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 $i = [i]$, $v = [\varnothing]$, $a = [a]$, $\varnothing = [\varnothing]$, $q = [?]$, and $c = [s]$. Tones: high or high-falling á, low or low falling à, and mid level ā. 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) $k\ddot{a}$ ‘chicken’   $k\acute{a}$ ‘debt’   $k\ddot{a}$ ‘word’
    $\ddot{r}\ddot{i}$ ‘bundle, bunch’   $r\acute{i}$ ‘carry’   $\ddot{r}\ddot{i}$ ‘plural marker’
    $r\ddot{u}$ ‘to write’   $r\acute{u}$ ‘to be struck’   $\ddot{r}\ddot{u}$ ‘poisoned’
    $ng\ddot{a}$ ‘fish’   $ng\acute{a}$ ‘borrow’   $n\ddot{g}\ddot{a}$ ‘1sg’
    $\acute{g}\acute{a}r$ ‘CL(drop)’   $g\ddot{a}r$ ‘protect’   $\ddot{g}\ddot{a}r$ ‘large’
2. Verb classes
Morphology in citation identifies form class (third person non-past affirmative/declarative):

- Intransitives: non-past affirmative/declarative particle (ē) alone in the non past (e.g. ngōē 'to cry') and the intransitive past tense marker (-ì) 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 (ò) plus non-past affirmative/declarative particle (ē) in non-past forms (e.g. rīdē 'to carry (something)') and transitive past tense marker (-à) in past forms (with third person P arguments).
• Ambitransitives (labile verbs): used as transitives or intransitives ($v\text{m}d\text{e} / v\text{m}d\text{e}$ 'to eat'). Both S=P type and S=A types.

• With the S=P type, (e.g. $gv\text{yaq}d\text{e}$ 'be broken, destroyed' ~ $gv\text{yaq}d\text{e}$ '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 zvtnē.
    àng pē zvt-ē
    3sg basket weave-N.PAST
    'He weaves baskets.' (general or habitual sense)

b. À:ngí pē tiqchéng za:tnòē.
    àng-í [pē tiq-chéng] zvt-ò-ē
    3sg-AGT basket one-CL weave-TNP-N.PAST
    'He is weaving a basket.'
(2) a. Àng ūmē.

àng ūm-ē
3sg eat-N.PAST
'He's eating.' or 'He eats.'

b. À:ngí yālòng ṿmpà á:mòē.

àng-í yālòng ṿmpà ūm-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 sỳng (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. *Ngài àng-sìng shông rǒngāngòe.*

ngà-í àng-sìng shông rí-ng-ā-ng-ò-ē
1sg-AGT 3sg-LOC wood carry-1sg-BEN-1sg-TNP-N.PAST
'I'm carrying wood for him.'

b. *ṅìng dvpvt rvmá-hýng shvláādòe.*

āng dvpvt rvmá-hýng shvlā-ā-ò-ē
3sg for field-field good-BEN-TNP-N.PAST
'The fields are good for him.'
c. Àngtaq yādūng bèlaq mvnøklá téādē.
   àng-taq yā-dūng bèlaq mvnøklá tē-ā-ð-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-ð-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:
In (4a), *vshvp* '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 *s̀ng* here) is *vgō* 'head', but the person/animal whose head it is is affected as well.
b. *Vnō dvbôp hŷm gō èl̄mādē.*

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{vnō} & \quad \text{dvbôp} & \quad \text{hŷm} & \quad \text{gō} & \quad \text{è-l̄m-ā-ò-ē} \\
\text{bean} & \quad \text{rotten} & \quad \text{basket} & \quad \text{also} & \quad \text{N.1-step.on-BEN-TNP-N.PAST} \\
\end{align*}
\]

'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 -shi:

(5) paqz̀ng vyá, vyà ỳng kènì wédò vs̀ng shì p̀ngshì yàngì. (Text 26-14)

paqz̀ng vyà vyà ỳng kènì
lizard lie lie place/at from

wē dō vs̀ng shì p̀ng-shì̀ ỳng-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. \(\text{ãng nõ ãng vдорshë} \quad \text{'He's hitting himself.'}\)
\[
\text{ãng nõ ãng vдор-shë-ë} \\
3\text{sg TOP 3sg hit-R/M-N.PAST}
\]

b. \(\text{ãng nõ ãng vдоршë} \quad \text{'He is hitting his own (child, etc.).'}\)
\[
\text{ãng nõ ãng vдор-shë-ë} \\
3\text{sg TOP 3sg hit-R/M-N.PAST}
\]

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 nō nà èwáshì bóì 'You did it to yourself.'
    nà nō nà è-wà-shì bó-ì
    2sg TOP 2sg N.1-do-R/M PFV-IPAST

    b. nà nō nà èwáshì bóì 'You did it for yourself.'
    nà nō nà è-wà-shì bó-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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Transitive</th>
<th>Indirect Reflexive</th>
<th>Direct Reflexive</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ámòē</td>
<td>ámshèè</td>
<td>ámshèè</td>
<td>‘eat’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dvhòmòē</td>
<td>dvhòmshèè</td>
<td>dvhòmshèè</td>
<td>‘meet’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dvkùmòē</td>
<td>dvkùmshèè</td>
<td>dvkùmshèè</td>
<td>‘raise/feed’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dvnàngòē</td>
<td>dvnàngshèè</td>
<td>dvnàngshèè</td>
<td>‘carry always’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dvtìnòè</td>
<td>dvtìnshèè</td>
<td>dvtìnshèè</td>
<td>‘to break, spoil’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>làngòē</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>lángshèè</td>
<td>‘leave, abandon’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>láòē</td>
<td>lāshèè</td>
<td>lāshèè</td>
<td>‘look for’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lùòē</td>
<td>lùshèè</td>
<td>lùshèè</td>
<td>‘take’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>púlòē</td>
<td>pūlshèè</td>
<td>pūlshèè</td>
<td>‘pull up (plants)’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pỳngòē</td>
<td>pỳngshèè</td>
<td>pỳngshèè</td>
<td>‘start’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rìòē</td>
<td>rìshèè</td>
<td>rìshèè</td>
<td>‘carry’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ròmòē</td>
<td>ròmshèè</td>
<td>ròmshèè</td>
<td>‘wear (sarong)’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shàlòē</td>
<td>Shālshìē</td>
<td>Shálshìē</td>
<td>‘drag, pull’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shòngòē</td>
<td>Shōngshìē</td>
<td>Shóngshìē</td>
<td>‘love’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shònòē</td>
<td>Shōnshìē</td>
<td>Shōnshìē</td>
<td>‘speak, talk’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tvrìòē</td>
<td>Tvríshìē</td>
<td>Tvríshìē</td>
<td>‘spin’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vdöròē</td>
<td>Vdörshìē</td>
<td>Vdörshìē</td>
<td>‘beat, hit’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vrèòē</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Vréshìē</td>
<td>‘irritate’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vwùòē</td>
<td>Vwūshìē</td>
<td>Vwūshìē</td>
<td>‘roam’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vyàòē</td>
<td>Vyāshìē</td>
<td>Vyāshìē</td>
<td>‘handle carefully’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wàòē</td>
<td>Wāshìē</td>
<td>Wāshìē</td>
<td>‘do, make’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yàngòē</td>
<td>Yāngshìē</td>
<td>Yángshìē</td>
<td>‘see’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zíòē</td>
<td>Zìshìē</td>
<td>Zìshìē</td>
<td>‘give’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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': $\tilde{v}m(\dot{o})\bar{e}$ 'to eat (rice, vegetables)', $k\bar{e}(\dot{o})\bar{e}$ '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 ($\tilde{v}m$) 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 tiqyòm rónɡ kēē.
àŋɡ kwá tiqỳ-òm rónɡ kē-ē
3sg bee one-hive put.in.hole eat-N.PAST
'He is raising bees for himself.'

b. Àng waq nākēē.
àŋɡ 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 kvpmvé á:miē.
   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  kvt-ũm-ì
1pl vegetables grow-eat-1pl
'We grow vegetables for ourselves.'

g. *Àng ýmpà wĩnũmē.*

àng  ýmpà  wĩn-ũm-ē
3sg rice/food buy-eat-N.PAST
'He is buying himself rice/food.'

h. *Àng nò wāũmē.*

àng  nò  wā-ũm-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.  *kvtshìē*  'to grow something (not eaten) for oneself' (reflexive)
   kvt-shì-ē
   grow-R/M-N.PAST

   b.  *kvtnûmē*  'to grow something (eaten) for oneself'
   kvt-ûm-ē  (food-benefactive)
   grow-eat-N.PAST

   c.  *kvtnàòē*  'to grow something for someone else' (benefactive)
   kvt-à-ò-ē
   grow-BEN-TNP-N.PAST

   d.  *vkvtńā kēē*  'to grow something for one another'
   v-kvt-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 kéđē '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) cùmré shvngó kéòē
    pòyaq chapgá gá cùmré 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 ~ kéđē* '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. Àngsvǹg vpèí ngṳn kéòē.
àng-sṳng v-pè-í ngṳn ké-ò-ē
3sg-LOC 1-father-AGT scold eat-TNP-N.PAST
'He is being scolded by my father.'

b. Àng svmīí gáng kéòē.
àng svmī-í gáng ké-ò-ē
3sg fire-INST hot eat-TNP-N.PAST
'He's hot from the fire.'

c. À:ngí pāgō mà-shvbòn kéò.
àng-í pā-gō mà-shv-bòn ké-ò
3sg-AGT thing-also NEG-CAUS-be.possible eat-TNP
'He's incapable of doing anything.'
d. Àngsvìng tvp ké bóà.
   àng-sììng  tvp     ké    bó-à
   3sg-LOC  be.arrested  eat   PFV-TR.PAST
   'He was arrested.'

e. Àng nò nò mvnøklá aq dàrì rvt nòí vrù kéòë
   àng  nò  nò  mvnøklá  aq  dàrì     rvt
   3sg  TOP  wine  too    drink  TMhrs-I.PAST  because
   nò-ì    vrù    ké-ò-ë
   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. *Dvdìòē.*

```
dv-dì-ò-ē
CAUS-go-TNP-N.PAST
'(He) makes (him) go/walk.' (direct or indirect causation)
```

b. *Dí dvzá:ròē.*

```
dí dvzvr-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’

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

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

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

c. lǎotóuzi shài tài-yáng old.man sun(v.) sun(n.) ‘The old man basks in the sun’

c’. tài-yáng shài lǎotóuzi sun(n.) sun(v.) old man ‘The sun shines on the old man’
‘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://ahfembcz.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。

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 crys this much without stopping.’
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！


……

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, . . .’
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。


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:

NP1  *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

NP1

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

NP2  V1 V2 NP3


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

Zhe ti tài nán 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 1 sg change ADV too cute CSM
These clothes made me (look) too cute!

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


Wo hai pa
1sg 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