A Synopsis of Yongning Na (Mosuo)

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Yongning Na (Mosuo)

* The language of the Na (Mosuo): categorized as an eastern variety of Naxi, which in turn has been characterized as:
  
  o An unsubgrouped Tibeto-Burman language (Thurgood 2003)
  o On the periphery of Loloish (Matisoff 1986)
  o Close to but not part of Lolo-Burmese (Bradley 1975)
  o Typologically very similar to Loloish languages, yet perhaps not actually Loloish (Ramsey 1987)
Yongning Na (Mosuo)

- Eastern Na (Mosuo) has three dialects:
  - Yongning
  - Beiquba
  - Guabie

- Also different lexical items preserved in Daba (religious practitioner) oral tradition
Southwestern China

Redrawn from map in Lonely Planet Guide to South-West China (1998: map insert between pp. 16–17)
Language typology

* Tends toward analycity
* Grammatical relations mainly indicated by:
  o Word order
  o Lexical choice
  o Pragmatics
* Word order: SOV
* Agreement is not marked by inflection, although person often can be extrapolated because of the conjunct/disjunct system
NP

* Many typical TB features for NP:
  o N + ADJ + ADV + NUM + CLS word order
  o Relation between nominalization, relativization, and possession
  o Classifier system
Many typical TB features for VP:

- Verb-final, although aspect markers, interjections, and evidentials can follow the verb
- Multiple existential verbs: (4)
- Aspectual system
- Conjunct/disjunct system
Also of interest

* Rampant grammaticalization: (8) processes that I’ve found so far
* Evidentiality
Link to Gemu7.mpg!
Grammaticalization

Overview

a. xi33 ‘person’ => xi33 NOM_{Agt} => xi33 NOM
b. di33 ‘place’ => di33 NOM_{Loc} => di33 NOM_{Purp}
c. ki33 ‘give’ => ki33 BEN => ki33 DAT
d. dʑɔ33 EXIST/LOC => dʑɔ33 PROG
e. bi33 lexical verb => bi33 AUX (movement to a location) => bi33 AUX (no movement to a location) => bi33 FUT
f. xɔ33 (desire) => xɔ33 (willingness) => xɔ33 (intention) => xɔ33 (prediction)
g. ku13 AUX (ability) => ku13 FUT (prediction)
h. xɔ33 AUX (movement to a location) => xɔ33 FUT (remote)
xǐ33 ‘person’ => xǐ33 Nom\textsubscript{Agt} => xǐ33 Nom

xǐ33 means ‘person/people’:

[1] xǐ33 tʰt33 tʰt33 ni13 ku13 zo33.
        person    this  this way  FUT   CRS

人 这 这样 会 了
This type of person will be like this.
这样人会这样的。
Tsodeluyizo103
\(\text{\textquotedblleft person\textquotedblright} \Rightarrow \text{\texttt{x}i33 \text{NOM}}_{\text{Agt}} \Rightarrow \text{\texttt{x}i33 \text{Nom}}\)

[2] \text{1533 yi33} \quad \text{labor}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>劳动</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>laborer(s)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tsodeluyizo4

[3] \text{p133 dzæ33 -xî33, l33 dzæ33 -xî33, ẕuæ33 dzæ33 -xî33} \quad \text{yak ride, tiger ride, horse ride}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>牦牛 骑</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the yak rider, the tiger rider, the horse rider,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

骑牦牛的人，骑老虎的人，骑马的人

yongzhutser12
\( \text{xí33 'person' } \Rightarrow \text{xí33 NOM}_{\text{Agt}} \Rightarrow \text{xí33 Nom} \)

[4]  lə33 zǔw33
    ADV MAN   say
    说

  words
  说的
  Fangzi63

\(-xī33 -\text{Nom}\)
di33 ‘place’ => di33 NOM\textsubscript{Loc} => di33 NOM\textsubscript{Purp}

di33 means ‘land, earth, place’:

[5] nɔ13 zɔ33 lə33 z.z33 zɔ33 di33-kuɔ33 bu33 mu33 zɔ33 gə33
REFL son ADV MAN take CSM earth-LOC Poss young woman with

自己 儿子 拿 了 地里
She said, “It is not possible for my son to court
她说他们家的儿子不可能和

self son took the earth

se33 se33 tɔɔ31 mu33- yĩ33 pi33.
court okay NEG- can QUOT

恋爱 行 会
a regular girl.”

民间的女孩子恋爱。
The heavens said, “If it’s not a warm place you can’t plant them, in the mountains, you can’t plant them.”

| zu33-di33 | tu33 | muu33- | ni31 | no33 |
| warm-NOMLoc | plant | NEG- | COP | 2SG PRO |
| 热的地 | 播种 | 是 | 你 |

In the mountains, you can’t plant them.”

| wuu33-di33 | tu33 | thaa33- | x533 | pi33. |
| mountain-NOMLoc | plant | NEG- | go | QUOT |
| 山地 | 播种 | 不 | 去 |
di33 ‘place’ => di33 NOM

Loc => di33 NOM

Purp

[7]  dzi33  -di33

eat  -NOMPurp

吃

things to eat

吃的

muphadaba12
ki33 ‘give’ => ki33 BEN => ki33 DAT

[8] t³³³³ m³³ pinguo (loan) mα³³
3PS PRO AGT apple 1PS PRO
他 苹果 我
3ps gives me apples.
他给我苹果。

versus

[9] mα³³ t³³³³ ki³³ pinguo (loan) ki³³
1PS PRO 3PS PRO DAT apple give
我 他 苹果
I give 3ps apples.
我给他苹果。
At each of the three meals each day, one must do a “chudu” blessing for one’s ancestors...

给祖先和神灵作 chudu…
He went to Apato’s place.

到了Apato那里。
There was a type of bird that says, “cheeper cheeper cheeper cheeper.”

有 一种 鸟 说, “tɕʰi pʰuə tɕʰi pʰuə tɕʰi pʰuə tɕʰi pʰuə”。“
There was a fish caught in the cave;  
有一个鱼卡在山洞里头；  
the boy was roasting the fish to eat.  
这个小孩儿正在烧鱼肉吃。
bi33 lexical verb => bi33 Aux (movement) => bi33 Aux (no movement to a location) => bi33 Fut

bi33 lexical verb meaning ‘go’:

[14] tʰæ33 tʰt33 ni13 mʊ31 tɕɔ33 bi33 mu33- tʂʰu33.

often this way below go NEG- allow

经常 这 样 下边 去 准

Often in this way he was not allowed to go down to earth.

经常这样不准他去下面。
bi33 lexical verb => bi33 Aux (movement) => bi33 Aux (no movement to a location) => bi33 Fut

[15] pʰæ31 tɕʰi33 mu33 zɔ33 -‘æ31 513 bu33 l533 yi33
man young woman -PL REFL labor
男 姑娘 -们 自己 劳动
Men and women don’t need

bi33 mu33- zɔ33.
go NEG- use
go to go labor (in the fields).
So he said, “Your book is made from pig skin, why don’t we eat it up?”

所以我们说, “你的书是猪皮做的, 为什么我们不吃掉它?”
bi33 lexical verb => bi33 Aux (movement) =>
bi33 Aux (no movement to a location) => bi33 Fut

[17]  la33    su13    bi33    ze33    pi33    ni31.
ADV MAN    kill    FUT    CRS    QUOT    Cop
副词    杀    去    了    是
He said he was going to kill him.
说是去杀掉他。
Tsodeluyizo138
xɔ33 (desire) => xɔ33 (willingness) => xɔ33 (intention) => xɔ33 (prediction)

xɔ33 literally means ‘want’:

[18]  zǔ33 mi33  či33  xɔ33  sùæ33 si33  sùæ33 -xī33  da13.
  wife    find   want   [type of tree]  tall -NOM      cut down

If he wanted to find a wife, he should cut down the tallest shuae si tree.

要找老婆的话，要砍最高的 shuae si 树。
They would give their daughter to him.

女儿是会给他的。

Tsodeluyizo146
When he arrived at Apato’s place, then he would go find a wife.

到了 Apato 那里，才去找老婆。
\( \text{xc33 (desire)} \Rightarrow \text{xc33 (willingness)} \Rightarrow \text{xc33 (intention)} \Rightarrow \text{xc33 (prediction)} \)

\([21]\)  th33 kʰuɯ33 lu33 pi33 dzə33 my33 la33 di33
this CLS till if heaven and earth
如果这块儿地耕种的话，天和地

If this piece of land is tilled, heaven and earth

la33 to31 pi13
ADV MAN turn over 翻转
will switch places.
会翻转。
This way, don’t we have a kind of shuttle for weaving hemp cloth, isn’t that right?

That can be passed back and forth.

Here pass often COP.

Guan shuang gen (ability) => gu shuang FUT (prediction)
It is said that there would be a spring there.

听说会有一个泉水站在那里。
Everyday he went to feed the pigs and such.

每一天去放猪阿这些。
To ask, "Please carefully protect the child so that illness and such

不要让他得到。"