Timotheus Bodt.

**Language contact and prosodic features of Duhumbi**

**Abstract:** Duhumbi (Chugpa) and Khispi (Lishpa) are two closely related, endangered Tibeto-Burman languages of the Eastern Himalayas, spoken by around 700 and 1,900 speakers respectively. The languages of the Kho-Bwa cluster, to which Khispi and Duhumbi belong, are usually described as being non-tonal, with as major exception in descriptions from the Tibetan side of the Indo-Tibetan border.

Recent advances in the description of Duhumbi show that whereas in elicitation a limited number of minimal pairs with contrasting pitch contours can be distinguished, these differences tend to level off in the spoken context and are overridden by other features of prosody, including both lexical stress and prosodic stress.

The interaction between various phonetic and prosodic features in Duhumbi is complex and moreover undergoing constant change, evident from inter-generational and dialect differences. The reason for many of these changes can be found in the influence of the main contact languages: Central Bodish Tibetan and Brokpa, East Bodish Tawang Monpa, and unclassified Tshangla. In fact, even the minimal pairs for tone have Bodish cognates with distinctive pitch-phonation registers: unlike in Bhutan Tshangla, Bodish loans, whether old or recent, have generally preserved their original pitch contour in Duhumbi.

Similarly, it is probably language contact through which Duhumbi, in contrast to the other Kho-Bwa languages, has replaced an iambic rhythm, in which bi-syllabic words have stress on the second syllable, with trochaic rhythm. In Duhumbi the reduced, light initial syllables, particularly the prefixes, of the other Kho-Bwa languages have become heavy syllables that can carry stress. The negative prefix and most of the suffixes are generally unstressed, with as major exception suffixes that mark questions.

This presentation and paper will focus on the influence of language contact on two of the prosodic features of Duhumbi: tone and rhythm.