

What lies behind Wobzi Consonant Clusters?

Lai Yunfan

ILPGA, CRLAO

Abstract

Wobzi is a dialect of Lavrung, a Rgyalrongic language spoken in Chuchen County, Rngaba Autonomous Prefecture of Tibetan and Qiang.

The extremely elaborated consonant clusters in the onset position of Lavrung are under analysis in this talk.

A Lavrung onset can reach up to five or more consonants. Huang (2007) finds an example with five consecutive consonants in the dialect of Guanyinqiao: *ɛvrɔdzyə* “hatch”; Yin (2007) and my own fieldwork show a number of examples with four-consonant onsets in Njorogs and Wobzi: Wobzi. *ɛnscʰə* “hibernate”, etc. As a result, we are interested in how these consonants are organised and what they tell us about the phonology of the language.

In this talk, we are going to give a phonological account to the structure of the Wobzi onset and the way to derive a Wobzi onset.

We will first examine the different roles (pre-initials, initial and medial) of the onset by applying the reduplication test, which contributes to the analysis of its structure. Then we will focus on the pre-initial hierarchy, using various phonomorphological tests (resyllabification, reduplication, etc). The hierarchy will be dealt with by modern phonological theories.

Finally, we will see how these phonological rules work in a whole syllable and even an utterance.

References

- Clements, G.N. 1990. The role of the sonority cycle in core syllabification. in J. Kingston & M. Beckman, eds. *Papers in Laboratory Phonology I*: 283-333. CUP, Cambridge.
- Clements, G.N. 1997. Berber Syllabification: Derivations or Constraints? in I.M. Roca, ed. *Derivations and Constraints in Phonology*: 289-330. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dell, F. & Elmedlaoui, M. 1985. Syllabic consonants and syllabification in Imdlawn Tashlhiyt Berber. *Journal of African Languages and Linguistics* 7: 105–130.
- Huang, Bufan. 2007. 拉坞戎语研究 *Lawurongyu Yanjiu*. Beijing: Minzu Chubanshe.
- Keren D. Rice. 1992. On deriving sonority: a structural account of sonority relationships. *Phonology*, 9, pp 61-99
- Yin, Weibin. 2007. 业隆拉坞戎语研究 *Yelong Lawurongyu Yanjiu*. Beijing: Minzu Chubanshe.