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Kyoto University
Once again, on the “dual” suffix of Tangut

ARAKAWA, Shintaro
Research Institute for Languages and Culture of Asia and Africa, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies

Keywords: Tangut, dual suffix, verb phrase, Tibeto-Burman

1. Tangut language and its verb phrase
The Xixia (Tangut) dynasty occupied a dominant position in the northwestern part of China between the 11th and 13th century. Despite the extinction of the Tangut language and scripts, many Tangut documents remain, illuminating the prosperous culture at the time.

Tangut belongs to Tibeto-Burman language group. The considerable amount of surviving Tangut texts contribute to a reconstruction of the phonology and grammar of Tangut. It has unique linguistic features, which are not found in either Old Tibetan or Old Burmese, for example: the ‘agreement’ between personal pronouns and personal suffixes, the unique set of verb-prefixes originated from ‘directional marker’, and other features.

In terms of linguistic typology, Tangut belongs to the so-called SOV group and its noun phrase consist of (Dem-)N(-adj-CM). The verb phrase can be complicated in some cases.

Prefix (negative, perfect, etc.)- Verb stem -Auxiliary verb -Pronominal suffix -Particle

‘Verb agreement’ (or ‘Pronominalization’) exists in the verb sentences, but only with an agreement that the first and second person is marked (personal pronoun – personal suffix). The sentence below shows the example of the agreement:

(01)

I Buddha Pref1 say truth Pref1 understand Suf (1sg)
“I understood the truth which the Buddha explained” (Arakawa 2014a: 149)

The Tangut language has a variety of verb-prefixes with different functions. The prefixes are grouped into two series with similar consonants. The first series of them indicates the direction or perfective (of the motion), and the second series represents the ‘optative’ meaning. The former series is usually called ‘Prefix series 1’ (hereafter, ‘Pref1’) and the latter ‘Prefix series 2’ (hereafter, ‘Pref2’). According to Nishida, Pref1 originally functioned as directional marker and then developed into an aspect marker expressing perfect aspect. The Table 1 shows the set of Pref1 or 2 from Nishida’s previous work (Nishida 1989: 419).
Table 1: The set of verb prefixes

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Expected direction, Tangut script, and phonetic reconstruction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Direction</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>upward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>downward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to here</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>outward</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(02) 

空 计 禼

2wi 1kha 'kI: 1shI: 
castle CM Pref1 go

(He) went inside the castle (Arakawa 2014b: 20)

2. 禼 'kI: functions as dual marker?

Previous Studies show that there is a correlation between independent forms and suffixes of pronominal, such as Table 2.

Table 2: The set of independent forms and suffixes of pronominal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>independent form</th>
<th>suffix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1sg.</td>
<td>禼 nga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2sg.</td>
<td>禼 ni:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3sg.</td>
<td>禼 tha:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pl.</td>
<td>N- 禼 nI:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, Nishida argued that the 禼 'kI: functions as dual marker in some cases. The suffix indicates “the agents are ‘dual’” (Nishida 2004: 374-375), though it is not combined with independent form. It is out of range of the so-called ‘agreement’.

X and Y ... Verb- 禼 'kI: 

1 The system of phonetic transcription is given according to Arakawa (2014). ‘1’ means ‘high-level tone’ and ‘2’ means ‘low-rising tone’. The transcription ‘I’ means [ i ].
He quoted the samples from Tangut version of the Lotus sutra (Nishida 2004: 374-375).

A: 汗亳鯉款垪計冂榎遭組

B: 汗亳鯉款垪計冂榎遭組

C: 汗亳鯉款垪計冂榎遭組

D: 汗亳鯉款垪計冂榎遭組

E: 汗亳鯉款垪計冂榎遭組

Re-analysis of the samples 1: In A and B, 跡kl: functions as a prefix or a suffix?

A: 汗亳鯉款垪計冂榎遭組

what cause heretical view family CM Pref1 bear ??? say

Verb  Verb

“(We) have been born into this family of heretical views!”

B: 汗亳鯉款垪計冂榎遭組

house leave way Pref1 practice make ??? say

Verb  AV  Verb

“(We beg our mother to permit us going to the place where the Buddha is,) to leave the household life and to practice the way.”

Re-analysis of the samples 2: In C and E, no subject appears?

C: 汗亳鯉款垪計冂榎遭組

house Pref1 leave AV ???

“(We beg our mother to permit us?) to leave the household and become shramanas.”

E: 汗亳鯉款垪計冂榎遭組

Lotus listen to go ???

“(He will permit us?) to go and listen to the Lotus (sutra).”

Re-analysis of the samples 3: In D, which pair is ‘dual’, subject or object?

D: 汗亳鯉款垪計冂榎遭組

father mother 1sg pl CM house Pref1 leave AV ???

Subject  Object

“Our father and mother should permit us to leave household life.”

At first, the presenter doubted Nishida’s idea and thought that it was an error in writing. However, after the re-analysis of previous studies, a sample that reinforces Nishida’s idea was found:
The sample sentence above has ‘dual’ agents of the verb that properly matches to Nishida’s idea.

3. Exceptions and the explanation
The presenter basically agrees with Nishida’s idea but some exceptions must be pointed out. In some cases, the sentences which include ‘dual’ agents have no suffix.

At the time, Ananda and Rahula thought to themselves. (SP4, Arakawa forthcoming)

We face some questions: Do the ‘dual’ subjects appear without the suffix? Where will the suffix appear? Here, we will again check the original texts from the research. In my previous work, we can find the suffixes in the long texts below.

(AV77, Arakawa 2011: 155-157)
The texts seem long, but the construction is simple:

At the time, the boy and girl said to Sudhana, “We, two…”

The first sentence in which ‘dual’ agents are talking to Sudhana has no suffix of dual. On the other hand, in the conversational part, all verbs (the subjects of which are ‘the boy and girl’) are followed by the suffix. The rest of the text is omitted because it is long, but all the samples (A-E) of Nishida can be found in the conversational part.

Actually, the sample sentence (04) and (05) appear in the descriptive (not conversational) part. Besides, since the sentences are very short, it is easy to find the ‘dual’ agents.

The facts above may suggest that  ejemplo works in colloquial style.

The suffix does not appear in short and simple sentences. Rather, it appears in long and complicated sentences in which the subject (or object) is not easy to define as ‘dual’. The suffix is not an obligation, just works as a ‘reminder.’

4. Two remarks on ejemplo:
Here the presenter makes two comments on ejemplo:

In some cases, ejemplo functions as the last element in idioms such as ejemplo “what is”:


good

‘dual’


what

What (is it)

After interrogative pronouns, ejemplo works as an accusative case marker.

The second comment is about the shape of the character. Though the character “example” consists of two same elements such as Chinese “双”, the character does not mean ‘dual’ ideographically. The other character ejemplo means ‘dual’ (Li 2008: 905-906).
5. ‘Dual’ in Tibeto-Burman languages

We can find the same kind of expression in the Tibeto-Burman (hereafter, TB) languages. This presentation does not cover all TB languages, but some languages have a special expression for ‘dual’:

Type A: verb suffix, Type B: noun suffix (or special form of pronouns).

The verbal agreement of the Rgyalrong language is introduced below. Rgyalrongic marks dual in the form of suffixes as -ch (-Nch) (Nagano1988: 1387).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>prefix</th>
<th>suffix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1sg.</td>
<td>(kə-)</td>
<td>-ng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1du.</td>
<td>(kə-)</td>
<td>-ch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1pl.</td>
<td>(kə-)</td>
<td>-y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2sg.</td>
<td>ta-</td>
<td>-n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2du.</td>
<td>ta-</td>
<td>-Nch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2pl.</td>
<td>ta-</td>
<td>-ny</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-gyo kə-mə-ndx-ch ko.
we(du.) Pre-pre-V-Suf Aux
we   1du-Pref-V-Suf1du   AV
We (two of us) will arrive.

It is difficult to define whether dual-marking “verb + ₁kI:” was used in Proto TB, or can only be found in Tangut and Tangut-Rgyalrong subbranch. If we suppose that Proto language of Rgyalrong and Tangut used *-ki (or prefix *ki-), that makes it possible to point out the change of *-ki  >  -kI (centralization in Tangut) and *-ki  >  -ch (Affrication in the front of front-vowel and the lost of the vowel in Rgyalrong).

6. Conclusion

The Tangut morpheme ₁kI: has three functions:
A) the most-common use, a verb-prefix indicating the direction of the action or perfective aspect.
B) an element in idioms such as ₁kI:  “what is”.
C) a verb-suffix functioning as a “dual” marker.

Although the late Prof. Nishida advocated the hypothesis of the “dual” marker (Nishida 2004 etc.), the attestations he adduced were insufficient. In this study, his examples are re-analyzed, and further attestations are provided from some Buddhist texts of Tangut version (mainly, 大方広仏華厳経 Buddhāvataṃsaka-nāma-mahāvaipulya and 妙法蓮華経 Saddharma-puṇḍarīka).
In the conclusion, the author argues:

1) The suffix遭kI: functions as a marker expressing the “dual” persons of the action.
2) The use of the suffix is not obligatory. It is frequently missing in short or simple sentences, but is favored in long or complicated passages in which it is not otherwise easy for a reader to confirm the duality of the person doing the action.
3) Similar sound and usage of the suffix can be found in some Tibeto-Burman languages, especially Rgyalrongic languages which are said to be potentially cognate to Tangut.

Abbreviations


References


——forthcoming Xixia Version of the Lotus Sutra: from the Collection of the Princeton University: Facsimile, text and linguistic studies.


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