The Conjunctive Participle in Tshangla
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The conjunctive participle (CP) construction is a common feature of languages across South Asia. CPs are non-finite subordinate clauses in which the verb is marked with a participial morpheme, and in which the CP and matrix verbs are understood as occurring in succession, at the same time as, and sometimes because of or instead of each other (Subbarao 2012: 26). Tshangla (Tibeto-Burman, eastern Bhutan) is a language in which CPs may be found. In the proceeding discussion I will outline syntactic facts about the CP in Tshangla from a cross-linguistic perspective, in hopes of providing a picture of Tshangla CPs amenable to theoretical analysis.

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1. The Conjunctive Participle

I will consider two morphemes which seem to best fit current definitions of CPs: *nyi* (hereafter glossed CP1) and *than* (CP2). *Nyi* may be seen in (1a), in a construction looking very similar to the Hindi-Urdu CP in (1b) and the Tamil CP in (1c), showing a similarity between CP constructions across three different language families and geographically all of South Asia.

(1)   Conjunctive Participles
a.   Tshangla
        Tshering-gi   lum   thrup-nyi   kha   khe-wa
        Tshering-Erg stone throw-CP bird hit-Pst
        'Tshering threw a stone and hit a bird'
b.   Hindi-Urdu
        Amir-ne   patthar phenk-kar ciḍiya maar-ii
        Amir-Erg stone   throw-CP   bird   kill-Pst.F
        'Amir threw a stone and killed a bird'
c.   Tamil
        Raman kal   eri-ntu   paravai ko-ṉṉ-aan
        Raman stone throw-CP bird   kill-Pst-3SM
        'Raman threw a stone and killed a bird'

Andvik (2010)'s grammar of Tshangla describes these constructions, but does not consider them from the perspective of the cross-linguistic phenomenon of CPs. Andvik collects -*nyi*, -*than*, and several

other particle under the umbrella of particles marking "Non-final adverbial clauses" (281) which are fully reliant on matrix clauses for tense, aspect, and mirativity. Andvik describes *-nyi* as the "unspecified non-final marker" (288), and *-than* as "sequential non-final marker" (284). Given the similarity of the sentences in (1), however, it seems clear that a theoretical understanding of these constructions is best served if they are understood as a related phenomenon.

Andvik's other adverbial clause markers may indeed be CPs of the same sort of *-nyi* and *-than*; certainly the functions he mentions (such as concessive and conditional) are similar to the sorts of CP functions seen in particular in the Dravidian languages (Subbarao 2012, Steever 1988). But, as current data best support the similarity of these two with the cross-linguistic CP phenomenon.

2.   Aspect in CPs

Andvik describes both *-nyi* and *-than* (and indeed all other "adverbial clause" markers) as temporally unspecified and dependent on the matrix verb (281). While it is fair to describe *-nyi* as wholly unspecified temporally, this cannot be said of *-than*. As Andvik himself implies in his translation of *-than* as 'after' (284), the data make it clear that *-than* requires a perfective/completive interpretation. The examples below show that while a verb marked *-nyi* is interpreted as on-going if the matrix verb is in the imperfective, a minimally different sentence with *-than* requires that while the matrix verb is interpreted as on-going, the CP verb has a completive interpretation.

(2)   *-nyi*
a.   Tshering-gi   dramnyen trok-nyi   karma-gi   ngang jang-la
       Tshering-Erg dramnyen play-CP1 Karma-Erg song   pull-Prs
       'Tshering played dramnyen and Karma sang (along)'
b.   Lopen-gi   cas yek-nyi waktsa-ba tsangke chowa-la
       teacher-Erg talk do-CP1 child-Pl   quiet   stay-Prs
       'The teacher is talking so the children are staying quiet'

(3)   *-than*
a.   Tshering-gi   dramnyen trok-than karma-gi   ngang jang-la
       Tshering-Erg dramnyen play-CP2 Karma-Erg song   pull-Prs
       'Tshering played dramnyen and (then, as soon as he stopped) Karma sang'
b.   Lopen-gi   cas yek-than waktsa-ba tsangke chowa-la
       teacher-Erg talk do-CP2 child-Pl   quiet   stay-Prs
       'The teacher said something, so the children are staying quiet'

This differential specification between *-nyi* and *-than* is also seen in differential ambiguity when the matrix verb is future. In (4a), the *-nyi* verb may be interpreted as having happened or being in the future; but, the equivalent verb in (4b) only has the latter interpretation.

(4)   CP with Future Verbs
a.   Jigi lum thrup-nyi kha-ga khe-le
        I.Erg stone throw-CP1 bird-Dat hit-Inf
        'I will throw a stone and hit a bird'
        or 'I threw a stone and it will hit a bird'
b.   Jigi lum thrup-than kha-ga khe-le
        I.Erg stone throw-CP2 bird-Dat hit-Inf
        'I will throw a stone and it will hit a bird'
        *'I threw a stone and it will hit a bird'

Notably, even with this interpretation the use of *-than* with a future matrix verb is somewhat marginal itself. The extent of what this says about the semantic relationship between the temporal interpretation of the CP marker and the matrix tense marker is unclear, but it can at least be concluded that *-than* is not completely unspecified in terms of aspect. While cross-linguistically, languages vary in terms of whether or not CPs carry such temporal information (Subbarao 2012), it seems uncommon for a language to have two CPs which differ specifically on this.

Though strictly speaking it is dependent for tense and aspect on the matrix verb, *-nyi* is not completely unrestricted temporally; a *-nyi*-marked verb cannot be understood as following the matrix verb. Thus, while in (4), where either order of events is a logical possibility, either verb may be *-nyi*-marked, this is not the case for (5), as throwing a stone logically should proceed hitting a bird.

(5)
a.   Tshering ngang jang-nyi shek-pa
        Tshering song pull-CP1 come-Pst
        'Tshering came singing a song'
b.   Tshering shek-nyi ngang jang-pa
        Tshering come-CP1 song pull-Pst
        'Tshering sang a song coming in'

(6)
a.   Jigi lum thrup-nyi kha khe-wa
        I.Erg stone throw-CP1 bird hit-Pst
        'I hit a bird throwing a stone'

b.   *Jigi kha khe-nyi lum   thruph-a
      I.Erg bird hit-CP1 stone throw-Pst

3.   Syntactic facts about CPs

The two CPs share similar syntactic abilities and constraints, particularly with regards to positional

optionality of CP clauses and argument sharing. Transitive verbs may share both (7a) or either subject

(b) and object (c), or neither (d).

(7)   Transitive argument sharing
a.   Tshering-gi   emadatse cet-than   za-wa
       Tshering-Erg emadatse make-CP2 eat-Pst
       'Tshering made and ate emadatse'
b.   Tshering-gi   emadatse cet-than   kharang za-wa
       Tshering-Erg emadatse make-CP2 kharang eat-Pst
       'Tshering made emadatse and then ate kharang'
c.   Tshering-gi   emadatse cet-than   karma-gi   za-wa
       Tshering-Erg emadatse make-CP2 Karma-Erg eat-Pst
       'Tshering made emadatse and then Karma ate it'
d.   Jigi ri   pha-ni   Tshering-gi   emadatse za-wa
       I.Erg water bring-CP1 Tshering-Erg emadatse eat-Pst
       'I brought water so that Tshering would eat emadatse'

For ditransitive verbs, there is a similar degree of flexibility in which arguments are shared between the

CP and matrix verb. (8a) shows ditransitive verbs which share an subject and direct object, (b) just a

subject, and (c) just a direct object.

(8)   CP ditransitive verbs
a.   Tshering-gi Karma-ga   leng se   thur bin-than Dechen-ga bi-wa
       Tshering-Erg Karma-Dat peach fruit one give-CP2 Dechen-Dat give-Pst
       'Tshering gave a peach to Karma and then gave one to Dechen'
b.   Tshering-gi Karma-ga leng   se   thur bin-than solu thur Dechen-ga bi-wa
       Tshering-Erg Karma-Dat peach fruit one give-CP2 chili one Dechen-Dat give-Pst
       'Tshering gave a peach to Karma and then a chili to Dechen'
c.   Tshering-gi Karma-ga   leng se   thur bin-than Wangmo-gi   Karma-ga bi-wa
       Tshering-Erg Karma-Dat peach fruit one give-CP2 Wangmo-Erg Karma-Dat give-Pst
       'Tshering gave Karma a peach and then Wangmo gave Karma one'

If the two verbs share both objects but not subjects, the particle -bu is required for the matrix subject.

(9)   Tshering-gi Dechen-ga leng   se   thur bin-than Karma-gi-*(bu) bi-wa
       Tshering-Erg Dechen-Dat peach fruit one give-CP2 Karma-Erg-too give-Pst
       'Tshering gave Dechen a peach and Karma gave her one too'

Andvik understands -nyi in particular has having a distinct "serial" and "clause-chaining" reading, one

distinguishing factor supposedly being that the former does not allow for non-coreferent subjects (351).

However, the facts he cites with regards to argument sharing do not necessarily bear out this

distinction. Another distinction which he asserts is whether or not the CP clause is serving as a modifier

of the matrix clause (342). But, it is easy to find examples with non-shared subjects where one clause

must be understood as modifying the other, as shown above. Indeed, sentences like (7d) are only

felicitous if there is an established connection between the two events; it must be understood, in this

case, that Tshering is only eating emadatse because he has been brought water. (10) shows that this is

the case for *-nyi* as well as *-than*.

(10)   Tshering-gi shing cat-nyi karma-gi   kangthri cet-pa
        Tshering-Erg tree   cut-CP1 Karma-Erg chair   make-Pst
        'Tshering cut wood and Karma made a chair (from it)'

Thus, the distinction Andvik draws between serial constructions and clause chains becomes somewhat

obscured. However, the argument could still be made from the behavior of ditransitives that CPs which

do not share the matrix subject are in some sense peculiar.

        Sentences in which the shared argument is the matrix verb but the object of the CP provide a

seem also to pose an issue for Andvik's distinction; if the shared argument is not repeated, the sentence

may be ambiguous.

(11)   Tshering-gi   karma brek-ni   roke.jong-ma
        Tshering-Erg Karma push-CP1 fall-Pst
        'Tshering$_1$ having pushed Karma$_2$, he$_{1,2}$ fell'

If chained clauses have greater syntactic independence than serial CPs, one might assume that only

shared subjects could be dropped in these conditions.

        Non-matrix clauses may also contain CPs. (12) shows relative clauses where the argument

shared by the two verbs within the relative clause is relativized; (13) shows this with a benefactive

clause, where the matrix direct object appears to originate in the embedded benefactive clause.

(12)   CPs in RCs
a.   Lum Tshering-gi   phi-nyi kha khe-khan katang la
        stone Tshering-Erg fly-CP1 bird hit-Rel   large   is

'The stone that Tshering threw and hit the bird is large'

b.   Emadatse jigi cet-nyi   za-khan ma-drikpa la
emadatse I.Erg make-CP1 eat-Rel Neg-good is
'The emadatse I made and ate isn't good'

c.   phin-nyi u-khan   kha-gi to   za-wa
fly-CP1 come-Rel bird-Erg food eat-Pst
'The bird that came flying ate the food.'

(13)   Tshering-gi Karma-ga bu-nyi   za-le-ga   denge emadatse cet-la
Tshering-Erg Karma-Dat take-CP1 eat-Inf-Dat for   emadatse make-Prs
'Tshering is making emadatse for Karma to take and eat'

However, this sort of relativization becomes ungrammatical when trying to relativize from a CP which does not share arguments with main verb of the relative clause (ie the one which shows relativizing morphology).

(14)   Relativizing too far
a.   *Emadatse jigi Karma-gi   kharang za-nyi   cet-khan ma-drikpa la
emadatse   I.Erg Karma-Erg kharang eat-CP1 make-Rel Neg-good is
Intended: 'The emadatse that, Karma having eaten kharang, I made, isnt good'
b.   *kharang jigi   emadatse cet-nyi   Karma-gi za-khan ma-drikpa la
kharang   I.Erg emadatse make-CP1 Karma-Erg eat-Rel Neg-good is
Intended: 'The kharang that, I having made emadatse, Karma ate, isn't good'

Such movement is also thought to be awkward if *-than* is used rather than *-nyi*. It is unclear why this should be; the relativizing suffix *-khan* and *-than* share the same requirement of a perfective interpretation. This could arise out of a sense of redundancy, although in such constructions the it might be expected that *-than* only relate temporally to the *-khan*-marked verb, and the latter to the matrix verb. This could be an indication that, even inside of a relative clause, CP verbs must relate temporally to the matrix verb only.

Generally, CP clauses may optionally be post-posed after the matrix verb. However, this seems preferred in environments where reversing the morphology is acceptable; (15b), because of the causal relationship between the two verbs, would be ungrammatical with the morphology switched, and is dispreferred with this morphology and configuration.

(15)
a.   Tshering shek-pa   ngang jang-nyi
Tshering come-Pst song   pull-CP1

'Tshering, singing a song, came'

b.   %Jigi emadatse za-wa cet-nyi
         I.Erg emadatse eat-Pst make-CP1
         'I ate emadatse, having made it'

4.   Prospects for a theoretical analysis of CPs

It is common for CPs to be lumped into the category of serial verb constructions (eg. Steever 1988,

Andvik 2010). However, insofar as a coherent standard exists for what may or may not be a serial verb

construction, Tshangla CPs seem to fail many relevant tests (Seuren 1990, Zwicky 1990). Argument

sharing is not required between clauses, the verbs in CP constructions do not share all aspectual

information (at least with -*than*), and the CP morpheme itself could be analyzed as a complementizer or

conjunction. The latter is not clear, but certainly *nyi* has a separate use as a conjunction:

(16)   Se onya-ke lekpu la, nyi se   thaloka-ke churpu la
        fruit this -Abl good be CP1 fruit that   -Abl bad   be
        'The fruit from this one is good, but the fruit from that one is bad'

Indeed, some definitions of SVC require that subject specifically is shared between clauses (Baker

1989, Collins 1997). However, as the results of the tests aside from argument sharing are not nearly as

stark, this might be an argument for a liberalized definition of SVC which includes CPs, rather than

excluding them by keeping current definitions. Already there do exist definitions for SVCs which

attempt to include "switch-subject serialization" seen in some Papuan languages (Bradshaw 1993).

      Previous theoretical analyses of both SVCs (Collins 1997) and CPs in particular (Davison 1981)

have assumed that empty categories. Baker (1989)'s analyses of SVCs as involving multiply-headed

VPs seems an unlikely fit for Tshangla, as it is assumed specifically for theta-assignment in SVCs

which share internal arguments (ie objects), only a small number of the possible CP constructions we

have discussed here.

      The question of relativization offers a puzzle which may be the key to understanding what sort

of syntax is involved in CP constructions. Assuming phrase structure something like (17), it can be seen

that the relativized argument does not have to come directly from the lowest clause (ie the CP clause),

but raised first out of the CP clause and then into the sentential matrix clause in relativization; however, that should lead to (18) being grammatical, as the relativized argument comes only from the matrix relative clause, not the CP clause. But, in fact, these are wholly unacceptable.

(17)   [[lum$_1$ [Tshering-gi$_2$ [e_2 e_1 phi-nyi] e_1 kha khe]-khan]
           stone Tshering   throw   bird hit

(18)   [[kharang$_1$ [jigi$_2$ [e_2 emadatse cet-ni] karma-gi e_1 za]-khan]
           kharang   I   emadatse make   karma   eat

The answer to this will depend on our understanding of the nature of these empty categories, whether or not they are (all) created by movement, and what the general restrictions on movement in Tshangla are.

The CP construction in Tshangla is not yet wholly understood, and such understanding will rely on better formal representations of aspect, argument structure, and movement in the language. But, it appears a wholly tractable problem, waiting to be solved by more data and further analysis. Such analysis will provide a better understanding not just of this one language, but of similar constructions in other Tibeto-Burman languages, and indeed many other languages worldwide with similar sorts of constructions.

Finally, a note on the historical perspective on the Tshangla CPs. While uncommon in the rest of South Asia, language with multiple CP forms are been attested among the Tibeto-Burman languages, such as Classical Newari *-le* and *-nam*. However, these (as described in Kansakar 1995) are translated as 'as, when' and 'after, while', which do not seem to match the Tshangla distinction (*-than* is 'after' but not 'while'). Further, only one seems to be attested in (at least some varieties of) Modern Newari (Genetti 2005). This may be a feature of proto-Tibeto-Burman, or some other, more recent common ancestor of Newari and Tshangla (proto-Himalayish?), which has been lost in some daughter languages. Understanding the history of of these multiple CPs may be a key to understanding the history of the CP in general in South Asian languages.

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