

Postverbal Particles in Naxi¹

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This paper aims to show that the postverbal particles in Naxi play a prominent role in the syntax of Naxi. Unlike English, the inflectional components such as aspect in the Naxi language are not expressed in morphosyntactic categories but in the analytic categories of postverbal particles. The postverbal particles in Naxi have their origins in directional verbs, which nowadays still retains their use as verbs. In Naxi, the grammaticalization is an ongoing development. With strong verbal characters, the grammatical status of the postverbal particles in Naxi is thus analyzed as functional categories, in between inflectional categories and lexical verbs.

0. Introduction

Naxi is a SOV language spoken in Yunnan, the southwestern China. Naxi belongs to the Lolo-Burmese branch of Tibeto-Burman.

The verbal inflections of grammatical categories are obligatory in English sentences. Look at examples (1a-d), tense or aspect markers such as *-ed*, *-s*, *-ing*, are inflected in English verbs:

- | | | |
|--------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| (1) a. | It rained yesterday. | (past tense) |
| b. | It rains every year. | (present tense) |
| c. | It is raining now. | (present progressive) |
| d. | It has rained already. | (past perfective) |

However, the inflectional components in the Naxi language are not expressed in morphosyntactic categories but in the analytic postverbal particles. For examples: (PROS = prospective particle, PERF = perfective particle, PROG = progressive particle, INCHO = inchoative particle)

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- (2) a. xur³³ gur³³ mbur³³
rain drop PROS
 ‘It is going to rain.’
- b. xur³¹ gur³³ t^hv³³
rain drop PERF
 ‘It has rained.’
- c. xur³¹ gur³³ ne³¹
rain drop PROG
 ‘It’s raining.’
- d. xur³¹ gur³³ t^sh³¹
rain drop INCHO
 ‘It is starting raining.’

As shown in (2a) and (2b) respectively, the prospective future is expressed by the postverbal particle *mbur*³³ and the perfectivity by the postverbal particle *t^hv*³³. Likewise, *ne*³¹ expresses progressive as in (2c); and the inchoative is expressed by *t^sh*³¹ as in (2d).

However, in Naxi, the term "postverbal particles" should be distinguished from the "sentence-final particles" (or SFP for short). For one thing, The postverbal particles are adjacent to the main verbs; whereas the SFP are in the sentence final positions. Take sentences (3a-b) as examples. In (3a) the perfective *t^hv*³³ is adjacent to the main verb, and thus recognized as a postverbal particle. By contrast, the interrogative particle *la*³¹ is a SFP and appears in the sentence final position. In (3b), *we*³³ is a SFP, expressing interjection while prospective particle *mbur*³³ and hearsay particle *tsɿ*⁵⁵ are the postverbal particles, which are closer to the main verb. (SFP=sentence final particle)

- (3) a. nur³¹ ha³¹ ndzɿ³¹ t^hv³³ la³¹
you rice eat PERF SFP: INTERROGATIVE
 ‘Have you finished eating?’
- b. u³³je³³ xo³³pe⁵⁵ xa³³ mbur³³ tsɿ⁵⁵ we³³
WuYong vegetable buy PROS HERESAY SFP: INTERJECTION
 ‘I was told that WuYong is going to buy vegetable.’

For the other thing, the postverbal particles are originated in verbs, and by virtue of this, they have strong verbal characters. For examples: in (3a) the postverbal particle *t^hv*³³ is originated from the verb ‘reach’, and in (3b), the postverbal particle *mbur*³³ is from the verb ‘go’. And the hearsay particle *tsɿ*⁵⁵ is derived from the verb ‘say’.

There is still another character which can differentiate the two types of particles. That is, the postverbal particles are actually syntactic components. They involve in determining the grammaticality of Naxi sentences.

As a matter of fact, this distinction is prevalent across Tibeto-Burman languages. Take Trung for an example. There are two forms of the postverbal particles. The postverbal particles are inflected. As we can see in example (4), the postverbal *bũŋ* is inflected for person and number, and thus is considered as inflectional component. But the sentence final particles are invariables, very much like the sentence-final particles in Chinese: (Mei 1996)

- (4) Trung (Data quoted from Mei 1996)
- | | | | | | | |
|--------------|-----------------|----------|------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|
| tũrùŋ | kā | ʒgə̀ | tēn | būbū | sōŋ | bũŋ |
| <i>Trung</i> | <i>language</i> | <i>I</i> | <i>now</i> | <i>much</i> | <i>know.IS</i> | <i>PERF.IS</i> |
- ‘I have already leaned a lot of Trung now.’

1. Expressing the "Inflectional Categories" in the Naxi Way

In Naxi, the so-called "inflectional categories" such as aspect are expressed in the postverbal particles.

Prospective is a term used by Comrie (1976) to refer to such English expressions as *to be going to*, *to be about to*, etc. In Naxi, the directional verb *mbur*³³ ‘go’ can further develop a functional use as a prospective particle as in (5):

- (5) so³¹ŋi³³ xu³³ gu³³ mbur³³ jə³³
- | | | | | |
|-----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------------------|
| <i>tomorrow</i> | <i>rain</i> | <i>drop</i> | <i>PROS</i> | <i>SFP: INDICATIVE</i> |
|-----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------------------|
- ‘It is going to rain tomorrow.’

The perfectivity is expressed, crucially, by the postverbal particle *t^hv*³³ in (6a), which is like the verbal particle *-wan* 完 in Chinese:

- (6) a. ŋə³¹ mbe³³ t^hv³³
- | | | |
|----------|-----------|-------------|
| <i>I</i> | <i>do</i> | <i>PERF</i> |
|----------|-----------|-------------|
- ‘I have done.’
- b. 我做完了。

Similarly, the past experience is manifested as an experiential perfective particle *dzi*³³ in Naxi: (EXP PERF=experiential perfect)

- (7) t^hu³³γu³¹ ŋi³³ ndzɿ³³ dzi³³
they fish eat EXP PERF
 ‘They have ever eaten fish before.’

As in (8), t^hɿ^hɿ³¹ is an inchoative particle, referring to an event happened immediately before the utterance, which has not completely ended when the speaker started talking. The inchoative particle is roughly parallel to the inchoative verbal particle *-qilai* 起来 in Chinese:

- (8) a. t^hu³³ gə³¹ ŋv³⁵ ts^hɿ³¹
he up cry INCHO
 ‘He is starting to cry.’
 b. 他哭起来了。

At first glance, the postverbal particle *ne*³¹ is used to express progressive in Naxi:

- (9) t^hu³³ iə³³ t^hu³¹ ne³¹
he cigarette smoke PROG
 ‘He is smoking cigarette.’

However *ne*³¹ cannot be analyzed as progressive aspect marker because it may occur in canonical non-aspectual sentences such as in a habitual sentence (10a), or in a stative sentence (10b): (WITN=witness)

- (10)a. t^hu³³γu³¹ mə³³ɕiə³¹we³³ k^hə³³lo³¹ nu³³ dzi³³ dzər³¹ ne³¹
they usually ditch at water swim WITN
 ‘They usually swim in the ditch.’
 b. fe³³ɕi³³ dza³¹ t^hu³¹ bi³¹ ne³¹
airplane very fast fly WITN
 ‘The airplane is very fast.’

In fact, the progressive meaning is derived from its strong visual effect; it is a direct presentation of what the speaker is seeing at the moment of speaking--a scene or a happening. Accordingly, the particle *ne*³¹ is turned out to be an evidential expression. Therefore, the sentences in (10a-b) can be paraphrased separately as "Look! They are

swimming in the ditch, and they usually do that", or "Look! This kind of airplane flying thru now is very fast."²

So far, the data (from 2.1 to 2.5) show that there is no inflection in Naxi. Rather, the locational stance or perspective of the speaker is significant in Naxi grammar (Mei 2002). As a matter of fact, the postverbal particles play a crucial role in specifying the locational stance or the perspective of the speaker in the grammar of Naxi language.

2. More Functional Expressions of the Postverbal Particles in Naxi

In addition to the aspectual particles, there are more functional components specifying the locational perspective of the speaker expressed by the postverbal particles, namely directional and evidential particles.

Directional relations imply a spatial point-reference to the speaker. Thus centripetal and centrifugal motions are always anchored with respect to the speaker's location. In Naxi, the directional expressions are also displayed in the postverbal particles. As in (11), *fa*³³ is a centrifugal particle and *du*³³ a centripetal particle:

- (11) a. (nu³¹) y⁵⁵ ʃɿ³³ gv⁵⁵ sɿ³¹ fa³³ la³¹
 you child this CL take AWAY SFP: IMPERATIVE
 ‘Get the child out of here, please!’
- b. (nu³¹) y⁵⁵ ʃɿ³³ gv⁵⁵ sɿ³¹ du³³ la³¹
 you child this CL take TOWARD SFP: IMPERATIVE
 ‘Get the child here, please!’

Just like other postverbal particles, evidential stance is also a formal syntactic concept. There are two postverbal particles in Naxi expressing evidentiality: while *me*⁵⁵ is used when a claim is made by the speaker on the basis of his direct knowledge or first-hand information, *tsɿ*⁵⁵ is used by a Naxi speaker to make a statement without direct evidence, or at second hand: (EVIDN=evidential particle)

² In Chinese, *-zhe* 著 display similar phenomena. The progressive meaning of *-zhe* 著 is actually from its strong visual effect (Mei 2001):

- a. 张三在看著电视。 (*progressive*)
 b. 河里游著两条鱼很快乐的样子。 (*dynamic on the scene*)
 c. 墙上刻著两个大大的字。 (*vivid on the scene*)

- (12)a. u³³jə³³ nɑ³¹ɕi³³ ɣu³³tɕɿ³¹ dʒɑ³¹ sɿ³³ me⁵⁵ / tɕɿ⁵⁵
WuYong Naxi language very know EVIDN / HERESAY
 ‘WuYong knows Naxi language very well.’
- b. ŋə³³ nu³³ v³¹ me³³ u³³jə³³ nɑ³¹ɕi³³ ɣu³³tɕɿ³¹
I NOM think that WuYong Naxi language
 dʒɑ³¹ sɿ³³ me⁵⁵ /*tɕɿ⁵⁵
know very EVDN / HERESAY
 ‘I think that WuYong knows Naxi language very well.’
- c. t^hu³³ɣu³¹ tɕɿ⁵⁵ me³³ u³³jə³³ nɑ³¹ɕi³³ ɣu³³tɕɿ³¹ dʒɑ³¹
they say that WuYong Naxi language very
 sɿ³³ *me⁵⁵ / tɕɿ⁵⁵
know EVDN / HERESAY
 ‘They say that WuYong knows Naxi language very well.’

Interestingly, the hearsay particle *tɕɿ⁵⁵* is clearly developed from the verb *say*. When the postverbal particle *tɕɿ⁵⁵* is occurred, it indicates that the source of information the sentence is about is other than the speaker himself.

3. Grammaticalization

In Naxi, the directional verbs play a crucial role in the development of functional postverbal particles, most significantly in the workings of the modal or aspectual expressions.

As shown in (13-14), the modal contrast between realis and irrealis is made on the directional verbs in Naxi: (REA: realis, IRR: irrealis)

- (13)a. u³³jə³³ (*so³¹ni³³/ a³³ni³³) xo³³pe⁵⁵ xa³³ xu³³
WuYong tomorrow yesterday vegetable buy go.REA.3P
 ‘WuYong went to buy vegetable yesterday.’
- b. u³³jə³³ (so³¹ni³³/ *a³³ni³³) xo³³pe⁵⁵ xa³³ mbu³³
WuYong tomorrow yesterday vegetable buy go.IRR
 ‘WuYong will go to buy vegetable tomorrow.’
- (14)a. u³³jə³³ (*du³³k^ha³¹gv³¹/ga³³sɿ⁵⁵k^ha³¹) xa³³ ndzɿ³³ tɕ^hɿ³¹
WuYong later just now rice eat come.REA
 ‘WuYong came to eat rice just now.’

- b. u³³jə³³ (du³³k^ha³¹gv³¹/*ga³³s¹55k^ha³¹) xa³³ ndz¹33 du³³
 WuYong later just now rice eat come.IRR
 ‘WuYong will come to eat rice later.’

However, the synthetic directional verbs may further develop a functional use as aspectual particles. Take the directional verb *mbu³³* ‘go’ in (13b) as an example: *mbu³³* ‘go’ is a synthetic verb encoded with the centrifugal motion and irrealis modality, which may extend to a functional expression of the events in the future, namely, a prospective particle. Compare the usage of *mbu³³* as a verb (in (15a)=(13b)) and as a functional particle (in (15b)):

- (15)a. u³³jə³³ so³¹ni³³ xo³³pe⁵⁵ xa³³ mbu³³
 WuYong tomorrow vegetable buy go.IRREALIS
 ‘WuYong will go to buy vegetable tomorrow.’
 b. so³¹ni³³ xu³³ gu³³ mbu³³ jə³³
 tomorrow rain drop PROS SFP: IND
 ‘It is going to rain tomorrow.’

Likewise, as the verb *ts^h1³¹* ‘come’ in (14a) and (16a), it is involved with the functional information of centripetal motion and realis modality at the same time. As indicated in (16b), it may develop into an inchoative particle, referring to an event happened immediately before the utterance but not completely ended when the speaker started talking. For example:

- (16)a. u³³jə³³ gu³¹be³³ ts^h1³¹
 WuYong LiJiang come.REA
 ‘WuYong came to LiJiang.’
 b. t^hu³³ gə³¹ ŋv³⁵ ts^h1³¹
 he up cry INCHO
 ‘He is starting to cry.’

The phenomena of the grammaticalization from motion verb to functional particle are rather prevalent in Naxi. To illustrate the grammaticalization in Naxi, more examples are given below. For instance: the postverbal particle *dzi³³* expressing past experience is actually originated from the verb ‘walk or leave’. Naxi uses *dzi³³* to mark the shifting position of the speaker, meaning, roughly, walking away from (or leaving) the narrated scene, and thereby expressing the events distance and by implication its pastness. Compare (17a) and (17b):

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- (17)a. $\eta\theta^{31}$ dzi^{33} $m\theta^{33}$ lo^{31} ze^{31}
I *walk* *not* *movable* *SFP*
 ‘I cannot walk anymore.’
- b. $t^h\omega^{33}\gamma\omega^{31}$ ηi^{33} $ndz\eta^{33}$ dzi^{33}
they *fish* *eat* *EXP PERF*
 ‘They have ever eaten fish before.’

The grammaticalization of t^hV^{33} from verb to functional particle is demonstrated in example (18):

- (18)a. $\eta\theta^{31}$ $ia^{33}go^{31}$ t^hV^{33} ze^{31}
I *home* *reach.REA* *SFP*
 ‘I have reached home.’
- b. $\eta\theta^{31}$ mbe^{33} t^hV^{33}
I *do* *PERF*
 ‘I have done.’

The perfective particle t^hV^{33} is originated from the telic verb t^hV^{33} ‘reach or arrive’, which nowadays is still retains its use as a verb of centripetal movement in realis environments:

- (19)a. $\eta\theta^{31}$ $ia^{33}go^{31}$ t^hV^{33} ze^{31}
I *home* *reach.REA* *SFP*
 ‘I have reached home.’
- b. * $\eta\theta^{31}$ $so^{31}\eta i^{33}$ $ia^{33}go^{31}$ t^hV^{33} $ts\alpha^{31}$
I *tomorrow* *home* *reach. REA* *should*
 ‘I should arrive home tomorrow.’

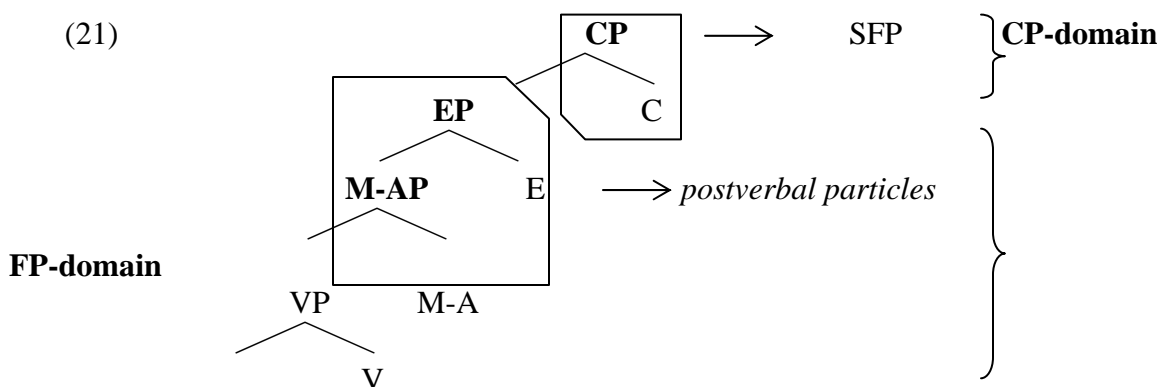
All these facts indicate the ongoing development from the lexical category as a synthetic verb complex to the functional category as analytic postverbal particles. A summary of the grammaticalization discussed above is given in (20):

- | (20) | Syntactic Verb Complex | →→→ | Analytic Functional Particles |
|------|-------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| a. | $mb\omega^{33}$ 'go': | IRREALIS. CENTRIFUGAL | PROSPECTIVE |
| b. | $ts^h\eta^{31}$ 'came': | REALIS. CENTRIPETAL | INCHOATIVE |
| c. | t^hV^{33} 'reach': | REALIS. CENTRIPETAL. TELIC | PERFECTIVE |
| d. | dzi^{33} 'leave': | REALIS. CENTRIFUGAL | EXPERIENTIAL PERFECT |

4. A Sketchy Analysis

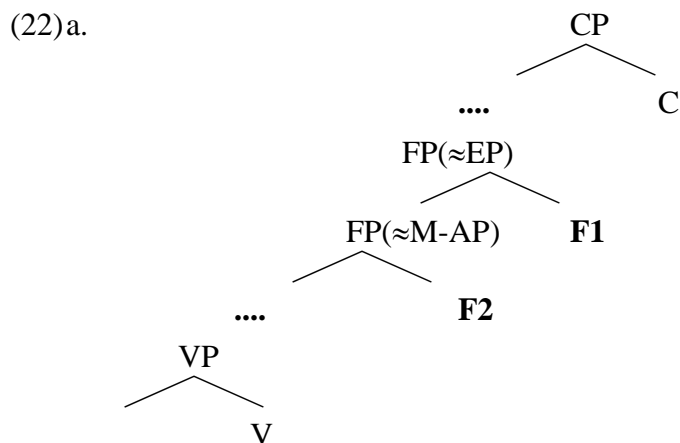
Before moving on to the analysis, we summarize the observations of the characters of the postverbal particles in Naxi. First of all, the postverbal particles are not inflected, which should be separated from sentence-final particles (SFP). The SFP in Naxi is used to express the mood of a sentence, or modulate the tone of a message in an imperative sentence or other forms of speech, which is very much like Chinese sentence-final particle *ma* 吗, *ne* 呢, *ba* 吧. Secondly, the functional expressions of aspect, direction and evidentiality are realized in the postverbal particles. They are syntactic, and involved in determining the grammaticality of a sentence. Moreover, the postverbal particles in Naxi exhibit strong verbal characters. They have their origins in verbs, and nowadays their verbal uses are still retained.

To account for the features of the postverbal particles in Naxi, I firstly differentiated the sentence-final particles from the postverbal particles by placing them in CP domain and in FP domain (cf. IP domain in Mei (2002)). Tree diagram (21) is basically based on Mei (2002):



According to Mei (2002), EgoP(EP), LocusP(LP) and M-AP(Modal-AspectP) are all inflectional projections. In Naxi, however, the development of verbal category to inflectional category is still in progress, in consideration of the facts that there is no inflection in Naxi and that the postverbal particles display strong verbal characters. To catch the facts, I hereby propose functional projections for the postverbal particles in Naxi. The so-called functional projections are between the inflectional projections (IP) and the projections of functional light verbs (*vP*).

The system works by placing the postverbal particles in the predicate in various combinations according to a fixed order. Look at the modified tree diagram in (22a) and their contents in (22b):



- b. F1: DIRECTION; EVIDENTIALITY
 F2: MODAL/ASPECT
 PROSPECTIVE, PERFECTIVE, PAST EXPERIENCE, INCHOATIVE ...etc.

The advantages of the analysis can basically account for the clustering characters of the postverbal particles in Naxi:

- (23)
- a. No inflected postverbal particles; i.e. no grammatical categories.
 - b. The postverbal particles should be differentiated from SFP.
 - c. The postverbal particles exhibit strong verbal characters.
 - d. The analytic postverbal particles are developed from the synthetic verbs, which is an ongoing development in Naxi grammar.
 - e. The postverbal particles are relevant to the locational stance or the locational stance or perspective of the speaker.

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