

Certain Phonological Peculiarities of Taku Tibetan

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Abstract

Taku is an obscure variety of Tibetan spoken at Sandagu Village in Luhua Town of Heishui County in northern Sichuan. Situated in a remote borderland between Amdo Tibetan and Northern Qiang, this previously unstudied Tibetan variety is unintelligible to speakers of the mainstream Tibetan dialects (in particular Amdo and Khams) on first contact, owing to its unusual phonological, grammatical, as well as lexical features. Examples of its phonological peculiarities include a *glide* ɟ realization of Written Tibetan <r-> (reminiscent of Northern Qiang) and its voiceless counterpart ɟ^h as reflex of Written Tibetan <sr->, abundance of central vowels, phonemic opposition of velar, uvular, and glottal fricatives, and lack of phonemic tone despite massive syllable-canon reduction. In this talk, a selected number of phonetic and phonological features of special interest for Tibetology and Sino-Tibetan linguistics will be presented, with forays into their historical origins.