'Bo skad, a newly recognised non-Tibetic variety spoken in mDzo sgang, TAR
a brief introduction to its sociolinguistic situation, sounds, and vocabulary
(Language material)

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'Bo skad

The language name should be written mBo, based on the pronunciation /ˈmbo/.
A variety spoken in Tshawarong of mDzo sgang County, Chab mdo District, TAR.
Another closely related variety to 'Bo skad, called sMad skad, is also spoken in Tshawarong.

'Bo skad sound structure

- Maximum syllable structure:
  \[ \text{C} \text{CGV} / \text{minimum: CV} \]
  E.g., \( \text{ŋa} \) ‘sky’; \( \text{ŋa} \) ‘hillside’; \( \text{ŋa} \) ‘five’

- Suprasegmentals:
  Two-way word tone system, High ( ¨ ) and Low ( ´ )
  E.g., \( \text{ŋa} \) ‘ten’ - \( \text{ŋa} \) ‘needle’
  Pitch generally descends at the end of a word.
  A tonal distinction is valid only for the first two syllables of a multisyllabic phonological word.

- Vowels:
  Plain (i, e, æ, a, o, u, u, o, o, o, o); +retroflexed (ɔ);
  +creaky ( u ); +nasalisation ( ŋ ); +creaky nasalisation ( ŋ )
  No length contrast.
  No checked syllable.

- Consonants:
  Obstruents (pʰ, b, tʰ, d, l, kʰ, k, g, qʰ, q, g, ?, tsʰ, ts, dz, tcʰ, tc, dz);
  Fricatives (s, z, c, z, ɣ, ɣ, h, f); Resonants (m, n, n, n, n, ŋ, ŋ, ŋ, n, l, l, r, w, j)
  Prenasalisation (voiced), preaspiration (any voicings)
'Bo skad is a non-Tibetic language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>meaning</th>
<th>mBo</th>
<th>Written Tibetan</th>
<th>PTB (based on STEDT)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>seven</td>
<td>ʼni</td>
<td>bdun</td>
<td>*s-ni-s (#2505)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>four</td>
<td>ʼlɔ</td>
<td>bźhī</td>
<td>*b-la-y (#2409)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one</td>
<td>ʼdɔ</td>
<td>gcig</td>
<td>*tyвлад = *g-t(y)i(y) (#2726)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ten</td>
<td>ʼrɔ</td>
<td>bcu</td>
<td>*ts(y)i(y) = *tsay (#2748)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you</td>
<td>ʼnɔ</td>
<td>khyod</td>
<td>*na-n(#2489)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>horse</td>
<td>ʼre</td>
<td>rta</td>
<td>*s/m-rañ(#1431)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>road</td>
<td>ʼtɕu</td>
<td>lam</td>
<td>*lам (#1017)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, many Tibetic loans are attested. An outstanding feature is that the open syllable of WrT-a# corresponds to /-e/ in 'Bo, e.g.: /ʼne/ ‘fish’ (< nya), /ʼce mə/ ‘sand’ (< bye ma), /ʼse tcʰe/ ‘land’ (< sa cha), /ʼnə pə/ ‘pastoralist’ (< 'brog pa), etc.

'Bo skad seems to be a Qiangic language

Some distinguished words of mBo are compared with Basum (non-Tibetic non-Qiangic; Kong-po rGya-mda), Nyagrong Minyag (rGyalrongic; Nyag-rong), Choyu (Qiangic; Nyag-chu-kha), Lhagang Choyu (Qiangic; Dar-rtse-mdo), Darmdo Minyag (Qiangic; Dar-rtse-mdo), and bTsanlhar Gyalrong (rGyalrongic; bTsan-lha).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>meaning</th>
<th>mBo</th>
<th>Basum</th>
<th>Nyagrong-Minyag (Shoring)</th>
<th>Choyu (Phubarong)</th>
<th>Lhagang-Choyu (Thamkhas)</th>
<th>Darmdo-Minyag (Lhartseshis)</th>
<th>bTsanlhar-Gyalrong (Sengge)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>seven</td>
<td>ʼni</td>
<td>ni</td>
<td>ʼne</td>
<td>ŋɔ</td>
<td>ŋɔ</td>
<td>ʼnɔ</td>
<td>ʼnɔ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>four</td>
<td>ʼlɔ</td>
<td>bɔr</td>
<td>ʼlʰɛ</td>
<td>ʼzɔ</td>
<td>ʼzɔ</td>
<td>ʼrɔ</td>
<td>ʼrɔ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one</td>
<td>ʼdɔ</td>
<td>tiʔ</td>
<td>ʼre</td>
<td>ʼtɔ</td>
<td>ʼtɔ</td>
<td>ʼtɔ</td>
<td>ʼtɔ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>five</td>
<td>ʼswɔp</td>
<td>ʼjo</td>
<td>ʼsʰɛ</td>
<td>ʼsʰɔ</td>
<td>ʼsʰɔ</td>
<td>ʼsʰɔ</td>
<td>ʼsʰɔ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you</td>
<td>ʼnɔ</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>ʼne</td>
<td>ʼnɔ</td>
<td>ʼnɔ</td>
<td>ʼnɔ</td>
<td>ʼnɔ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blood</td>
<td>ʼsa</td>
<td>kɔʔ</td>
<td>ʼsʰɛ</td>
<td>ʼsʰɔ</td>
<td>ʼsʰɔ</td>
<td>ʼsʰɔ</td>
<td>ʼsʰɔ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meat</td>
<td>ʼtʰi</td>
<td>aŋi</td>
<td>ʼtʰu</td>
<td>ʼtʰo</td>
<td>ʼtʰo</td>
<td>ʼtʰo</td>
<td>ʼtʰo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iron</td>
<td>ʼtʰu</td>
<td>leʔ</td>
<td>ʼtɛu</td>
<td>ʼcoe</td>
<td>ʼtʰɛa</td>
<td>ʼtɛa</td>
<td>ʼtɛa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pig</td>
<td>ʼpʰo</td>
<td>tɕu</td>
<td>ʼva</td>
<td>ʼve</td>
<td>ʼve</td>
<td>ʼve</td>
<td>ʼve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>urine</td>
<td>ʼqo</td>
<td>ʼpʰi</td>
<td>ʼpa</td>
<td>ʼpʰi</td>
<td>ʼpʰi</td>
<td>ʼpʰi</td>
<td>ʼpʰi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>snow</td>
<td>ʼnʰu</td>
<td>ʼjhu</td>
<td>ʼḥu</td>
<td>ʼʔkʰ vo / .removeItem</td>
<td>ʼʔkʰ wa</td>
<td>ʼʔkʰ</td>
<td>ʼʔkʰ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>road</td>
<td>ʼtɕu</td>
<td>ʼtɕu</td>
<td>ʼtʰę</td>
<td>ʼtʰę</td>
<td>ʼtʰę</td>
<td>ʼtʰę</td>
<td>ʼtʰę</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>water</td>
<td>ʼtɕu</td>
<td>ʼtɕu</td>
<td>ʼtʰę</td>
<td>ʼtʰę</td>
<td>ʼtʰę</td>
<td>ʼtʰę</td>
<td>ʼtʰę</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source of data: Basum from Nicolas Tournadre (p.c.), phonetic description reconfirmed by the first author; the others from the first author’s fieldwork.

Phonetic symbol-based transcription; no orthographical description except for suprasegmentals.

Pitch patterns written as ʼ: high-level; ʼ: rising; ʼ: falling; ʼ: rising-falling; ʼ in Lhagang Choyu: ‘atonalising marker’ or ‘tone bearing unit terminating marker’

As seen in the word forms of ‘you’, ‘blood’, and ‘meat’, Basum does not seem to be a member of Qiangic.

The word ‘urine’ in mBo, unfortunately, suggests that this language has a different feature from Qiangic languages because this word can display a similarity among them.
′Bo skad numerals

Let’s count one to hundred.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>+10</th>
<th>+20</th>
<th>100</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>`ina</td>
<td>`ne qa</td>
<td>`-bdzi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-do</td>
<td><code>na </code>ta `ne qa pʰe -do</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>-na</td>
<td><code>na </code>na `ne qa pʰe -na</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>-sɔ́</td>
<td><code>na </code>ra sɔ́ `ne qa pʰe -sɔ́</td>
<td>`-sɔ́ qa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>-lɔ́</td>
<td><code>na </code>ra lɔ́ `ne qa pʰe -lɔ́</td>
<td>`-lɔ́ qa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>-nwɔ́</td>
<td><code>na </code>ra nwɔ́ `ne qa pʰe -nwɔ́</td>
<td>`-nwɔ́ qa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>`tei</td>
<td><code>tei </code>tei <code>ne qa pʰe </code>tei</td>
<td>`-tei qa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>`-ni</td>
<td><code>-ni </code>ni <code>ne qa pʰe </code>-ni</td>
<td>`-ne qa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>`-dzɔ́</td>
<td><code>-dzɔ́ </code>ne qa pʰe `-dzɔ́</td>
<td>`-dzɔ́ qa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>`-go</td>
<td><code>-go </code>ne qa pʰe `-go</td>
<td>`-go qa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some grammatical expressions

Copulative verbs, existential verbs, and directional marking for action verbs

**Copulative verbs**

Egophoric copulative verb: `/`nɔ/;

Non-egophoric copulative verb: `/tʰu/`

(1) a `nɔ `po ri `nɔ
1sg Tibetan CPV
I am Tibetan.

b `kə `po ri `tʰu
3sg Tibetan CPV
He is Tibetan.

Anticipation usage attested:

(2) a `nɔ `po ri `tʰu
2sg Tibetan CPV
You are Tibetan.

b `nɔ `po ri `-ʔa-ʔo
1sg Tibetan Q-CPV
Are you Tibetan?

The sentence construction and evidentiality distinction are quite common to many Tibetic languages, including Southern Route Khams to which the mDzogong dialect belongs.

**Existential verbs**

Existential verbs are employed as possession, existence, and location.

There are three verb stems and three categories:

Egophoric existential verb: `/kʰo/;

Sensory existential verb: `/nɛ/;

Factual existential verb: `/kʰo tʰu/ (morphologically EXV+CPV)
I have a pig.

There is a pig. (I see it)

There are pens in the box. (I know that)

The sentence construction and evidentiality distinction are quite common to several Tibetic languages, including Southern Route Khams to which the mDzogong dialect belongs.

**Directional marking**

Imperative and completed forms of general verbs should take a directional prefix. E.g., ‘/xwu/ ‘go’:

a. ‘/xwu-xwu/ ‘go’
   DIR-go
   Go upwards!

b. ‘/no-xwu/ ‘go’
   DIR-go
   Go downwards!

c. ‘/ja/ ‘/xwu-xwu-zo/ I have already been over there.
   1sg DIR-go-EXP

d. ‘/kho/ ‘/no-xwu-te/hu/ He has already been downwards.
   3sg DIR-go-CPV

Almost all the verbs must have a directional prefix when it is used in an imperative as follows:

- ‘/wo-/ ‘/wo-a/hi/ ‘drink!’,
- ‘/wo-a/dzi/ ‘eat!’
- ‘/no-/ ‘/no-gu/ ‘sleep!’,
- ‘/no-sa/ ‘kill!’

This phenomenon is also attested in several dialects of Dzayul Khams and Sems-kyi-nyila Khams.

**Abbreviations**

1sg: 1st person singular  CPV: copulative verb  GEN: genitive
2sg: 2nd person singular  DIR: directional  LOC: locative
3sg: 3rd person singular  EXP: experience  Q: question marker
         EXV: existential verb

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