

# Notes on Anong, a New Language

Sun Hongkai  
Institute of Nationality Studies  
Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

Translated by Lǐ Fèngxiáng<sup>1</sup>

Through preliminary research and comparison, it has been found that the Anong language is quite different from the Nusu and Rouruo languages spoken by the Nu peoples in Bijiang and Lanping. However, it is similar to the Trung language. Therefore, I suggest that Anong and Trung should be classified as belonging to the Chingpo language branch of the Tibeto-Burman language family. In this paper, I will give a brief description of the phonology, morphology, and syntax of the Anong language as it is spoken in the Muguja Township of Fugong County (Yunnan).

## SOUND SYSTEM

### I. Consonants

There are 64 consonants in the Anong language, 45 of which are simple consonants and the rest are consonant clusters.

#### 1) Simple consonants:

p	t	t̚		k	ʔ
pʰ	tʰ	t̚ʰ		kʰ	
b	d	d̚		g	
			ts	tɕ	tɕʰ
			tʂ	tɕʰ	tɕʰ
			dz	dʒ	dʒ
	f		s	ɕ	x
	v		z	ʑ	h
ɱ	ɱ			ŋ̃	ŋ̃
m	n		ŋ	ñ	ŋ
	ɬ	l			
	l				
		ɭ			

<sup>1</sup> The translator wishes to thank Graham Thurgood for his help with certain parts of the text.

## Notes on the simple consonants:

1. Unaspirated voiceless stops and voiceless affricates have a relatively low frequency of occurrence. In some words, the voiced stops and affricates are in free variation with their voiceless counterparts.

2. The nasals *m*, *n*, *ɲ*, and *ŋ* all may be syllabic.

3. The palatals *tɕ*, *tɕʰ*, *dʒ*, and *ʃ* are articulated a little back in the mouth. The phonetic value is similar to that of *c*, *cʰ*, *j*, *ɲ*, and *ç*.

4. The phonetic value of the retroflex stops *ʈ*, *ʈʰ*, *ɖ*, and *ɳ* is similar to that of the palatals *ɕ*, *ɕʰ*, *ɖ*, and *ɲ*. In some words in speech, the retroflexes are in free variation with the non-retroflex stops *t*, *tʰ*, *d*, and *n*.

5. The phonetic value of the retroflex affricates *tɕ*, *tɕʰ*, *dʒ*, *ʃ*, and *ʒ* is similar to that of the palatals *tɕ*, *tɕʰ*, *dʒ*, *ʃ*, and *ʒ*. In some words in speech, the two retroflex sounds *ʃ* and *ʒ* are in free variation with *s* and *z*, respectively.

6. As an independent consonant, *ɹ* is variable. Sometimes it is pronounced as *z* or *ʒ*, and sometimes it assimilates to a following *i*.

7. The glottal stop *ʔ* occurs as both an independent consonant and in combination with other consonants in consonant clusters. The syllabic nasals *ɱ*, *ɳ*, *ɲ*, and *ŋ* are preceded by a glottal stop, but these are not treated as consonant clusters in this work [*ʔɱ*, *ʔɳ*, *ʔɲ*, and *ʔŋ*].

<i>p</i>	<i>pi</i> 31	'pen'	<i>ph</i>	<i>phi</i> 35 <i>du</i> 55	'key'
<i>b</i>	<i>bwi</i> 31	'snake'	<i>ɱ</i>	<i>ɱu</i> 55 <i>ɳu</i> 31	'start; begin'
<i>m</i>	<i>mi</i> 55	'hemp'	<i>f</i>	<i>fau</i> 31	'lock'
<i>v</i>	<i>vi</i> 55 <i>ka</i> 31	'bottle'	<i>ts</i>	<i>tsui</i> 55	'crime; sin'
<i>tɕʰ</i>	<i>tɕʰi</i> 55	'rain'	<i>dz</i>	<i>la</i> 35 <i>dzi</i> ? 31	'hot pepper'
<i>s</i>	<i>si</i> 31 <i>di</i> 55	'true; real'	<i>z</i>	<i>zin</i> 53	'ask'
<i>t</i>	<i>ti</i> 53	'half'	<i>tʰ</i>	<i>tʰi</i> 55	'one'
<i>d</i>	<i>di</i> 55 <i>ba</i> 35	'spider'	<i>ŋ</i>	<i>ŋo</i> 31 <i>iunŋ</i> 55	'stay; remain'
<i>n</i>	<i>nen</i> 55	'goods'	<i>ɬ</i>	<i>ɬau</i> 53	'seek; look for'
<i>l</i>	<i>lim</i> 53	'bury'	<i>ɭ</i>	<i>ɭi</i> 31 <i>ɭu</i> 53	'compensate'
<i>ʈʰ</i>	<i>ʈʰi</i> 31 <i>maŋ</i> 31	'old'	<i>q</i>	<i>qim</i> 55	'kick'
<i>ɳ</i>	<i>ɡwi</i> 31 <i>ɳi</i> 55	'kneel'	<i>ɭ</i>	<i>ɭi</i> 31 <i>ɭi</i> 31	'return (money)'
<i>tɕ</i>	<i>pau</i> 31 <i>tɕi</i> 55	'newspaper'	<i>tɕʰ</i>	<i>tɕʰi</i> 31	'fart'
<i>dʒ</i>	<i>dʒi</i> 31	'swell'	<i>ʃ</i>	<i>ʃa</i> 55 <i>ʃi</i> 31	'urine'
<i>ʒ</i>	<i>ʒi</i> 55	'be'	<i>ɹ</i>	<i>ɹi</i> 31 <i>ʔunŋ</i> 55	'mountain'

tɕ	tɕi 55 p <sup>h</sup> i 55	'narrow'	tɕ <sup>h</sup>	ɑ 31 tɕ <sup>h</sup> iŋ 31	'exchange'
ɕ	ɕi 31	'copper'	ŋ	ŋu 55 ŋu	'weave'
fi	fiŋ 55	'fingernail'	ɕ	ɕim 55 bu 31	'full'
k	ko 31 p <sup>h</sup> u 55	'fox'	kh	khin 53	'cook; boil'
g	ɑ 31 gi 31	'lift'	ŋ	ŋe 31 ŋu 31	'weigh'
ŋ	ŋi 31 sa 31	'monkey'	x	ɑ 31 xi 55	'laugh'
y	yw 55	'shadow'	ʔ	ʔi 55 bu 31	'goose'
h	ɑ 31 hiŋ 35	'bowl'			

2) Consonant clusters: Consonant clusters can be divided into three categories. The first category is formed by prefixing a glottal stop to the voiced nasals, voiced laterals, voiced stops, and voiced affricates; the ten clusters in this category are ʔb, ʔd, ʔɕ, ʔg, ʔdz, ʔɕ, ʔm, ʔn, ʔŋ, and ʔŋ. The second category includes clusters of bilabials, labio-dentals, velar stops, fricatives, and nasals combined with the semi-vowel ɹ; the nine clusters in this second category are pɹ, phɹ, bɹ, mɹ, fɹ, vɹ, khɹ, gɹ, and xɹ. The third category consists of a single three-part consonant cluster: ʔbɹ.

ʔb	ɑ 31 ʔban 55	'a bamboo species'
ʔd	ʔdem 55	'on credit'
ʔɕ	ʔɕaŋ 55	'crawl'
ʔg	ʔgam 55	'remember by cutting notches on wood'
ʔdz	ʔdzɹin 55 ɛ 31	'defecate'
ʔɕ	ʔɕu 55 ŋu 31	'bite'
ʔm	tɕ <sup>h</sup> e 55 ʔmu 31	'daughter'
ʔn	ɑ 31 ʔna 31	'dye'
ʔŋ	ɑ 31 ŋe 35	'apply'
ʔŋ	ʔŋɑ 31 ɛ 31	'ruminate'
pɹ	pɹu m 55 no 31	'untie'
p <sup>h</sup> ɹ	ɑ 31 p <sup>h</sup> ɹi 31	'ancestor'
bɹ	bɹi 53	'four'
mɹ	ɑ 31 mɹaŋ 55	'angry'
fɹ	da 31 fɹi 55	'turtledove'
vɹ	ɑ 31 vɹi 55	'rope bridge support'
khɹ	khɹi 53	'sweet'
gɹ	de 31 gɹi 55	'dog'
xɹ	xɹum 53	'sift'

ʔbɿ ɕa 55 ʔbɿum 35 'stride over'

## II. Finals (vowels):

There are altogether 77 finals. Ten of them are simple vowels, sixteen of them are diphthongs, four syllabic nasals, and forty-seven finals with consonant endings.

1. The simple vowel finals are: /i, e, ɛ, a, ɔ, o, u, ʊ, y, and ɪ/. The following are notes on these vowels:

1) The position of the tongue for /e/ is a little low, and its phonetic value is close to that of /E/. The phonetic value of /ɛ/ is close to that of /æ/.

2) The phonetic value of /a/ is actually the same as that of /A/. When it occurs before /n/ and /l/ in word final position, its phonetic value is close to that of /a/.

3) The phonetic value of /u/ remains unchanged when it occurs after nasals such as /m, n, ŋ/ etc. But, when it occurs after bilabial stops its phonetic value is close to that of /ʊ/. It is labialized after the other consonants, assuming a phonetic value similar to that of /y/.

4) The phonetic value of /ʊ/ is in fact the same as that of /ə/ when it occurs in loan words from Chinese. It can be pronounced as /i/ after retroflex consonants.

5) In speech, /i/ is often deleted after /ŋ/, and /u/ is often deleted after /ŋ/.

6) The alveolar vowel /ɪ/ becomes /l/ after retroflex consonants.

7) In prefixes, vowels are weak and indistinct.

i	pʰi 35 du 55	'key'
e	tsʰe 53	'deer'
ɛ	pʰe 55	'deceive'
a	pʰa 53	'belly'
ɔ	ɕɔ 55	'hundred'
o	pʰo 31 lo 53	'roll'
u	pʰu 55	'silver'
ʊ	pʰʊ 55 ŋam 53	'wild pig'
y	tɕʰy 55 ŋin 53	'extinguish'
ɪ	dʒɪ 55	'walk'