

Review of BO Wenze. 1997. *The Yanghuang Language*. Shanghai Far East Publishers. 242pp.

This volume on the Yanghuang (autonym: Then) language is a welcome addition to the field of Kadai linguistics. It is a sketch grammar which provides a large amount of information for the comparative linguist, although there should be much of interest to the formal linguist and typologist as well. Since Yanghuang is a Kam-Sui language, it should complement two other volumes in this series (A Study of Mo (Mak) by Yong Tongyin, and A Study of Mulao (Mulam), also by Bo Wenze) as part of a greater comparative study of Kam-Sui. The review below is meant to be a general summary of the contents of the book, so that the reader can become familiar with various aspects which might be useful in their research. A more general overview is given at the end.

Introduction

Bo begins the introduction with a brief description of Yanghuang culture including demographic information, which is followed by a discussion of the history of the Yanghuang people and their putative migration into Guizhou. The third and fourth sections of the introduction provide some selected ethnographic information: the place of marriage and funerary customs within the household and general society is discussed in section three, and section four is a discussion of holiday customs and their relationship to the design of the typical Yanghuang house. The final sections of the introduction provide information on the present state of Yanghuang language use, and a short history of the state of research on the Yanghuang language,

beginning with Li Fang-kuei's fieldwork in the 1940s (1966, 1967, 1968).

Chapter One: The Yanghuang Sound System

Chapter one provides a thorough discussion of the Yanghuang sound system, with section one devoted to its phonemic inventory. Initial consonants, of which Yanghuang has an impressive array (seventy-one overall, including consonants with secondary articulations), are treated first. There are five places of articulation (labial, alveolar, palatal, velar, and glottal); palatal glides may be co-articulated with consonants in every series except for the palatal stops, and labio-velar glides may be co-articulated at all five places, although they tend to have a more defective distribution overall. There are two clusters with [r] ([pr] and [kr]) which are apparently rare. Two lexical examples are given for each initial, and a more specific description of the phonetic properties of some of the initials is included, as well as examples of synchronic variation (largely in the case of pre-glottalized initials).

There are a total of seventy-one rhymes, built from a system of nine vowels and eight codas, plus a tenth 'apical' vowel which does not combine with any of the codas. There are two examples given for each of the rhymes, and there are additional brief examples given of intra-speaker variation in vowel pronunciation. The tone system is typical for a Kam-Sui language, with ten tones in all – six tones in 'open' syllables and four in closed syllables; the tones in the latter category seem to preserve a secondary length distinction, with tones 7 and 8 corresponding to original short vowels, and 9 and 10 corresponding to original long vowels. Two examples are again given for

each of the ten tones. Section one ends with some notes on consonant-vowel interaction, followed by some very interesting examples of contraction in disyllabic compounds, where there is a tendency for the first syllable to be reduced in length and lose a final stop, if one exists.

Section two is dedicated to Han borrowings, and is divided between early Han lexical items and words which have been borrowed more recently. The early Han borrowings are divided into Middle Chinese categories for the initials and rhymes, respectively, where they show a tendency to be quite conservative. They are also, with a few exceptions, consistent with the eight tone series of Middle Chinese. For the modern Han borrowings, consonant, vowel and tone charts are provided which show the Yanghuang equivalents of the Chinese words once they have been borrowed. The segmental correspondences are primarily one-to-one, but there is occasionally variation in the consonants and vowels.

Chapter Two: Words

The first section of chapter two gives a general accounting of the content of the Yanghuang lexicon. It is first emphasized that Yanghuang shares a large portion of its vocabulary with other Kam-Sui languages, but several examples are given where specific Yanghuang lexical items from the core vocabulary are not cognate with other Kam-Sui (or even other Kadai) languages. The second section describes the tendency in Yanghuang for words to be monosyllabic and monomorphemic, but also notes some exceptions. The third section provides a number of different cases in which there are reasons

to suggest that words are comprised of more than one morpheme, including animal and plant names which have in common the animal prefix *nəi^m*- and the plant prefix *la^d*- respectively. Examples of various other kinds of compounds are provided as well, as well as sound-symbolic compounds such as *rem⁶ru²* 'cold' and *yeu⁶sjeu⁶* 'clean'. Section four treats the effects of borrowed words on Yanghuang, and briefly covers the two main sources of borrowings in Yanghuang, Chinese and Bouyei. Lexical doublets are also described, in which native and borrowed words exist side by side, and more general syntactic effects are shown, for example where variation has emerged in head-modifier order under Chinese influence.

Chapter Three: Grammar

This chapter is the largest in the book, and is devoted to lexical categories, phrases, and sentences. The first half of the chapter breaks words down into content words and function words. Content words include nouns, numerals, measure words, pronouns, verbs, and adjectives. Function words include adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, auxiliaries, exclamations, and onomatopoeia. These twelve categories receive roughly proportionate attention based on their respective inventories, with an adequate enough number of examples given to paint a broad picture of their functions within the language. The following sections describe phrase structure (noun phrases, verb phrases, etc.) and sentences, respectively. Section six gives some examples of sentence intonation in declarative, interrogative, and exclamatory sentences. Section seven describes two kinds of subordi-

nate clauses, and section eight concludes with a description of the influence of Chinese on Yanghuang grammar.

Chapter Four: Dialects

This chapter compares the three main dialects of Yanghuang: Hedong, Hexi, and Huishui. Phonemic differences are given first, and there is a clear tendency for the Hedong and Hexi dialects (Hedong is the dialect used for the Yanghuang lexicon in Appendix one) to be more conservative than Huishui. Differences in lexical items are described next, and all of the possible cases are presented where two of the dialects pattern together against the third, as well as items where all three disagree with each other. A section on grammatical differences follows, emphasizing the differences in the pronominal systems (with Huishui being the outlier) and in noun phrases, where Huishui has adopted the Chinese order of modifier-modified, whereas Hedong and Hexi show the more conservative order of modified-modifier. The final section describes the difference in usage between the three dialects, with Hexi holding out the strongest against language shift to Chinese and Bouyei, and Huishui being in the sharpest transition to these two languages.

Chapter Five: The Place of Yanghuang within Kam-Tai

This chapter should prove especially interesting to the historical linguist, as the majority of it is dedicated to a comparison of Yanghuang with four of the other Kam-Sui languages (Maonan, Sui, Kam, and Mulao) as well as with Lakkia, Bouyei, Zhuang, and the Baoding dialect of Hlai. A numerical comparison is given first of the number

of initials, rhymes, and tones of each of these languages. The author then launches into a comparison of initials which, while far from exhaustive in terms of total Kadai vocabulary, is impressive in the number of correspondence sets presented (seventy-three), with about three examples given on the average for each correspondence. A similar treatment is provided for vowels and diphthongs (thirty-three correspondence sets), final consonants (six sets), and tones (twenty sets). The amount of information given is painfully tantalizing, since there is enough data provided to do a preliminary comparison (especially amongst the Kam-Sui languages), but an exhaustive comparison and corresponding reconstruction is ultimately impossible without more data. There is also no mention of the existence of an initial Proto-Kam-Sui reconstruction (Thurgood 1988); this is unfortunate, as the interested reader could benefit greatly by referring to Thurgood's interpretation of the data, which are largely repeated in this section.

The penultimate section compares cognates across the same languages, with the result that Yanghuang is furthest from Hlai (22.33%), closest to Zhuang within the Zhuang-Tai branch (39.67%), and closest to Sui within Kam-Sui (54.48%); the specific way in which this is carried out is not explained in much detail, however, and given the fact that scholars are divided on the utility of cognate percentages in determining genetic distance, this section is best viewed cautiously.

The final section briefly compares parts of the Yanghuang numeral system with other Kam-Sui languages, as well as a couple of final grammatical points.

Appendix One: Vocabulary

Appendix one provides the entirety of the collected Yanghuang vocabulary from the Hedong dialect. Items are organized by semantic field, and are part of the standard list used by Chinese field workers when working on other languages. There are approximately 1,700 vocabulary items altogether.

Appendix Two: Texts

Appendix two includes a folk song and five short folk stories in interlinear text, accompanied by a Chinese translation following each of them.

There are some editorial mistakes in this volume, most notably the failure to include the tone on some random examples, and occasional misalignment in some of the tables (i.e. the table which lists the inventory of initials, and some of the rows of correspondences in chapter five). There are also times in chapter five when the actual examples given do not support the row of correspondences which have been suggested; this detracts a bit from the amount of faith that can be put in the examples from the other Kadai languages and necessitates a double-checking in the primary sources.

Otherwise, I feel positively about this volume, and am very happy to see it in print as a compact source of data on Yanghuang. It succeeds in providing a general sketch of the language with supporting ethnographic details, and is easy to use; it is made all the more important in view of Li Fang-kuei's original work on the language which may be compared with the contents of this volume. It should

be useful not only to the Kadai specialist, but also more generally to linguists with an areal focus in Southeast Asia.

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