

Sūn Hóngkāi 孙宏开, Huáng Chénglóng 黄成龙, Zhōu Máocǎo 周毛草. 2001. A study of Rouruo [Róuruòyǔ yánjiū 柔若语研究]. Beijing: Central Nationalities University Press. 308 pp.

Zauzou (Chinese Róuruò 柔若, autonym [zau⁵⁵zou³³]) is a language spoken by approximately 2100 members of the Nù 怒 nationality mostly living on the banks of the Lánkāng River 澜沧江 in the Tù'é 兔峨 region of Lánpíng County 兰坪县, Nùjiāng Prefecture 怒江州, Yúnnán Province 云南省.¹ It was not known to Chinese linguists until the 1960s. Other than a brief report published in the journal *Mínzú Yǔwén* 民族语文 and a collection of Rouruo data published in Yunnan, the language has not been described.² With the publication of *A Study of Rouruo*, we now have the first substantial grammar of this Lolo-Burmese language of the Tibeto-Burman family.

A Study of Rouruo is one of the publications in the series *New found minority languages in China* 中国新发现语言研究丛书, and is organized according to the general framework of the grammars in this series.³ There are six chapters (1 Overview; 2 Phonology; 3 Lexicon; 4 Syntax; 5 Dialects; 6 Affiliation within Tibeto-Burman), two appendices (1 Word lists; 2 Texts), a bibliography, and a postface. A handsomely-bound hardcover volume, the book provides a comprehensive description of the language. While by no means the final word on the language, this grammar contains sufficient detail to be of substantial benefit to scholars interested in the study of the Lolo-Burmese languages of southwest China.

The contributions of the three authors are detailed in the postface. The phonology chapter was written by Zhōu, the lexicon chapter by Huang Huáng, and the rest of the book, including the extensive word lists, was the responsibility of the principal author Sūn. Because of this division of labor there are some inconsistencies within the book, which will be detailed below.

In the overview chapter, Sūn lays out his views of the cultural, ethnic, and linguistic position of the Rouruo language, and provides some anthropological background. According to Sūn, the Nù nationality are divided into four distinct branches: (1) the Nùsū 怒苏, who speak the Loloish language of the same name; (2) the Ānóng 阿侬 of Fúgòng 福贡 County, who speak Anong, a language Sūn relates to Jingpo; (3) the Anong of Gòngshān 贡山 County, who speak a variety of Dúlóng 独龙 (also known as Trung); (4) the Rouruo, who speak the Loloish language Rouruo. Sūn's justification for the classification of Rouruo as Loloish is given in Chapter 6, which will be discussed below. In 1995, there were approximately 2100 Rouruo speakers. The majority (about 1800) live in a series of villages along the Lancang River, while the remaining 300 live in three villages in Hùshuǐ County 泸水县 in the Nù River region. Rouruo speakers are being assimilated by surrounding ethnic groups, so the future survival of the language is not assured. The autonym [zau⁵⁵zou³³] is apparently cognate to 'Lolo', which is now viewed as a

¹ Chinese terms are given in *pīnyīn* romanization and, at the first occurrence, simplified Chinese characters. After the first occurrence, language names will be given without tone marks. I will refer to Zauzou by the Chinese term Rouruo throughout this article.

² Sūn Hóngkāi 孙宏开 1985. An outline of the Rouruo language of the Nu nationality [Nùzú Róuruòyǔ gài kuàng 怒族柔若语概况]. *Minzu Yuwen* 1985.4. Lǐ Shào'ēn 李绍恩 and Lǐ Zhì'ēn 李志恩 1993. Collected materials of the Rouruo language of the Nu nationality [Nùzú Róuruòyǔ zīliào jí 怒族柔若语资料集]. Yunnan Nationalities Press.

³ For an overview of this series, see Thurgood 2003. Review of *New found minority languages in China Series*. *Language* ??.

pejorative term for the ethnic group known in Chinese as the Yí 彝 (although the term Lolo survives in the linguistic designations Loloish and Lolo-Burmese). Most speakers of Rouruo also speak Lisù 傣傣, and some speak Bái 白. The Rouruo lexicon contains borrowings from Chinese, Lisù, and Bái.

Dialectal variation within Rouruo is minimal, as the two main varieties are mutually intelligible. Because of their similarity, Sun prefers to call them “local varieties” (*tǔyǔ* 土语) rather than “dialects” (*fāngyán* 方言), and notes that their differences lie primarily in phonology. The representative forms of the two varieties are Guǒlì 果力 dialect (representing also the villages Sānjiācūn 三家村 of Hùshuǐ County and Shuǐlìzhài 水利寨 of Lǔzhǎng Town 鲁掌镇) and Jiāngmò 江末 dialect (representing also the villages Xiǎocūn 小村, Tù’ér, Wúpījiāng 吾批江 and Bìjīngǎng 碧鸡岗). The lexicon and grammar chapters deal primarily with Guǒlì data, while the phonology chapter gives a detailed description of both variants. The first appendix gives word lists for both varieties. It is apparent, however, that the variety of Guǒlì described in the main body of the book differs slightly from the form represented in the word list. This is perhaps because the data on Rouruo were collected over a series of fieldwork expeditions from several different speakers. This provides some difficulty for the user of the book who wishes to cite a particular lexical item: should he take the word list form or the form found in grammatical section? While many words are identical in both sections, a significant number are not. For example, consider some of the Guǒlì forms given text in comparison with those found in the word list:

| | <u>grammar</u> | <u>word list</u> |
|-----------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| ‘big’ | ie ³³ (p. 20) | i ³³ (p. 267) |
| ‘cow’ | ŋu ³¹ (p. 55) | nu ³³ (p. 211) |
| ‘to fear’ | ka ⁵³ (p. 18) | kā ⁵³ (p. 262) |

The Jiāngmò forms given in the phonology chapter do match the forms given in the Jiāngmò column of the word list.

I will now summarize and discuss the contents of the remaining book chapters and appendices, some in more detail than others.

Chapter 2: Phonology

Following traditional Chinese linguistic practice, Rouruo syllables are analyzed as composed of three parts: an initial consonant (*shēngmǔ* 声母), all remaining segments of the syllable (*yùnmǔ* 韵母), and the tone (*shēngdiào* 声调). Each of these three parts is described separately. The phonology of the Guǒlì variety is described first, then that of the Jiāngmò variety.

Both varieties have similar phonological structures. All syllables have the basic shape CV. Rouruo is tonal, so that each syllable is pronounced with a lexically determined distinctive pitch contour. There is a two-way manner distinction of initial obstruents, voiceless unaspirated and voiceless aspirated, and a different two-way manner distinction of fricatives, voiced and voiceless. Vowels are described as occurring in four phonations (referred to in Chinese simply as “types” *lèi* 类): plain, nasal, tense, and nasal tense. This four-way contrast may be illustrated by the phonemes /ɛ ɛ̃ ɛ̄ ɛ̄̃/. The exact phonetic nature of the tense vowels is not explained. In Guǒlì, the vocalic portion of a syllable may be a monophthong or a diphthong the first element of which is one of three on-glides /i u y/. In Jiāngmò, diphthongs with off-glides /i u/ are also possible. (Co-occurrence restrictions of on-glides with main vowels in Jiāngmò are illustrated in a chart on

pages 25 and 26, in which slashes represent combinations which do occur.) Jiāngmò also has six triphthongs: /iou, iau, uei, uau, yau, uai/. Both dialects have six tones: two level tones (55 and 33), two falling tones (53 and 31), and two rising tones (35 and 13). There are complex tone sandhi phenomena, which are unfortunately not described.⁴ The Guǒlì low falling and low rising tones are said to vary freely in some lexical items.⁵ (The phonemic inventory of the Guǒlì dialect is reproduced at the end of this article.)

A number of interesting correlations between tone, vowel phonation, and consonant manner are described. For example, in Guǒlì the high falling and low rising tones are mostly found in syllables with tense vowels. Voiceless unaspirated initial obstruents are pronounced as voiced in the 33 and 31 (and its 13 variant) tones. The authors do not speculate on the historical origins of these correlations. One might ask whether the voiced initials are secondary, i.e. conditioned by the tone category, or whether these tones are historically secondary, conditioned by original voiced initials. This is a complex question. Consider, for example, the following Proto-Lolo-Burmese [PLB] forms, which all have proto-tone 1, and their Rouruo cognates (Guǒlì forms from the word list):

PLB roots with proto-tone 1 and voiced initials

| | | |
|------|---------------------|--|
| FOOD | *dza ¹ | tso ³³ [dz-] ‘grain, food; eat’ |
| WORM | *dey ¹ | pə ³³ ti ³³ [d-] ‘roundworm’ |
| TUSK | *dʒway ¹ | tɕyi ¹³ [dʒ-] ‘tooth’ |
| FLY | *byam ¹ | piɔ ⁵⁵ ‘fly’ |
| HAWK | *dzwan ¹ | tsɔ ⁵⁵ ‘eagle’ |
| PAIR | *dzum ¹ | tɕɛ ⁵³ ‘pair’ |

PLB roots with proto-tone 1 and voiceless initials

| | | |
|--------|--------------------|--|
| FOOT | *krəy ¹ | tɕhi ⁵⁵ ‘foot’ |
| UNTIE | *prəy ¹ | phi ³³ xu ³³ ‘untie’ |
| TEN | *tsay ¹ | tshe ⁵⁵ ‘ten’ |
| HORN | *krəw ¹ | ʔo ⁵⁵ khɯ ³⁵ ‘animal horn’ |
| SWEET | *kyəw ¹ | tɕhu ⁵⁵ ‘sweet’ |
| PERSON | *tsaŋ ¹ | tsu ³³ ‘person; human’ |

While there is a clear correlation between PLB voiced initials and Rouruo unaspirated initials, and between PLB voiceless initials and Rouruo aspirated initials, the tonal

⁴ The omission of a description of tone sandhi phenomenon is surprising. The only explanation I can think of is that the authors have not yet themselves worked out the conditioning factors.

⁵ Throughout the book, sandhi tones are marked on morphemes occurring in compound words, while citation tones are marked on monomorphemic words, even if their phrasal context induces tone change (see p. 21). For example, in the word list (page 211) the word for ‘cattle’ appears as nu³³, while this same morpheme occurs as nu³¹ in the compounds nu³¹ to³³ ‘bull’ and nu³¹ mie³¹ ‘cow’.

correspondences are more complex.⁶ The Rouruo correlates of PLB voiced initials occur both in tones which condition initial voicing and tones which do not. Clearly, more analysis is needed.⁷

Chapter 3: Lexicon

This chapter discusses lexical types, morphological processes, four-syllable expressive constructions, and borrowings.

Rouruo, like other languages of the region, is essentially monosyllabic, with a nearly one-to-one relationship holding between morphemes and syllables. Compounding is common, with the result that many Rouruo words are bisyllabic. The authors distinguish between “simple words” (*dānchúncí* 单纯词) consisting of a single morpheme and compound words (*héchéngcí* 合成词) consisting of more than one morpheme. Polysyllabic morphemes (and by extension polysyllabic simple words) are rare. Some examples are given on page 33, and include such words as *pha*³⁵ *vü*⁵³ ‘ant’ and *me*⁵⁵ *mɛ*¹³ ‘dragonfly’. The authors draw a distinction between “empty” morphemes (*xū yǔsù* 虚语素) which function as morphological affixes, and root morphemes with “definite meaning” (*shízài yìyì* 实在意义).

One of the more interesting types of words described is formed by suffixing a grammaticalized measure word to a root noun. This is a richly productive morphological process. For example, the word for ‘eyes’ consists of the measure word *tse*⁵³ ‘pair’ suffixed to the root word *mi*⁵³ *tɕi*³¹ ‘eye’.

Like other Lolo-Burmese languages of the region, the Rouruo lexicon contains a significant number of fixed four-syllable expressive constructions, which can be viewed either as tightly-bound phrases or as loosely-bound words. These can be formed by reduplication of two-syllable words, or from combinations of three or four different morphemes. Examples include *ye*³³ *ye*³³ *ŋu*³³ *ŋu*³³ ‘laughing and crying’, *pio*⁵⁵ *ti*⁵⁵ *pio*⁵⁵ *ta*⁵⁵ ‘flying back and forth’, *ʔa*³³ *kɔ*⁵³ *ʔa*³³ *tshu*⁵⁵ ‘neither cold nor hot’ and *su*⁵⁵ *mi*³¹ *ʔɔ*³⁵ *zu*³³ ‘boys and girls; men and women’.

The authors report that of the more than 2000 Rouruo vocabulary items they have collected, they have identified 310 borrowings: 240 from Chinese, and over 30 each from Bai and Lisu. Based on the phonological shape of the Chinese borrowings, the authors believe they reflect at least two distinct layers, one early and one late. Examples of borrowed words from all three source languages are given on pages 50-53. It is also noted that native morphemes are sometimes appended to borrowed syllables to form compounds which clarify the meaning of the borrowed item. For example, the word for ‘green bean’ in Chinese is *sìjìdòu*, literally ‘four-season bean’. In Rouruo, the native morpheme for ‘bean’ has been appended to the first two borrowed syllables, yielding *se*⁵³ *tse*³³ *nə*⁵³. Sometimes the native affix which is appended to the borrowed item is one of the grammaticalized measure words described above.

Chapter 4: Grammar

The chapter on grammar is the longest in the book, and is copiously illustrated with example sentences. Each sentence is given with interlinear glosses and a Chinese translation. The chapter is divided into two large sections describing parts of speech and syntactic structures. The authors identify eleven parts of speech for Rouruo, each of which is described in some detail: nouns, numerals, measure words, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, structural particles,

⁶ Note that the high rising tone 35, found in the word for ‘horn’, is identified as a secondary tone found primarily in polysyllabic words (p. 21). The lack of aspiration in the Rouruo word for ‘person’ appears to be an irregular development.

⁷ PLB roots with other tones and initial manners of articulation (e.g. prenasalized and preglottalized) must be brought into the analysis.

conjunctions, modal particles, and exclamations. The syntax section first details basic syntactic constituents, and then describes the structure of simple and compound sentences.

There is a significant typesetting error in the introduction of the basic numerals on page 60, most of which are glossed incorrectly. The correct identification of the numerals is as follows:

| | | |
|---|----------|--------------------|
| 一 | one | tu ³¹ |
| 二 | two | nɛ ⁵³ |
| 三 | three | sɛ ³³ |
| 四 | four | yi ³³ |
| 五 | five | ŋo ³³ |
| 六 | six | kha ⁵³ |
| 七 | seven | ne ⁵⁵ |
| 八 | eight | ia ³³ |
| 九 | nine | ku ³³ |
| 十 | ten | tshe ⁵⁵ |
| 百 | hundred | io ⁵⁵ |
| 千 | thousand | tshɿ ³¹ |

Chapter 4 paints a picture of Rouruo as typologically very similar to the Lolo-Burmese languages spoken in Yúnnán Province. It is an analytic language, with grammatical relations indicated through a combination of word order and the use of postpositioned grammatical particles. The basic word order is SOV. Verbal modifiers precede head verbs; nominal modifiers either precede (in the case of attributive nouns) or follow (in the case of adjectives) their head nouns. Nouns are counted with measure words, as in the phrase ŋo³¹ tu³¹ kō⁵⁵ ‘fish one MW’ meaning ‘one fish’. Rouruo is primarily an aspect, rather than a tense, language. The authors identify six distinct aspects, generally marked by means of a clause-final grammatical particle. These are prospective (*jiāngxíng* 将行), imminent (*jíxíng* 即行), progressive (*jìnxíng* 进行), perfective (*yǐxíng* 已行), completive (*wánchéng* 完成), and experiential (*jīngyàn* 经验). Adjectives, though treated as a distinct word class by the authors, are clearly a subtype of verbs, as they can function independently as predicates and in that capacity may co-occur with aspect particles. The main structural particles identified by the authors are a possessive particle, an agent/instrument marker, a patient marker, several locative particles, a comparative marker, an ablative marker, and a comitative particle. The many other grammatical particles of the language (for example those indicating verbal aspect or adverbialization of adjectives) are not treated in the section on structural particles, but are discussed in the sections on nouns, verbs, or adjectives. It is unfortunate that in the interlinear glosses throughout the book, all of these particles are identified simply as *zhùcí* 助词 “particle”, with no further indication of specific function. The reader who wishes to identify the grammatical function of any particle encountered in an interlinear gloss must search through several sections of the book in order to locate a description.

In describing sentence structure, the authors take an atheoretical approach, employing traditional syntactic terminology. The major syntactic constituents identified for Rouruo are: subject (*zhǔyǔ* 主语), predicate (*wèiyǔ* 谓语) (in this case referring to the verb phrase without its nominal arguments), object (*bīnyǔ* 宾语) (encompassing both direct and indirect objects),

attributive (*dìngyǔ* 定语), and adverbial modifier (*zhuàngyǔ* 状语). The authors describe all simple and complex sentences as being composed of these basic constituents in combination with the various grammatical particles already described. Although no particular theoretical approach to syntactic analysis is employed, there is sufficient data provided in the example sentences and the appendices for the theoretically-minded syntactician to make use of. As a trivial example, the authors' description of 'subject' suggests that it might be more profitably viewed as a topic. Consider this example sentence from page 138:

ʔa⁵⁵ku³¹ tu⁵⁵ kɔ³³ tha³¹ ŋu⁵⁵ pi³¹
 this [subject] 3sg ptcl⁸ don't say give

Don't tell him/her about this (matter).

ʔa⁵⁵ku³¹, although it appears at the beginning of the sentence, cannot be considered a subject according to the traditional understanding of this term.

Chapter 5: Dialects

This chapter is a systematic presentation of the differences between the Guǒlì and Jiāngmò varieties of Rouruo. Separate sections deal with phonetics and phonology, vocabulary, and syntax. There are some curious differences between the data given in this chapter and those given in earlier chapters, perhaps attributable to the book's multiple authorship. For example, on page 158 it is noted that in the Jiāngmò dialect, voiceless unaspirated obstruents are realized as voiced in all syllables with the low falling tone, and in some syllables with the mid level and high rising tones.⁹ It is then noted that "Guǒlì dialect no longer has these characteristics." Yet, on page 14, it is clearly stated that Guǒlì voiceless unaspirated initial obstruents become voiced in the mid level and low falling tones.

The phonological differences between the two varieties are significant enough that a comparative reconstruction of an earlier "Proto-Rouruo" would appear to be a useful precursor to comparative work between Rouruo and other related languages. There is certainly enough data in this book to provide the basis for such a reconstruction.

In terms of lexicon, the authors report that there is an 80% overlap in vocabulary between the two varieties (in other words, 80% of all synonym pairs are cognate pairs). The authors divide the cognate pairs into groups according to degree of phonetic similarity, an exercise which is of little historical value but does bear on the question of mutual intelligibility. Unfortunately, the authors do not provide specific explanations for the 20% discrepancy in lexicon between the two varieties, instead simply presenting a number of examples of non-cognate synonym sets (pp. 166-167) and leaving the question open for further investigation.

The syntactic differences between the dialects are exceedingly minor, mainly involving the use of different grammatical particles for certain functions.

Chapter 6: Affiliation within Tibeto-Burman

In this chapter the authors make a detailed comparison of Rouruo with other Tibeto-Burman languages, first to determine its classification within Tibeto-Burman and then, having placed it in the Loloish branch, to determine its position within Loloish. The comparisons are strictly typological. The diagnostic value of the typological features examined, in terms of genetic

⁸ kɔ³³, a structural particle, is the indirect object marker.

⁹ The authors clearly treat these voiced initials as allophones, yet at the same time this description implies that the presence of voicing is lexically conditioned and thus leaves open the theoretical possibility of meaningful contrast between voiceless and voiced obstruents. On page 22, however, it is stated that voiced and voiceless variants are in free variation in the mid level and high rising tones

affiliation, varies considerably, yet the authors treat all the features equally in arriving at their classification. No attempt is made to identify shared innovations or to distinguish between inheritance and convergence. Although a good deal of interesting data is presented in this chapter, the conclusions must be viewed with some skepticism.

In the first section, the linguistic features of Rouruo are compared with features of the five Tibeto-Burman subgroups Loloish, Burmish, Jingpoic, Qiangic, and Tibetic.¹⁰ Some of the features selected for comparison are: Are there consonant cluster initials? Are there uvular initials? How many on-glides are there? Is there a correlation between tone and vowel phonation? Is there a rich system of measure words? Is the syntax analytic or inflectional? The authors supplement the feature comparison with a count of the number of cognate sets found between Rouruo and a selection of languages from the five Tibeto-Burman subgroups.

It should be apparent that these features are of limited value for determining genetic affiliation, at least in the absence of a more nuanced analysis that takes into account principles of language change, divergence, and convergence. For example, one of the features tallied is the presence of a voicing opposition in initial obstruents. Yet it is clear from the present description of Rouruo that a voicing opposition can be lost in a very short time within a language, or might be lost in a representative dialect but preserved in another variety. We also know that new voicing oppositions can arise in the history of a language (for example, through the loss of prenasalization). The mere shared presence of a voicing opposition between two languages should therefore not be taken as evidence of a close genetic relationship. To make that argument, one would instead need to show that the voicing opposition exhibits a pattern of regular correspondence across the two languages which is due to shared innovations in their history.

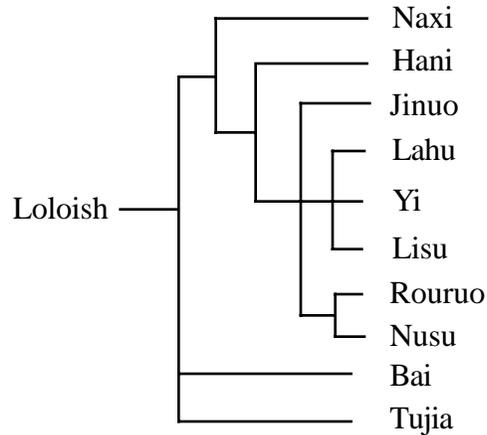
The authors conclude that Rouruo is closest to Loloish in most respects and should be classified as a Loloish language. This conclusion is probably correct, despite the flawed methodology, and is not difficult to confirm based on more reliable techniques. For example, Thurgood, in a concise one-page article, argues based on the data in Sūn 1985 that Rouruo must be Lolo-Burmese, because its initial and tone systems both show certain regular patterns of correspondence with the Proto-Lolo-Burmese initials and tones.¹¹ Because the PLB initials and tones reflect innovations not shared by other Tibeto-Burman subgroups, the only conclusion possible is that Rouruo belongs to this subgroup.

The results of the second section, which attempts to identify the place of Rouruo within Loloish, are less reliable. Rouruo is compared with the Loloish languages Yi, Lāhù 拉祜, Hāní 哈尼, Lisu, Jīnuò 基诺, Nusu, Nàxī 纳西, Bai and Tǔjiā 土家, using the same typological approach but employing different specific features.¹² The authors conclude that within the Loloish branch, Rouruo is most similar to Yi, Lisu, Lahu, and in particular Nusu. Based on the results of the chapter, the authors present the following family tree to illustrate the historical ramification of Loloish:

¹⁰ I have chosen the term *Tibetic* to render *Zàngyǔzhī* 藏语支. It is unclear whether this is to be identified with Bodic, Himalayish, or some other specific configuration of languages which are closely related to Tibetan.

¹¹ See Thurgood, Graham 1986. Zauzou: a new Lolo-Burmese language. *Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area* 9.2:90.

¹² The authors consider all of these languages to be Loloish. However, the position of Naxi, Tujia, and Bai is far from certain. Many scholars consider the Bai dialects to form a separate branch of Tibeto-Burman, while others believe them to be varieties of Chinese. Naxi is sometimes affiliated with Lolo-Burmese, forming a larger group which can be called Lolo-Burmese-Naxi. The position of Tujia is similarly a matter of dispute.



However, because the subgrouping is based on shared features and not on shared innovations, this chart should be viewed as a diagrammatic representation of typological similarity rather than a model of historical divergence in the family.

Appendix: Word lists

The first appendix is a list of words in the Guǒlì and Jiāngmò varieties of Rouruo. There are significantly more Guǒlì lexical items than Jiāngmò items. The word list is loosely ordered by semantic category, but the ordering is not made explicit and the appendix is therefore not as convenient to use as might be hoped. As far as I can determine, the basic categories are roughly as follows:

| <u>Page</u> | <u>Category</u> |
|-------------|---------------------------------------|
| 204 | natural phenomena |
| 207 | directions and locatives |
| 208 | time words |
| 211 | animals |
| 216 | plants |
| 221 | body parts |
| 227 | kinship terms, humans, social roles |
| 231 | buildings and structural components |
| 233 | clothing |
| 235 | food and food preparation |
| 237 | tools and implements |
| 243 | measurements |
| 243 | transportation |
| 245 | culture, art, etc. |
| 247 | spiritual matters and beings |
| 248 | verbs - human actions |
| 253 | verbs - agriculture, animal husbandry |
| 255 | verbs - cultural |
| 261 | verbs - mental |
| 263 | verbs - weather |
| 265 | verbs - animal actions |
| 267 | adjectives |
| 273 | numerals |
| 275 | measure words |
| 277 | pronouns |
| 279 | adverbs |

As noted earlier, the forms given in these word lists do not correspond exactly to those found within the book proper. This is most likely due to recording by different researchers using different language consultants, although the possibility of minor dialectal differences cannot be discounted.

Appendix: Texts

Three complete texts are presented in the second appendix. There is no explanatory material, but the texts appear to be transcriptions of folktales recited in the Guǒlì variety of Rouruo. Each story is presented in transcription with interlinear morpheme-by-morpheme glosses, and is followed by a complete translation into Chinese. The first text is over seven pages long in transcribed form and two pages long in Chinese. The other two texts are somewhat shorter.

As a supplement to the description in the main section of the book, the texts are invaluable, as there are no examples longer than a single sentence in the main section. The texts can therefore be used to make preliminary investigations into extra-sentential syntactic relationships and discourse strategies. However, as presented the texts are somewhat unwieldy. As noted above, all grammatical particles are marked in the interlinears only as “particle” (*zhùcí* 助词). In order to understand how these particles are functioning, the reader must turn back to Chapter 4, and try to locate each particle in one of the four sections in which particles are discussed. It is unclear to what degree the Chinese translations attempt to reflect the structure of the Rouruo originals; a sentence-by-sentence translation would have been a useful intermediate step between the interlinear glosses and the complete translations. It would also have been nice to see in this section some analysis, especially of those features found in the texts which cannot be readily understood by reference to other parts of the book.

In sum, this introduction to Rouruo is a welcome addition to the growing literature on minority languages spoken in China and a useful reference for the comparative Tibeto-Burmanist. Sūn Hóngkǎi, the principal author, has over the length of his exceedingly productive lifetime made major contributions to the investigation, description, and analysis of Chinese minority languages; his experience and knowledge are invaluable and inform much of this book.

The reader should be aware of the following drawbacks when using this book, some of which I have noted earlier:

- There are discrepancies between the forms given in the body of the book and in the word lists. One must be careful, therefore, not to treat the two data sources as reflective of a single linguistic variety.
- As with any publication involving large numbers of phonetic symbols, diacritics, superscript numbers, etc., this book is not free of typographical errors, and the forms must therefore be treated with care. Unfortunately, because of the discrepancies just noted, forms found in the book cannot be checked against the word list for confirmation.¹³
- The layout of the book can be confusing. Subsection headings are not preceded by additional spacing, making them difficult to spot on the page. Similarly, example sentences are not separated by spacing, making it difficult at times to tell which Chinese translations match up with which Rouruo sentences and interlinears. There is no use of bolding or italics to help offset sections of text. The result is that the crowded pages are difficult on the eyes and make locating information a challenge.

¹³ I have not attempted to catalog all the typographical errors in the book. An example of the type of error that can easily creep into a work such as this is found on page 186 in the inventory of Lisu initials, in which the voiced sibilant ζ is incorrectly printed as z . As a second example, on page 168 the Guǒlì term for “Chinese nationality” is given as hx^{35} . This is certainly a typographic error, perhaps for $x\varepsilon^{35}$ (the form found in the word list).

• Different levels of chapter subsections are not made explicit typographically (e.g. through indentation) or by numbering (e.g. by means of decimalization). Instead, the level of depth within a chapter is indicated by the style of number preceding section headings. This is non-intuitive and makes it difficult to orient oneself within a chapter. The three subsection levels are indicated as follows (I have added indentation for clarification):

- 一、 Section
- 1. Subsection
- (1) Sub-subsection

A fourth level occasionally occurs, marked by an Arabic numeral enclosed in a circle.

These cautions are on the whole minor, and do not detract in any serious way from the value of this description of the Rouruo language.

APPENDIX:

Phonemic inventory of Guōlì variety of Rouruo

Initials (the layout has been somewhat modified from that found on p. 14)

| | | | | |
|----|-----|-----|----|---|
| p | t | | k | ʔ |
| ph | th | | kh | |
| | ts | tɕ | | |
| | tsh | tɕh | | |
| m | n | ɲ | ŋ | |
| | l | | | |
| f | s | ɕ | x | |
| v | z | | ʎ | |

Monophthongal finals

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------|----|----|-----|----|-----|----|----|-----|----|-----|-----------------|
| plain: | i | e | ɛ | a | ɔ | o | u | ɯ | y | ə | ɣ ¹⁴ |
| nasal: | ĩ | ẽ | ɛ̃ | ã | ɔ̃ | õ | ũ | ɯ̃ | ỹ | ə̃ | |
| tense: | ĩ | ẽ | ɛ̃ | ã | ɔ̃ | õ | ũ | ɯ̃ | ə̃ | ɣ̃ | |
| nasal tense: | ĩ̃ | ẽ̃ | ɛ̃̃ | ã̃ | ɔ̃̃ | õ̃ | ũ̃ | ɯ̃̃ | ỹ̃ | ə̃̃ | |

Diphthongal finals

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|----|----|-----|-----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|-----|-----|-----|
| i-medial: | ie | iɛ | iẽ | iɛ̃ | ia | iã | iã | io | iɔ | io | iɔ̃ | iu | iɯ |
| u-medial: | ue | uẽ | uɛ̃ | ua | uã | uã | uɛ̃ | uɛ̃ | uɔ̃ | uo | uɔ̃ | uɔ̃ | uɔ̃ |
| y-medial: | yi | yĩ | ye | ya | yẽ | yɛ̃ | | | | | | | |

Tones

| | |
|--------------|----|
| high level | 55 |
| mid level | 33 |
| high falling | 53 |
| low falling | 31 |
| high rising | 35 |
| low rising | 13 |

¹⁴ This symbol is commonly used by Chinese linguists to represent an apico-alveolar vowel produced with considerable frication. The nearest equivalent IPA symbol is [ç].

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