroup, and they use the language of that subgroup. If a father and mother are from different subgroups, the father and children use one language and the mother uses another. Although husband and wife each master the other's language, each uses his or her own. In other words, people speak in one language but are spoken to in another. The mother insists on using her own language, and the children may also use their mother's language when speaking to her, yet she demands that the children use their father's language when communicating with each other and with him. If a family has a grandmother who speaks a third language, the younger generation uses her language when speaking to her. Thus, three different languages may be used simultaneously. The preference for the father's tongue is probably rooted in the patrilineal tradition of the Jingpo family. The Jingpo nationality was once a matrilineal society, but now monogamy is the custom and the father

is the head of the household. Children use their father's surname and genealogy is patrilineal. The children's use of the mother's language when speaking to her may be a vestige of the older matriarchy. It shows that the female still holds a certain position in the family. Families are the cells of a society, natural units of a nation. They inevitably and strongly reflect people's awareness of the language and the position of the language in people's minds.

Let us take Kongjia village in Yinqian County as an example of how languages are used in Jingpo families. The village includes members of several subgroups of the Jingpo, but Bola people predominate. Eleven out of the twenty families in the village are Bola, nine are Long'e, and one is Zaiwa. Since Jingpo people having the same surname can not marry each other, and since the people of the Bola branch in this village all have the same surname, 'Kong' (tʃɛ̃³¹ khaŋ³⁵), the Bola in Kongjia village have all married people of other subgroups. Except for one family where a Long'e man married a Long'e woman, all of the villagers have married people from subgroups other than their own. The following is a detailed chart of the marriage situation in Kongjia village:

family name	family head	wife of family head
lɛʔ ³¹ ʃan ³⁵	Bola	Zaiwa
taŋ ⁵⁵ lɔn ³⁵	Bola	Zaiwa
tʃɛ̃ ³¹ khɔ̃ ³¹	Bola	Zaiwa
lɔn ³⁵ khɔ̃ ³¹	Bola	Zaiwa
tʃɛ̃ ³¹ lɔn ³⁵	Bola	Zaiwa
taŋ ⁵⁵ ɣɛ̃ ⁵⁵	Bola	Lang'e
taŋ ⁵⁵ khɔ̃ ³¹	Bola	Lang'e
tʃɛ̃ ³¹ kham ³⁵	Bola	Lang'e
tʃɛ̃ ³¹ tse ⁵⁵	Bola	Lang'e
lɔ̃ ³¹ xɔ̃ ⁵⁵	Bola	Lang'e
khɔ̃ ⁵⁵ tʃɛ̃ ³¹	Bola	Lang'e
xɔ̃ ⁵⁵ khɔ̃ ³¹	Lang'e	Bola
lau ³⁵ nɔʔ ⁵⁵	Lang'e	Bola
lum ⁵⁵ khɔ̃ ³¹	Lang'e	Zaiwa
khɔ̃ ³¹ tse ³¹	Lang'e	Zaiwa
kjuŋ ⁵⁵ tau ³⁵	Lang'e	Zaiwa
tau ³⁵ khɔ̃ ³¹	Lang'e	Zaiwa
lau ³¹ tsa ⁵⁵	Lang'e	Zaiwa
khɔ̃ ³¹ tau ³⁵	Lang'e	Lang'e
thaŋ ³¹ tau ³⁵	Zaiwa	Lang'e

Family composition determines the necessity of concurrent language use. Everyone in the village is able to use his or her 'native' (i.e. father's) language and is also capable of using one or two other subgroup languages fluently. Within the family, the rule that the children's language follows that of the father's is strictly observed. If anyone tries to change the rule, he is criticized by the older generation and by the public in general. For example, there is one family named $\text{taŋ}^{55} \text{kh}\text{ɔ}^{31}$, with nine children. The father is Bola, the mother is Lang'e. Therefore, Bola is the official 'native language' of the children, but the children are much closer to their mother, and for many years they used the Lang'e language at home. The father became upset and asked the children to change their language. Later, the children stopped using the Lang'e language except to speak to their mother.

In social situations: In social situations (outside the family), the use of the various subgroup languages is governed by different rules. Age and environment play important roles. Young people and adults can use each other's languages while conversing with people their own age. The preferred language is often the main language spoken in a given area. Sometimes the chosen language is whichever one both parties are familiar with. When adults talk to older people, they like to speak their own language to show respect. When young people from different subgroup are dating, the man usually speaks the woman's language to show his love for her. After marriage, men usually switch back to their own languages. When old people chat together, each one uses his or her own language. But children are more casual, and may use each other's languages according to the needs of the moment.

At school: Many schools in the Jingpo autonomous region include students from different subgroups. No strict rules dictate the use of a particular language. Generally the language of the majority of students is the language used in school. But students from the same subgroup, even though they might be in the minority, still like to use their own language when speaking to each other.

At weddings and funerals: The language used in weddings is usually the bridegroom's. This tradition again reflects the patrilineal tradition of the Jingpo. The word for 'marry' in Jingpo is $\text{num}^{31} \text{la}^{55}$, meaning 'take a woman'. Once married, a woman belongs to the man. A woman's social position is lower than a man's. The use of the bridegroom's language at a wedding reflects the relative power of men in marriage. Of course if only a few people understand the bridegroom's language, then the language of the bride can be used instead. During funeral ceremonies the shaman determines the language to be used based on the deities to be sacrificed to. In Christian areas, people pray in Jingpo because the Bible has only been translated into that language.

The existence of subgroup languages is a special phenomenon in the unification of a nationality. A nationality is formed step by step. Due to all sorts of factors in its social-historical development, each nationality follows a different path of development. When various communities merge into one nationality, it is always the case that in the process of assimilation some characteristics, such as customs and habits, are lost, but languages are not. Language becomes the last characteristic retained by different communities. It is the 'last line of defense' against complete merger of the subgroups. If various subgroups have had many features unified, they should be considered as a unified nationality. It is possible that each subgroup retains its own language. That does not hinder the unity, for a unified nationality can accommodate several different languages. The forming and development of the Jingpo nationality is a case in point. The Jingpo nationality is composed of several different subgroups that developed into a unified nationality. Although many important features of the subgroups have been unified, there still exist differences. However, the difference is mainly based on language use. For the present, the Jingpo have two kinds of consciousness concerning their nationality. One is the consciousness of the national unity. No matter what subgroup they belong to, they always consider themselves as the same nationality. Governed by this kind of consciousness, people from different subgroups have lived harmoniously and cooperatively in the same villages for generations, sharing the same lifestyle, and are able to form new families. Especially when they are with people of other nationalities, this kind of national consciousness is very strong. The other kind of consciousness is the consciousness of subgroup differences. The Jingpo people all believe that there are different subgroups within the nationality, and each knows clearly which subgroup he or she belongs to. The coexistence of the two kinds of consciousness reflects the fact that on the one hand the Jingpo have developed into a unified nationality, but on the other hand differences still exist within that nationality.

What power makes the people have such a loving feeling towards their own language that they try their best to give the language an independent position in the family as well as society? We interviewed some Jingpo people, and many of them answered: "Whichever subgroup one belongs to, one should use that subgroup's language. This is the dignity of the subgroup." "One would be laughed at if he didn't speak his own subgroup's language." It is obvious that the consciousness of subgroup differences is stable in people's minds. It has become a "formless" national characteristic. Different subgroups in the Jingpo nationality have their own different experiences in history. There are different myths, legends, and folklore about each subgroup's history. These are the essential factors which characterize the subgroups. However, the main difference between the

subgroups today is that of language. To different subgroups, any difference but language is easily lost to assimilation.

The stability of language is very strikingly evident in the use of the subgroup languages of the Jingpo. The concurrent use of the subgroup languages reflects the further merging of the Jingpo nationality since it was unified. Generally, in order to insure that communication is possible within the unified nationality, a common language is necessary. No doubt, the existence of subgroup languages is not conducive to national communication. In order to resolve the contradiction, the concurrent use of subgroup languages has become established. It is a transitional stage that has arisen because the use of a unified language is not yet possible. It can be said that the concurrent use of the subgroup languages is the main step the Jingpo people have taken to further reduce the differences between the subgroups since the unified nation was formed.

3. The development of the subgroup languages of the Jingpo nationality

Since the various languages were all spoken by people belonging ultimately to the same nationality, the languages have inevitably influenced and conditioned each other, despite their individual distinctive features and rules of development. The main characteristic of development of the use of these various languages has been that the concurrent use of language and language shift have gradually increased, and the sphere of language influence has been increasingly extended.

Along with the continuous increase of social intercourse between peoples of various subgroups in the Jingpo area and the continuous rise of the cultural and scientific level of the whole Jingpo nationality, more and more people are capable of using other subgroup languages. Especially in the past few decades the concurrent use of languages has greatly developed. Thus the custom of using one's own language has suffered a certain amount of erosion and has consequently been relaxed. This phenomenon can be seen commonly among cadres, intellectuals, and students. In some cadres' and intellectuals' families, the children adopt their mothers' language as their native tongue, and are not criticized by their fathers. In Longchuan County there is a family (with the surname 'Guo' (kɔʔ³¹ 1u³¹)) of which the head is a cadre who is a Zaiwa married to a Jingpo woman. The children all use their mother's language, and the cadre himself also speaks Jingpo in the family. But when the children go to their grandfather's home, they are required to speak Zaiwa. Some young students are not particular about the language they use and they just use whatever language is convenient. Usually the older the age of the people involved, the more particular they are in using languages and the stronger their resolve is to retain their own languages.

When the concurrent use of the language develops to a certain degree, language shift emerges. In some areas where the Jingpo live, such a phenomenon has already emerged. The conditions for the shift are always related to migration and changes of family members. There are more than forty families in Nansai village in Mangbang township, in the Xuangang district of Luxi county. Thirty years ago they still spoke Jingpo when they lived in the Xishan area. After they moved to Nansai, the next generation switched to Zaiwa because they were surrounded by Zaiwa. Now only the older generation can speak Jingpo. Almost all the young people can only speak Zaiwa. Lüliang village in Longchuan is mainly inhabited by Jingpo. Some of the Leqi and the Zaiwa who live there have switched to using the Jingpo language. There are all together twenty-three families in this village, of which eleven are Jingpo, seven are Leqi, and five are Zaiwa. Five of the Leqi families and two of the Zaiwa have switched to Jingpo, mainly because more people in this village speak Jingpo, and the mothers in those families are Jingpo. Aside from this, the fact that some people attended Jingpo language schools in Burma is also a factor in the shift to Jingpo. The following is a table summarizing the combinations of families in this village and their use of different languages.

Language shift is a natural and necessary step in the development of the Jingpo languages. Generally, a unified nationality develops in the direction of reducing differences and enlarging the pool of common characteristics. In a situation where various languages coexist within one group, language shift is the most effective way to overcome language barriers. Without a doubt, it takes a long time for this shift to be realized, and the realization of the shift is not without obstacles, because people always tend to retain their own languages out of their own group consciousness. Thus there are always factors which restrict language shift. Yet the power of language shift is irresistible. The fact that more and more people switch their language is good evidence of this.

Out of the five languages, Jingpo and Zaiwa are the two main languages used in situations of concurrent use and shift. This is probably due to the factors of population size, distribution, and social development of the Jingpo nationality. Although there are not a great many Jingpo subgroup people in China, there is a relatively large number in Burma. There is also a writing system for the Jingpo language. Therefore cultural education in Jingpo is relatively more advanced than that in the other subgroup languages. Students from other subgroups studying at schools using the Jingpo language can master it very quickly. The Zaiwa subgroup has the largest population (of the five subgroups) in China, and they are concentrated in certain areas, so they exert a definite influence on the other groups. In order to adapt themselves to these circumstances, many people have learned the Zaiwa language. The forming of these two centers among the

five Jingpo languages is the main tendency in the development of the Jingpo nationality at present.

Mutual influence among various languages in contact is one of the features of language development. Among the Jingpo it is mainly manifested in lexical borrowing. Among the five languages, the Jingpo language has the greatest influence. Each subgroup has borrowed certain lexical items from Jingpo. Following are some examples:

gloss	Jingpo	Zaiwa	Lang'e	Bola
handkerchief	pha ³¹ tʃet ³¹	phě ³¹ tʃet ³¹	phă ³¹ tʃet ³¹	pě ³¹ tʃet ³¹
shaman	tum ³¹ sa ³³	tum ³¹ sa ⁵⁵	tum ³¹ sa ³⁵	tum ³¹ sa ³⁵
emperor	kho ³³ kham ³³	xo ⁵⁵ kham ³¹	kho ³⁵ kham ⁵⁵	kho ³⁵ kham ⁵⁵
try hard	ʃă ³¹ kut ³¹	ʃă ³¹ kut ³¹	ʃă ³¹ kut ³¹	ʃă ³¹ kut ³¹
diligent	kjet ³¹	kjet ³¹	kjet ³¹	kjet ³¹
happy	kă ³¹ pu ³³	kě ³¹ pu ⁵⁵	kă ³¹ pu ⁵⁵	kă ³¹ pu ³⁵
blessed/lucky	ŋon ³³	ŋon ⁵⁵	ŋon ⁵⁵	ŋon ³⁵
busy	kjin ⁵⁵	kjin ³¹	kjin ⁵⁵	kjin ³¹
clean	san ³¹ seŋ ⁵⁵	san ³¹ seŋ ⁵¹	san ³¹	san ³¹ seŋ ⁵⁵
sorrowful	jon ³³	jon ⁵⁵	jon ³⁵	jon ³⁵
move (home)	thot ³¹	thot ³¹	thot ³¹	thot ³¹
on purpose	tiŋ ³¹ saŋ ³³	tiŋ ³¹ saŋ ⁵⁵	təŋ ³¹ ʃɔ̃ ³⁵	təŋ ³¹ saŋ ³⁵
lazy	lă ³¹ kon ³¹	lă ³¹ kon ³¹	lă ³¹ kɔn ³¹	(nɔ ³⁵)

Jingpo has also borrowed some words from Zaiwa, but very few:

gloss	Zaiwa	Jingpo
hoe	ʃam ⁵¹ khop ⁵⁵	ʃaŋ ⁵⁵ khop ⁵⁵
small bamboo container	kje ⁵⁵ tok ⁵⁵	kje ⁵⁵ tok ⁵⁵
hammer	pat ³¹ tu ⁵¹	pat ³¹ pau ³³
something you chew (used in weddings)	ŋja ⁵⁵ kai ⁵⁵	ŋja ⁵⁵ kai ³³

The four languages of the Jingpo people that are in the Burmish branch share many phonetic features, but are in many ways different from Burmese and Achang. For example, the Jingpo languages have only voiceless stops and fricatives, while Burmese has both voiced and voiceless stops and fricatives; the Jingpo languages have only voiced nasals and laterals, while Burmese and Achang have both voiced and voiceless nasals and laterals; all four Jingpo languages retain seven stop endings (-m, -n, -ŋ, -p, -t, -k, -ʔ), while Burmese (Rangoon dialect) has only one consonant ending (-ʔ), the nasal endings having reduced to nasalization on the preceding vowel; the

Jingpo languages have a tense-lax vowel distinction, while Burmese does not. The fact that their languages are so close to each other phonetically is probably due to their distribution, concurrent use, and mutual influence.

Judging from the direction of development, it is not possible that the Jingpo languages will become unified through language influence. Judging from the present situation, the speed of language influence is rather slow. Aside from this, the existing developmental characteristics of each language will bring up new differences between the languages. Therefore, language shift will necessarily be the way that the Jingpo languages will be unified.