

Affectedness in Some Sino-Tibetan languages

Randy J. LaPolla

Nanyang Technological University

randylapolla@ntu.edu.sg

1. Introduction to Rawang

- Tibeto-Burman language; far north of Kachin State, Myanmar.
- Closely related to Dulong in China.
- Data from the Mvtwang (Mvt River) dialect of Rawang.
- Verb-final, agglutinative, both head marking and dependent marking.
- Verbs: take hierarchical person marking, aspect marking, directional marking (which also marks aspect in some cases), and tense marking.
- Word classes and transitivity are clearly differentiated.

- The Rawang orthography (Morse 1962, 1963) is used in this paper.
- Most letters represent the pronunciations of English, except $i = [i]$, $v = [ə]$, $a = [ɑ]$, $ø = [ʉ]$, $q = [ʔ]$, and $c = [s]$. Tones: high or high-falling \acute{a} , low or low falling \grave{a} , and mid level \bar{a} . Syllables ending in a stop consonant ($-p$, $-t$, $-q$, $-k$) are in the high tone. Open syllables with no tone mark are unstressed. A colon marks non-basic long vowels.

Examples of the tone contrasts:

(1) $k\bar{a}$	‘chicken’	$k\acute{a}$	‘debt’	$k\grave{a}$	‘word’
$r\bar{i}$	‘bundle, bunch’	$r\acute{i}$	‘carry’	$r\grave{i}$	‘plural marker’
$r\bar{u}$	‘to write’	$r\acute{u}$	‘to be struck’	$r\grave{u}$	‘poisoned’
$ng\bar{a}$	‘fish’	$ng\acute{a}$	‘borrow’	$ng\grave{a}$	‘1sg’
$g\acute{a}r$	‘CL(drop)’	$g\bar{a}r$	‘protect’	$g\grave{a}r$	‘large’

2. Verb classes

Morphology in citation identifies form class (third person non-past affirmative/declarative):

- Intransitives: non-past affirmative/declarative particle (\bar{e}) alone in the non past (e.g. *ng \bar{o} \bar{e}* 'to cry') and the intransitive past tense marker ($-i$) in past forms (with third person argument). This includes what would be translated as adjectives on some other languages.
- Transitives: non-past third person P marker (\bar{o}) plus non-past affirmative/declarative particle (\bar{e}) in non-past forms (e.g. *ri \bar{o} \bar{e}* 'to carry (something)') and transitive past tense marker ($-a$) in past forms (with third person P arguments).

- Ambitransitives (labile verbs): used as transitives or intransitives (*ṽmòē / ṽmē* 'to eat'). Both S=P type and S=A types.
 - With the S=P type, (e.g. *gvyaqē* 'be broken, destroyed' ~ *gvyaqòē* 'break, destroy'), adding A argument creates causative, without the need for causative prefix.
 - With the S=A type, use of the intransitive vs. the transitive form marks a difference between a general or habitual situation and a particular situation respectively. If the P is specific, then the transitive form must be used, but if the P is non-specific, it is not necessary to use the intransitive form. If no P is understood, then usually the intransitive form is used.

(1) a. *Àng pē zvtñē.*

àng pē zvt-ē

3sg basket weave-N.PAST

'He weaves baskets.' (general or habitual sense)

b. *À:ngí pē tiqchv̀ng za:tnòē.*

àng-í [pē tiq-chv̀ng] zvt-ò-ē

3sg-AGT basket one-CL weave-TNP-N.PAST

'He is weaving a basket.'

(2) a. *Àng v̄mē.*

àng v̄m-ē

3sg eat-N.PAST

'He's eating.' or 'He eats.'

b. *À:ngí yālòng v̄mpà á:mòē.*

àng-í yālòng v̄mpà v̄m-ò-ē

3sg-AGT this-CL rice eat-TNP-N.PAST

'He is eating this rice.'

3. Benefactive marking

- The benefactive construction marked by the verbal suffix *-ā*, is the only applicative construction in Rawang.
- This form cannot be used for causative or other functions, such as for making an instrumental or locative phrase a direct argument. It also cannot be used for comitatives.
- The benefactive can apply to both transitives and intransitives.
- As adding the benefactive argument increases the transitivity of the verb, intransitive verbs become formally transitive, though the original S does not take agentive marking.
- With transitives the old P stays unmarked, and the new argument (the benefactive) is marked with the benefactive postposition (*dvpvt*) or the locative/dative postposition *s̀ng* (as with the other arguments, it may not be expressed as a noun phrase if it is recoverable from the context or person marking).

(3) a. *Ngàí àng-s̀v̀ng sh̀ng r̀ngā̀ng-̀e.*

ngà-í àng-s̀v̀ng sh̀ng r̀ng-ā̀ng-̀ng-̀-̀e

1sg-AGT 3sg-LOC wood carry-1sg-BEN-1sg-TNP-N.PAST

'I'm carrying wood for him.'

b. *À̀ng dvpvt rvmá-h̀ng shvlā̀-ā̀ng-̀-̀e.*

à̀ng dvpvt rvmá-h̀ng shvlā̀-ā̀ng-̀-̀e

3sg for field-field good-BEN-TNP-N.PAST

'The fields are good for him.'

c. *Àngtaq yādùng bèlaq mvnøklá téāòē.*

àng-taq yā-dùng bèlaq mvnøklá tē-ā-ò-ē

3sg-LOC this-CL upper.garment too big-BEN-TNP-N.PAST

'This shirt is too big for him.'

d. *Ngà dvpvt mvnøklá dō-ā-ò-ē.*

ngà dvpvt mvnøklá dō-ā-ē

1sg for too dark-BEN-TNP-N.PAST

'It is too dark for me.'

- Although the suffix *-ā* generally has the function of adding a benefactive argument, in two cases from the Rawang Creation Story the use of the suffix does not seem to have the meaning of doing the action 'for someone', but more the sense of possession:

(4) a. *Shv̄ngbēí vgō vshvp̄mā yà:ngà rvt vpú vgō vdvm̄ē, wāē.*

shv̄ngbē-í vgō vshvp̄-ā yàng-à rvt

all-AGT head rub-BEN TMyrs-TR.PAST because

vpú vgō vdvm̄-ē wā-ē

owl head flat-N.PAST say-N.PAST

'It is said that because everyone rubbed his head (after he said something wise), the owl's head is (now) flat.'

- In (4a), *vshvp̄* 'rub' could have been used without the *-ā* suffix and have basically the same meaning. It seems that the benefactive suffix is used here because the actual direct argument (which could be marked by the locative/dative marker *sv̄ng* here) is *vgō* 'head', but the person/animal whose head it is is affected as well.

b. *Vnō dvbøp hým gō èlvmāòē.*

vnō dvbøp hým gō è-lvm-ā-ò-ē

bean rotten basket also N.1-step.on-BEN-TNP-N.PAST

'You stepped on (someone's) basket of fermented beans.'

- In (4b), the benefactive (malefactive) is used to emphasize that the deer stepped on someone else's beans.

4. Tone variation with the reflexive/middle marking suffix *-shì*:

(5) paqz̀̀ng vyá, vyà ýng kèní wēdō vs̀̀ng shí p̀̀ngshì yàngì. (Text 26-14)

paqz̀̀ng vyà vyà ýng kèní
lizard lie lie place/at from

wē dō vs̀̀ng shì p̀̀ng-shì ỳ̀ng-ì
that manner human.being die start/begin-R/M TMyrs-I.PAST

'The dead of human begins because the liar bird/Pazang lied.'

In some cases there is a difference of tone on the verb in a direct reflexive situation relative to an indirect reflexive. In these cases a high tone marks a direct reflexive, while a mid tone marks an indirect reflexive:

(6) a. àng n̄ò àng vd̄òrshìē 'He's hitting himself.'

àng n̄ò àng vd̄òr-shì-ē

3sg TOP 3sg hit-R/M-N.PAST

b. àng n̄ò àng vd̄òrshìē 'He is hitting his own (child, etc).'

àng n̄ò àng vd̄òr-shì-ē

3sg TOP 3sg hit-R/M-N.PAST

In (6b) the form is that of a direct reflexive except for the tone on the verb, which marks the action as NOT a direct reflexive, so the referent hit must be something other than the actor, but something closely related to the actor.

(7) a. nà n̄ n̄ n̄ èwáshì b̄ ì 'You did it *to* yourself.'

nà n̄ n̄ n̄ è-wà-shì b̄-ì

2sg TOP 2sg N.1-do-R/M PFV-IPAST

b. nà n̄ n̄ n̄ èwāshì b̄ ì 'You did it *for* yourself.'

nà n̄ n̄ n̄ è-wà-shì b̄-ì

2sg TOP 2sg N.1-do-R/M PFV-IPAST

In (7a-b) again the forms differ only in terms of the tone, but this makes the difference between the actor as P and the actor as Benefactive (with possibly some other assumed P).

Following is a list of the same verb as transitive, indirect reflexive, and direct reflexive:

ámòē	āmshìē	ámshìē	‘eat’
dvhòmòē	dvhōmshìē	dvhómshìē	‘meet’
dvkùmòē	dvkūmshìē	dvkúmshìē	‘raise/feed’
dvnàngòē	dvnāngshìē	dvnángshìē	‘carry always’
dvtìnòē	dvtīnshìē	dvtínshìē	‘to break, spoil’
làngòē	x	lángshìē	‘leave, abandon’
láòē	lāshìē	lášhìē	‘look for’
lùòē	lūshìē	lúshìē	‘take’
púlòē	pūshìē	púlshìē	‘pull up (plants)’
p̀̀ngòē	p̀̀ngshìē	p̀̀ngshìē	‘start’
rìòē	rīshìē	ríshìē	‘carry’
rómòē	rōmshìē	rómshìē	‘wear (sarong)’

shàlòē	shālshìē	shálshìē	‘drag, pull’
shòngòē	shōngshìē	shóngshìē	‘love’
shònòē	shōnshìē	shónshìē	‘speak, talk’
tvrìòē	tvrīshìē	tvríshìē	‘spin’
vdòròē	vdōrshìē	vdórshìē	‘beat, hit’
vrèòē	x	vréshìē	‘irritate’
vwùòē	vwūshìē	vwúshìē	‘roam’
vyàòē	vyāshìē	vyáshìē	‘handle carefully’
wàòē	wāshìē	wáshìē	‘do, make’
yàngòē	yāngshìē	yángshìē	‘see’
zíòē	zīshìē	zíchìē	‘give’

5. Benefactives from 'to eat'

- A third type of benefactive that is also a type of indirect reflexive developed from the grammaticalization into auxiliary verbs of the two words for 'to eat': $\bar{v}m(\grave{o})\bar{e}$ 'to eat (rice, vegetables)', $k\bar{e}(\grave{o})\bar{e}$ 'to eat (meat), bite'.
- These verbs are used after the main verb for an indirect reflexive sense when the action expressed by the main verb relates to doing something to or with a domestic animal ($k\bar{e}$) or non-animal foodstuffs ($\bar{v}m$) that is eaten.
- The auxiliary verbs follow the pattern of transitive for specific actions and intransitive for general or regular, continuing actions (such as actions done for one's livelihood).
- This is also a type of benefactive, but not applicative, as it does not increase the transitivity of the clause.

(8) a. *Àng kwá tiqyò̀m róng kēē.*

àng kwá tiq-yò̀m róng kē-ē

3sg bee one-hive put.in.hole eat-N.PAST

'He is raising bees for himself.'

b. *Àng waq nākēē.*

àng waq nā-kē-ē

3sg pig feed-eat-N.PAST

'He feeds the pigs for himself.'

c. *Àng ngā mit kē-ē.*

àng ngā mit kē-ē

3sg fish catch eat-N.PAST

'He catches fish for himself.'

d. *Àng lávmē.*

àng lá-vm-ē

3sg cut.down-eat-N.PAST

'He cuts down (banana trees) to get the fruit for himself.'

e. *Tì kvpmám á:mìē.*

tì kvp-vm ám-ì-ē

water get(water)-eat DIR-1pl-N.PAST

'We go get water for ourselves.'

f. *Ngàmaq yúng kvtná:mì.*

ngàmaq yúng kv̄t-ṽm-ì
1pl vegetables grow-eat-1pl
'We grow vegetables for ourselves.'

g. *Àng v̄mpà w̄nṽmē.*

àng v̄mpà w̄n-ṽm-ē
3sg rice/food buy-eat-N.PAST
'He is buying himself rice/food.'

h. *Àng n̄ w̄ṽmē.*

àng n̄ w̄-ṽm-ē
3sg wine make/do-eat-N.PAST
'He is making wine for himself.'

- In terms of the benefactive sense, there is then a four-way contrast:

- (9) a. *kvts̄hìē* 'to grow something (not eaten) for oneself' (reflexive)
 kvts̄-shì-ē
 grow-R/M-N.PAST
- b. *kvtn̄vm̄ē* 'to grow something (eaten) for oneself'
 kvts̄-vm̄-ē (food-benefactive)
 grow-eat-N.PAST
- c. *kvtn̄āòē* 'to grow something for someone else' (benefactive)
 kvts̄-ā-ò-ē
 grow-BEN-TNP-N.PAST
- d. *vkvtn̄ā kēē* 'to grow something for one another'
 v-kvts̄-ā kē-ē (reciprocal-benefactive)
 INTR-grow-BEN eat-N.PAST

6. Adversative marking

- In situations where there is an adversative sense of something happening to someone that is beyond their control, the verb *kédē* 'eat (meat), bite' can be used, often with the causative prefix as well, and this can make the sentence morphologically transitive, though there is no A argument that can take the agentive marker, as the cause of the action is generally unknown.
- Semantically then, it is like a passive in emphasizing affectedness and lack of control, but syntactically it is not valency reducing, the way passives are.

(10) a. *Àng dvgøq kéòē.*

àng dv-gøq ké-ò-ē

3sg CAUS-hiccup eat-TNP-N.PAST

'He's hiccuping (uncontrollably).'

b. *(Pòyaq) chapgá (gá) c̀vmré shvngó kéòē*

pòyaq chapgá gá c̀vmré shv-ngó ké-ò-ē

all.night morning bright child CAUS-cry eat-TNP-N.PAST

'The children have been crying (all night) until morning (light).'

c. *Àng vléí mvdøng kéòē.*

àng vlé-í mvdøng ké-ò-ē

3sg vlé-INST stuck eat-TNP-N.PAST

'He has *vlé* (a kind of starchy food) stuck in his throat'

- This usage is actually a subtype of a more general usage of the verb *kēē ~ kèòē* 'eat (meat), bite' for an adversative sense.
- It can be used for any situation where the speaker has a negative attitude towards the referent involved in the action/situation or the action/situation itself.
- This can be used to show empathy with someone suffering a negative situation, and so is said to be more polite in some instances, and also has something of the feel of a passive in English, emphasizing affectedness (e.g. (8a), where the word order marks the receiver of the scolding, the affected participant, as the topic). In these cases the form of the verb is always transitive.

(11) a. *Àngs̀v̀ng vp̀eí ng̃vn kéòē.*

àng-s̀v̀ng v-p̀e-í ng̃vn ké-ò-ē
3sg-LOC 1-father-AGT scold eat-TNP-N.PAST
'He is being scolded by my father.'

b. *Àng svm̃í gáng kéòē.*

àng svm̃í-í gáng ké-ò-ē
3sg fire-INST hot eat-TNP-N.PAST
'He's hot from the fire.'

c. *À:ngí pàg̃ō mà-shv̀b̀on kéò.*

àng-í pà-g̃ō mà-shv̀-̀b̀on ké-ò
3sg-AGT thing-also NEG-CAUS-be.possible eat-TNP
'He's incapable of doing anything.'

d. *Àngs̀v̀ng tvp ḱe b́oà.*

àng-s̀v̀ng tvp ḱe b́o-à
3sg-LOC be.arrested eat PFV-TR.PAST
'He was arrested.'

e. *Àng n̄ n̄ mvnøklá aq dár-ì rvt n̄-í vr̀ ḱe-ò-ē*

àng n̄ n̄ mvnøklá aq dár-ì rvt
3sg TOP wine too drink TMhrs-I.PAST because
n̄-í vr̀ ḱe-ò-ē
wine-INST drunk eat-TNP-N.PAST
'He drank too much and so is/got drunk (from the wine).'

7. Difference in use of causatives

- There are two causative forms in Rawang:
 - A causative prefix, as in (12a);
 - An analytic causative, as in (12b).

(12) a. *Dvdiòē.*

dv-dì-ò-ē

CAUS-go-TNP-N.PAST

'(He) makes (him) go/walk.' (direct or indirect causation)

b. *Dí dvzá:ròē.*

dí dvzár-ò-ē

go send-TNP-N.PAST

'(He) let/makes (him) go.' (only for indirect causation)

The Chinese Topic-Comment Structure

- Chao (1955, 1959): word order is not determined by, and does not affect the interpretation of actor vs. non-actor; the clause is analogous to a function in logic: the argument is an argument of the function, and the truth value is unaffected by its position in the clause (1959:254). There are no exceptions to topic-comment order in Chinese, though there are some clauses that only have comments (e.g. *Xià yǔ le* (fall rain CSM) ‘It’s raining’).

- Lü Shuxiang (1979:72-73): “subject” = “topic” = whatever comes first in the clause, which can have any semantic role; “subject” and “object” can both be filled by any semantic role, and are to a certain extent interchangeable (see (5)), so subject is simply one of the arguments of the verb that happens to be in topic position. Difference in interpretation in Chinese with the different word orders is not one of actor vs. patient, but in terms of what is the topic and what is not the topic.

5. a. *chuānghu yǐjīng hú-le zhǐ*
 window already paste-PFV paper
 ‘The window has already been
 pasted with paper’

b. *shuǐ jiāo huā*
 water(n.) water(v.) flower
 ‘The water waters the flowers’

c. *lǎotóuzi shài tàiyáng*
 old.man sun(v.) sun(n.)
 ‘The old man basks in the sun’

a'. *zhǐ yǐjīng hú-le chuānghu*
 paper already paste-PFV window
 ‘The paper has already been
 pasted on the window’

b'. *huā jiāo shuǐ*
 flower water(v.) water(n.)
 ‘The flowers are watered by the
 water’

c'. *tàiyáng shài lǎotóuzi*
 sun(n.) sun(v.) old man
 ‘The sun shines on the old man’

(14) a. 学生发了成绩，孩子们的学习成绩挺不错的

<http://blog.xuemai.cn/blog/MyBlog/lookBlogInfo.do?aid=564275189353282&uid=564273196237017>

Xuesheng fa-le chengji,
student distribute-PFV marks

haizimen de xuexi chengji ting bu-cuo de
children NOM study marks very neg-wrong NOM

‘The students were given their marks today, the children’s marks
were really not bad’

b. 老师发了成绩单，我接过马上贪婪的看了起来。

<http://ahfcmcz.30edu.com/news/8f9736a4-9e05-423b-905f-42966a098e13/0c3b9d2d-1801-4220-a883-e0dacc220fad.htm>

Laoshi fa-le chengji-dan,
teacher distribute-PFV marks-sheet

wo jie-guo-lai mashang tanlan-de kan-le-qilai
1sg receive-over-come immediately greedy-ADV read-PFV-BEGIN
'The teacher distributed the marksheets, (and) I received (mine and)
and immediately greedily began to read it'

c. 今天考试，成绩发家长。

<http://page.renren.com/601028769/fdoing/4153050034?curpage=5>

Jintian kaoshi, chengji fa jiazhang.
today test marks distribute parents

'Today (I take the) test, the marks will be sent to the parents.'

(15) 她死了一匹马，便这么哭个不住。

<http://louisville.edu/journal/weiming/wuxia/lian06.txt>

tā sǐ-le yī-pǐ mǎ, biàn zhème kū ge bù-zhù.

3sg die-PFV one-CL horse then this.much cry CL NEG-stop

‘She had a horse die on her, and she cries this much without stopping.’

(16) 等他那几个小菜做好的时候，我已经饥肠辘辘了。我埋怨他动作太慢，害我饿了肚子，他却好脾气的说，慢工出细活嘛！

<http://book.msn.com.cn/n/a/34198/326436.shtml>

... *Wǒ mányuàn tā dòngzuò tài màn,*
1sg complain 3sg movement too slow

hài wǒ è-le dùzi, ...

harm 1sg hungry-CSM belly

‘... I complained that his movements were too slow, (and) caused me to get hungry, ...’

(17) 丫头你提了个问题很严重，睡觉前我要想一下，想不出就不睡了，
但是现在我肚子饿，所以我要先吃点东西。

http://spaces.huash.com/?111533/action_viewspace_itemid_210107.html

1 *Yātou nǐ tí-le ge wèntí hěn yánzhòng, ...*
girl 2sg raise-PFV CL question very serious

2 *dànshì xiànzài wǒ dùzi è, suǒyǐ wǒ yào xiān chī dōngxi.*
but now 1sg belly hungry so 1sg want first eat thing
'Girl, you've raised a question that is very serious, . . . but now I am
(my belly is) hungry, and so I want to eat something first.'

The BA construction

Traditional view, e.g. Thompson 1973:

NPI *ba* NP2 V1 (V2) (NP3)

(3) 他们计划明年把共祭活动推广到陵园和社区。

[Tamen] jihua mingnian
3pl plan next.year

NPI

ba [gongji huodong] tuiguang dao [lingyuan he shequ]
BA public.obervance activity spread arrive cemetery and community

ba NP2 V1 V2 NP3

<http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2011-04-04/100722235984.shtml>

ba said to be followed by NP and said to mark the “direct object” (e.g. Sun & Givón 1985).

(4) a. 如果你把笔写秃了，只要按一下蓝色按钮，
笔芯就会马上变尖。

<http://www.ycxljy.com/jyky/ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=16494>

Ruguo ni ba bi xie tu le,

if 2sg BA pencil write blunt CSM

‘If you make the pencil blunt from writing with it,’

[pencil is INSTRUMENT, not PATIENT, of ‘write’]

b. 这题太难了，会把头发愁白

http://web.wenxuecity.com/BBSView.php?SubID=netiq_best&MsgID=582

Zhe ti tai nan le,
this question too difficult CSM

hui ba toufa chou bai.
will BA hair worry white

‘This question is too difficult, it will make (one’s)
hair turn white.’

[‘hair’ is not a semantic argument of ‘worry’]

- c. 因為這套衣服把我變的太可愛了，身材整個又矮腿又短全身看來就不成比例無言啦!

<http://www.wretch.cc/blog/gitbox/4658325>

Zhe tao yifu ba wo bian de tai ke'ai le
this set clothing BA 1sg change ADV too cute CSM
These clothes made me (look) too cute!

[There is no equivalent expression with 1sg as the patient]

d. “我聽說，一般的女人不喝酒，女人不喝一般的酒，喝酒的女人不一般。”
“我怕你了，那我就喝一小點兒，剩下的你全包了。”
“好吧，千萬別強迫自己，真怕你喝醉了，做出什麼傻事兒來。”

“才不會呢，我還怕這兩瓶酒把你給喝醉了。”

<http://bbs.big5.voc.com.cn/topic-1964540-2-1.html>

Wo hai pa

I sg still fear

zhe liang ping jiu ba ni gei he zui le

this two bottle liquor BA 2sg AFF drink drunk CSM

‘I’m even afraid you’ll get drunk from these two bottles.’

[wine is PAT of ‘drink’, not AGT; AGT appears after BA]

Thank you!

References

- LaPolla, Randy J. 2000. Valency-changing derivations in Dulong-Rawang. *Changing valency: Case studies in transitivity*, ed. by R. M. W. Dixon & Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald, 282-311. Cambridge: CUP.
- LaPolla, Randy J. 2001. Dulong texts: Seven narrative and procedural texts. *LTBA* 24.2:1-39.
- LaPolla, Randy J. 2002. Copula constructions in Rawang. Paper presented at the Workshop on Copula Clauses and Verbless Clauses, RCLT, La Trobe University, October 30, 2002.
- LaPolla, Randy J. 2003. Dulong. *The Sino-Tibetan languages*, ed. by Graham Thurgood & Randy J. LaPolla, 674-682. London & New York: Routledge.
- LaPolla, Randy J. 2006. Clause linking in Dulong-Rawang. Paper presented at the Workshop on the Semantics of Clause Linking, RCLT, La Trobe University, 24 May, 2006.
- LaPolla, Randy J. & Poa, Dory. 2001. *Rawang texts*. Berlin: Lincom Europa.
- Matisoff, James A. 1972. Lahu Nominalization, relativization, and genitivization. *Syntax and Semantics I*, ed. by John Kimball, 237-257. New York: Seminar Press.
- Morse, Robert H. 1962. Hierarchical levels of Rawang phonology. M.A. thesis, Indiana University.
- Morse, Robert H. 1963. Phonology of Rawang. *Anthropological Linguistics* 5.5:17-41.