

AGENTIVE MARKING IN YONGNING NA (MOSUO)*

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Abstract: Agentive marking in Yongning Na (Mosuo) appears with non-canonical constituent orders; with ellipsed patients; to indicate volitionality and agency; to mark contrastive focus/switch in actor; and acts as an utterance predicate with direct speech complements. Semantic extension has occurred from the contrastive focus usage of the agentive, which marks a constituent as salient, to an emphatic marker, which marks saliency on non-nominals. Although agentive marking often occurs in clauses with structural ambiguity, it often does not resolve this structural ambiguity. Structural ambiguity, however, rarely results in true ambiguity.

Keywords: Agentive marking; optional case marking; optional ergativity; patient marking; Tibeto-Burman; Yongning Na; Mosuo; Eastern Naxi.

1. INTRODUCTION

Yongning Na, commonly known as Mosuo and closely related to Naxi, is spoken along the border of northern Yunnan and western Sichuan in southwestern China at the crossroads of the Himalayan, mainland Southeast Asian, and Sinitic linguistic areas. Na and Naxi remain unclassified within Tibeto-Burman, but are close to Lolo-Burmese. Precise data as to the number of speakers are not available, but best estimates give approximately 40,000 speakers for Na, inclusive of Yongning Na and the other Na varieties.

Grammatical relations in Na are primarily indicated by constituent order, which is AOV. However, non-canonical constituent orders may appear for pragmatic and discourse-related reasons. Na is a zero anaphora language, so agent/subject, object, or both, may not appear if they can be inferred from discourse context. Na has intransitive, transitive, ambitransitive, and ditransitive clauses. These classes are not based on morphological marking, but rather distinguished by the types of nominal arguments (agent, subject, and/or object)

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that the verb allows. Semantic roles are indicated by postpositions, the most common of which are presented in Table 1. The majority of these postpositional markers have a number of different but related uses.

<i>Morphosyntactic function</i>	<i>Na form</i>
Agent/subject	Marked by word order
Object	Marked by word order
Agentive, ablative, emphatic	nu ³³
Patient, comparative, adessive, allative, ‘at the time’	to ³¹
Possessive, associative, non-relative attributive	bu ³³
Locative, ablative, ‘with regard to’	kwɔ ³³
Dative, allative, benefactive, recipient, goal	ki ³³
Comitative	gd ³³
Instrumental	pɔ ¹³

Table 1. Na basic postpositional role markers

The Na data presented here were collected during fieldwork conducted in the village of Luoshui in Yunnan Province and in Muli County, Sichuan Province during the summer of 2002, 2004-2005, and 2005-2006. Methodologies used for this fieldwork include text collection; direct elicitation using Mandarin as the contact language; elicitation based on textual examples; lexical elicitation; and participant observation. The text collection is sizable, and contains texts of a variety of genres: mythological, conversational, procedural, historical, and opinion, as well as some from the shamanic register.

Of these methodologies, text collection and elicitation based on textual examples proved the most useful to understanding agentive marking. This is because agentive marking in Na is rooted in pragmatic and semantic factors, which are much clearer when the context has been established. In direct elicitation, agentive and patient marking often do not appear because the language of elicitation, Mandarin, does not have these markers. Even when one can elicit agentive and patient marking, it is very difficult for native speakers to articulate when the markers should or should not be used or what the markers’ semantic contributions are, beyond a sense that they appear with OAV constituent order or yield an emphatic reading on the marked argument. The difficulty that native speakers have in explaining the use of the agentive marker is quite natural, as marking has a number of related uses, and is not syntactically governed; rather, marking has pragmatic and semantics bases. Thus, textual examples have provided to be the most illuminating for this research.

This article is organized as follows. §2 presents an overview of the factors which motivate agentive marking in Na, and discusses some features which

commonly correlate with agentive marking or ergative-absolutive alignment, but do not play a role in agentive marking in Na. §2.1 discusses the grammaticalization of the Na agentive from an ablative marker. §2.2 shows that although agentive marking frequently appears when there is clause structure ambiguity, such as occurs with non-canonical word orders and ellipsed patients, in fact structural ambiguity rarely results in real ambiguity; agentive marking is not always sufficient to resolve ambiguity; agentive marking also occurs when there isn't structural ambiguity; and agentive marking yields readings of volitionality and agency on the part of the agent and tracks shifts in viewpoint within narrative. §2.3 and §2.4 give the usages of agentive marking which do not involve structural ambiguity: marking contrastive focus and switch in actor (§2.3) and acting as an utterance predicate with direct speech complements (§2.4). §2.5 shows semantic extension of *nur*³³ from an agentive marker to an emphatic marker which can appear marking a wide variety of non-nominals. §3 discusses the implications of the Na data for an understanding of agentive and optional case marking more generally.

2. AGENTIVE MARKING

Agentive *nur*³³ is a postposition which can be used to mark a nominal argument as an agent. Its use is not obligatory, and agents are unmarked more frequently than they are marked, both in conversation and narrative. In Na, marking is semantically and pragmatically motivated; thus, 'agentive' is used to describe this postposition rather than 'ergative', which here is reserved for marking with a syntactic basis. *nur*³³ is used in clauses with non-canonical constituent order; in clauses with ellipsed patients; to give a reading of agency or volitionality on the part of the actor; to mark contrastive focus or a switch in the actor from previous discourse; and to track changes in viewpoint within a narrative. It also has related usages as a speech predicate with direct speech complements and as an emphatic marker occurring with a number of non-nominal parts of speech. Agentive *nur*³³ has a counterpart, patient marker *to*³¹, which is discussed in §2.2.3. *nur*³³ is used fairly rarely among Luoshui speakers, but appears prolifically in the speech of speakers from Yongning proper.

Agentive *nur*³³ is often translated by Na speakers fluent in Mandarin as *bèi* (被), which is notable because Mandarin *bèi* is sometimes analysed as a passive marker because it demotes a core argument to an oblique. Na *nur*³³, however, marks a nominal as an agent. As passives decrease valency by marking an agent as an oblique while agentive/ergative markers in some cases emphasize agency, Na *nur*³³ and Mandarin *bèi* are in fact somewhat oppositional. However, *nur*³³ and *bèi* both occur with non-canonical word orders, and both mark actors. It is these similarities that lead speakers to gloss Na *nur*³³ as Mandarin *bèi* despite the different semantic roles the two mark. Mandarin *bèi* does not occur when a noun phrase has been ellipsed in the way that *nur*³³ may. This may be because Mandarin has AVO constituent order so nominal arguments have distinct pre- and post-verbal morphosyntactic slots, while Na has AOV constituent order so

both agent and object occur preverbally and when one is ellipsed, there is structural ambiguity.

Agentive marking in Na occurs with volitional verbs. This may in part be because the class of transitive verbs includes a large number of actions which require a certain amount of volition on the part of the agent. From the sizable naturalistic corpus, there is only one example in which the agentive is arguably used with a non-volitional verb: in example (5) below, the agentive is used with the verb ‘spot’ in a narrative context in which the agent spots the patient by happenstance rather than on purpose. Nonetheless, it is notable that this is the sole attestation of the agentive used with a verb which is not categorically volitional within the corpus. The actors which receive agentive marking are definite. When used to mark contrastive focus or switch in actor, the agentive can appear with intransitive verbs; however, these intransitive verbs are still volitional.

Agentive marking in Na does not appear to be governed by a TAM split. Given the large number of aspects available in the language, paradigmatic data with the grammaticality or ungrammaticality of using the agentive with each of the different TAM categories are not available, but there is no apparent patterning between agentive marking and TAM.

Agentive marking in Na is not linked to the animacy hierarchy. In some languages, some kinds of NPs follow an ergative-absolutive alignment pattern while other kinds follow a nominative-accusative alignment pattern; such systems are commonly referred to as split-ergative systems. Silverstein (1976) demonstrated that such systems follow an animacy hierarchy, where first and second person pronouns are least likely to follow an ergative-absolutive alignment pattern, and inanimate nouns are most likely to show ergative-absolutive alignment, with third person pronouns, determiners, proper nouns and kinship terms, human nouns, and animate nouns filling the continuum between first and second person pronouns and inanimate nouns. In Na, agentive marking is attested with nominals from across the animacy hierarchy: *nu*³³ appears with first, second, and third person pronouns; proper nouns; kinship terms; humans; and animate nouns. It is not attested with inanimate nouns, with the possible exception of the direct speech complement usage when occurring with natural forces discussed in §2.4.

Agentive marking in Na is not related to an active-stative distinction. In some languages, active verbs such as ‘walk’, ‘jump’, and ‘look’ take ergative marking, while stative verbs such as ‘be happy’ and verbs denoting happenings (in which the actor typically does not exhibit control) such as ‘cough’ receive absolutive marking. Verbs representing actions which may be performed either with or without control in such languages appear with ergative marking to indicate the subject is performing the action volitionally (i.e. someone may cough on purpose to signal to a speaker that what s/he is saying is inappropriate), or with absolutive marking to indicate the subject is performing the action inadvertently (i.e. someone may cough involuntarily as a result of having a cold) (McGregor 2009: 487). In Na, the agentive is not attested with stative verbs.

While the agentive can appear on active verbs, it does not appear on all active verbs, so there is no evidence that agentive marking in Na relates to an active-stative distinction. The examples in which *nur*³³ appears with an intransitive verb all have a contrastive focus/switch in actor reading and are thus discussed in §2.3. In some of these cases, *nur*³³ gives a reading of volitionality to the action, but in other cases, *nur*³³ serves simply to contrast one actor's actions with another's. (This usage is limited to the contrastive focus/switch in actor usage of *nur*³³ because the non-canonical constituent order and ellipsed patient usages require transitive verbs.) Further research, however, is needed to investigate whether this is just one strategy for indicating volitionality or intentionality on the part of the actor, or whether this is really a grammaticalized part of the language.

The Na agentive has grammaticalized from an ablative marker, and is not related to an instrumental marker as in Nyagrang-Minyag (Suzuki, to appear) or Tibetan, i.e. the relational (genitive)/instrumental marker in Kenhat Ladakh (Zeisler, to appear).

Although further research is needed, the agentive marker in Na does not seem to partner very tightly with a topic marker to mark information structure, as is found in Sumi (Teo, to appear) and Khumi (Peterson, current volume). In Na, *nur*³³ can mark an agent in sentences in which an adjunct is marked as a topic with topic marker *dzo*³³, but the agentive also frequently appears in sentences without topic marking. Furthermore, the agentive marker and the topic marker can appear on the same nominal argument; the examples of this phenomenon all are of the contrastive focus usage of *nur*³³.

Patient marking may be restricted to marking humans, but there are simply too few examples in the corpus to be certain; further research is needed on patient marking in Na.

2.1. Origins of the Na agentive marker from *nur*³³ ablative

The Na agentive marker *nur*³³ grammaticalized from an ablative/source marker to mark agent in the type of non-systemic ergative/agentive marking found in some Tibeto-Burman languages, as discussed in LaPolla (1995).¹ The grammaticalization of Na *nur*³³ into an agentive appears to be fairly recent: the form has not undergone phonetic change. This is consistent with LaPolla's conclusion that "For the Loloish branch (and possibly even Lolo-Burmese) the best we can do is possibly reconstruct an ablative or instrumental marker *ne or *ni, which in some languages came to be used as an agentive marker, but at the Lolo-Burmese level

¹ The Loloish languages with agentives clearly cognate to Na *nur*³³ are: Western Naxi *nur*³³, Sani Yi *lr*³³, Chiang Rai Akha *ne*, Dazhai Hani *ne*³³ (LaPolla 1995:208–209). Some Qiangic languages also show agentives that likely are cognate: Muli Namuzi *ni*⁵⁵, Taoba Pumi *ne*³⁵, Tuanjie Queyu *ni*³⁵/*ji*³⁵, Xiazhan Queyu *ji*¹³ *ni*⁵⁵, and perhaps Su Lyusu *le*⁵³ (LaPolla 1995), when one considers that the n/l distinction is neutralized in some varieties of Southwestern Mandarin and this neutralization has spread through language contact.

we have no clear evidence of a reconstructable proto-form for an agentive marker.” (LaPolla 1995: 209).

An example of ablative *nur*³³ is given in (1). My native-speaker consultant very specifically translates *nur*³³ as Mandarin *cóng* (从 ‘from’), in direct contrast to the usual translations he gives for *nur*³³: as marking agent, indicating emphasis, or as being a sociolinguistic marker of where the speaker is from. Note that ablative *nur*³³ is extremely rare within the textual corpus; *kwɔ*³³ is the commonly used ablative. This seems to support Huang’s (1991: 350) analysis cited in LaPolla (1995: 204) of the *nur*³³—cognate agentives attested in various Loloish and Qiangic languages across Yunnan, Sichuan, and northern Thailand as being loans from Tibetan, because Na already has an ablative, and *nur*³³ does not manage to make much of an incursion into its territory.²

- (1) *lə*³³-*ʃu*³³ *zɛ*³³ *ʃ*³¹-*sɣ*³³ *ku*³¹ *mɣ*³³-*wɔ*³³ *nur*³³
 ACCOMP-carry PERF 1INC.PRO heavens ABL
 ‘(He) carried (her) off, (he) carried (her) off from our heavens;
 T:Tsodeluyizo.147³
- lə*³³-*ʃu*³³ *zɛ*³³ *di*³³-*kwɔ*³³ *zu*³³-*tu*³³ *yɪ*³³
 ACCOMP-carry PERF earth-LOC family make
 (they) would send (them) to set up a family
- pu*¹³ *hu*³³ *hɔ*³³ *ni*³³.
 send go FUT.DES CERT.STR
 in the mortal world.’

2.2. Disambiguating agent?

In Na, one use of the agentive is to mark the agent when the argument structure of a clause contains structural ambiguity. Note, however, that structural ambiguity is very different from true ambiguity. There may be several ways to parse a clause’s structure (structural ambiguity) without listeners being unclear as to the intended meaning (true ambiguity). This is because discourse context provides information as to the intended reading, as will be shown.

The two main sources of ambiguity in argument structure in Na are non-canonical constituent order and ellipsis. Grammatical relations are usually

² The Na examples are transcribed in the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), with the exception that /y/ is used in place of IPA /j/. Hyphens indicate morpheme boundaries; for a few compounds, a word-level gloss is given rather than a morpheme-by-morpheme gloss, i.e. *pɔ*³¹-*ts^hur*³³ is glossed as ‘bring’ rather than ‘take-come’; *a*³³-*mi*³³ is glossed as ‘mother’ rather than ‘kinship prefix-female’; and *lɔ*³¹-*zur*³³ is glossed as ‘finger’ rather than ‘hand-digit’.

³ The reference number for each example is given just below the first words of the free translation of each example. The reference number is coded as follows: 1. letter (*T* indicates a textual example; *ET* indicates a textual example which has been edited for length, with one or more ellipses showing where the sentence begins or continues; and *E* indicates an elicited example, which may or may not be based on a textual example), 2. title of the text, and 3. the number of the sentence within its text.

indicated by constituent order, so when constituent order is altered for discourse-related reasons, the agent receives agentive marking. Na allows agents/subjects and/or objects to be omitted when they are available from the discourse context; however, when only one argument appears in a clause, there is structural ambiguity as to whether that argument should be interpreted as an agent or as an object. In these cases, the speaker often, but not always, uses agentive and/or patient marking to mark grammatical relations in the clause.

A third source of potential ambiguity in argument structure comes from possessive structures. In inalienable possession in Na, the possessor and the possidend appear adjacently without a possessive marker; inalienable possession is restricted to structures where the possessor is a pronominal and the possidend is a kinship term and those where the possessor is a non-human and the possidend is a body part (Lidz 2010: 237, 244). Thus, when two adjacent noun phrases of the correct lexical classes (e.g. pronoun and kinship term or non-human noun and body part) appear in a clause, there may be ambiguity as to whether they are in a relationship of inalienable possession (with an ellipsed argument filling the other argument role), or whether they are an agent and object.

Despite these clear opportunities for structural ambiguity, it is fairly rare for there to be true ambiguity. As is so often the case in Na, discourse context plays a central role, and clauses which might appear to be ambiguous in other areas of the grammar receive clear and consistent readings from native speakers. McGregor argues that optional ergative (agentive) marking is not primarily motivated by disambiguation (McGregor 2009: 495). This observation holds true for Na. Although agentive marking often appears in Na when there is structural ambiguity, it is rare that the structural ambiguity causes true ambiguity. There is a ‘chicken or the egg’ issue with agentive marking: is agentive marking appearing in clauses with ellipsed patients to clarify argument structure, or could the agent just as easily also be ellipsed and understood from the discourse context, with the fact that the agent *does* appear yielding a reading of enhanced agency and volitionality on the part of the actor? I will argue here that the latter is better supported by the evidence in Na. Agentive marking does not always resolve structural ambiguity, as will be shown in §2.2.2. Agentive marking does not always occur when there is structural ambiguity, and agentive marking appears when there is no structural ambiguity, where it can be used to give readings of volitionality or agency, or to mark a shift in viewpoint from one actor to another within a narrative text. *nɯ*³³ also has related usages marking contrastive focus, acting as an utterance predicate with direct speech complements, and as an emphatic marker appearing with a variety of non-nominals.

In the following section, examples with non-canonical constituent order and ellipsed patients are discussed. If the ellipsed nominal argument were an agent rather than an object, the overt object would receive patient marking, which is discussed in §2.2.3, because an ellipsed argument cannot receive marking.

2.2.1. Clauses with non-canonical constituent orders

Examples (2) and (3) occur sequentially in a narrative text. In (2), the 3SG.PRO agent is understood from the context. Example (3) shows the agentive used with OAV word order, which is a non-canonical word order. If one relies on word order to process this sentence, one receives the reading, ‘Again the dog took him hunting (and) brought (him) back.’ However, pragmatic knowledge would indicate that it is much more common for a man to take a dog hunting than for a dog to take a man hunting, and from the discourse context, we know that the man is performing a number of Herculean feats in order to obtain a woman’s hand in marriage. Thus, while one might argue that agentive marking appears with non-canonical word orders to clarify structural ambiguity, there is in fact no true ambiguity, as evidenced by the fact that not only is the agent not marked in (2), the agent is ellipsed. Furthermore, although agentive marking appears with non-canonical constituent orders and in clauses with ellipsed patients, it also appears with canonical word orders and in clauses without ellipsed arguments, so clarifying structural ambiguity is not the sole motivation for agentive marking in Na. In narrative text, the agentive often appears when the viewpoint shifts to a new actor; in this sense, agentive marking is serving a larger discourse purpose of foregrounding, similar to the analysis Peterson (current volume) gives for Khumi.

- (2) k^hu³³-mɔ³¹ ʃu³³-ʃu³³ ku¹³
 dog carry.BACK AND FORTH FUT.ABL
 ‘(He) would carry the dog back and forth;

T:Tso deluyizo.157

wɣ³³ k^hu³³ ʃæ³³ pu¹³ hu³³ ni³³.
 again dog lead (on a leash)⁴ send go CERT.STR
 again (they) sent (him) to take the dog hunting.’

- (3) wɣ¹³ k^hu³³ t^hu³³ nu³³ lə³³-ʃæ³³ lə³³-pɔ³¹-ts^hu³³ ni³³.
 again dog 3SG.PRO AGTV ACCOMP-carry ACCOMP-bring CERT.STR
 ‘Again he took the dog hunting (and) brought (it) back.’

T:Tso deluyizo.158

Example (4) has non-canonical word order, but there is no potential for ambiguity: the turnip seeds are inanimate, and one would not get a reading such as, ‘The turnip seeds stole her by putting them between her fingers’ if the agentive marker were not employed. This is yet more evidence that the agentive is not simply serving to disambiguate grammatical relations. This sentence is one in a series which tell how a woman stole a number of items from the heavens. Throughout this section of the narrative, after the woman steals each item from the heavens, the heavens then curse the item. In each case, the woman and the heavens each receive agentive marking, as if to emphasize the wilfulness of their actions and to contrast the series of actions of each against the other. Use of

⁴ Shading indicates that the word is from the shamanic register.

agentive marking here also serves to highlight the viewpoint shift from one agent, the heavens, to another, the woman.

- (4) ε^{33} $k^h u^{31}$ $y\ae^{13}$ $t^h u^{33}$ nu^{33} $l\ae^{33}-k^h u^{33}$ $z\varepsilon^{33}$
 turnip seed 3SG.PRO AGTV ACCOMP-steal PERF
 ‘Turnip seeds, she stole, putting (them)
 T:Tsoedeluyizo.258
 $l\ae^{31}-z u^{33}$ $q w\ae^{31}$ $k^h u^{13}$ $l\ae^{33}-p\ae^{31}-t s^h u^{33}$.
 finger between put ACCOMP-bring
 between (her) fingers, (she) brought (them) back.’

2.2.2. Clauses with ellipsed patients

Agentive *nu*³³ often occurs when the patient has been ellipsed. Na permits agents or objects, or both, to be ellipsed. In narrative text and in conversation, it is very common for agents to be ellipsed, and it is also very common for both agent and object to be ellipsed. It is somewhat less common for only the object to be ellipsed, and when an object is ellipsed, the agent generally takes agentive marking. Note, however, that this is a general preference, and it is possible for a patient to be ellipsed and the agent to be unmarked.

When only one nominal argument appears in a transitive clause, it could be filling either of the preverbal slots—agent or object. In this respect, clauses with ellipsed noun phrases are really a subtype of non-canonical constituent orders. In such cases, is agentive marking occurring to disambiguate grammatical relations? In fact, data indicate that although clauses with an ellipsed patient may display structural ambiguity, there usually is not true ambiguity. Furthermore, when agentive marking does occur, it does not always resolve structural ambiguity.

In example (5), there are clear structural ambiguities. Agentive marking, however, is not sufficient to resolve all of the structural ambiguity. In actuality, this sentence has an inalienable possession (pronominal + kinship term) where the possessor in the inalienable possession refers to a girl, and the object is ellipsed: ‘her mother spotted (him)’. However, the sentence could also be parsed as 3SG.PRO (object) + ‘mother’ marked with *nu*³³ (agent): ‘mother spotted him/her’, or if agentive marking were not employed, as 3SG.PRO (agent) + ‘mother’ (object): ‘s/he spotted mother’. These latter two readings are possible because third person pronouns are not marked for gender in Na and objects can be ellipsed. The agentive marking in this sentence obviates the ambiguity as to the grammatical role of ‘mother’; however, the structural ambiguity with respect to the grammatical role of 3SG.PRO remains.

- (5) $t^h u^{33}$ ε^{33} $d z\ae^{33}$ $t^h i^{13}$ $t^h u^{33}$ $\alpha^{33}-m i^{33}$ nu^{33} $l\ae^{33}-t\ae^{33}$.
 this time TOP SO 3SG.PRO mother AGTV ACCOMP-see
 ‘This time, her mother spotted (him).’

T:Tsoedeluyizo.129

In example (6), there is agentive marking and an ellipsed patient, but the agentive marking does not clarify the sentence's argument structure. In this sentence, the ellipsed patient which is understood from the context is a young couple. Thus, although *ni³³ ku¹³* 'two (people)' receives agentive marking, the sentence could be parsed as either 'The two coerced the parents' or 'The two parents coerced (them),' so the agentive marking does not resolve the sentence's structural ambiguity. In this case, the agentive marking adds to the reading of agency of the actors.

- (6) *ɑ³³-da³³-ɑ³³-mi³³ ni³³ ku¹³ nu³³ ku¹³ ni³³ ze³³.*
 father-mother two CLS AGTV coerce CERT.STR PERF
 'The two parents coerced (them).'
- T:Tso deluyizo.145

In (7), the patient is ellipsed, but both agent and patient are clear from the discourse context.

- (7) *t^hi¹³ t^hu³³ nu³³ ku¹³ ni³³ ɔ¹³ tɔ³¹ tɔ³¹ mi³³*
 SO 3SG.PRO AGTV test CERT.STR INTERJ intend
 'So, he would test (him), oh!; (he) intended'
 T:Tso deluyizo.160
- nɔ¹³ mɣ³³ ki³³ nu³³ ki³³ hɔ³³*
 REFL girl give EMPH give FUT.DES
 to give his daughter (to him); (he) would give (her) (away);
- zu³³-tu³³ t^hu³³ ɑ³¹-hɔ³³ mɛ³³-hɔ³³?*
 family succeed QM-FUT.DES NEG-FUT.DES
 would the marriage work out (or) wouldn't (it)?'

In (8), it is possible that without agentive marking, the listener could receive a reading such as, 'Again, (he) went to teach the woman,' but here, the agentive marking highlights the fact that the woman takes the initiative to help the man solve his own problems.

- (8) *wɣ¹³ mi³¹ zɣ¹³ nu³³ t^hu³³-sɔ¹³ hu³³.*
 again woman AGTV DUR-teach go
 'Again, the woman went to teach (him).'
- T:Tso deluyizo.193

In (9), although the patient is ellipsed, the sentence is not ambiguous, and the agentive marking serves to emphasize the agency of the deceased ancestors to bless the child.

- (9) *t^hi¹³ nɔ³³ nu³³ dzɣ¹³ du³³-wɔ³³ zu³¹*
 SO 2SG.PRO AGTV good bless.DEL
 'To say, "(Please) carefully bless (him/her)'
 T:Muphadaba.36

gɔ³³-ts^hu³³ la³³ t^hæ¹³ du³³ t^ha³³ hu³³ pi³³.
 illness and such arrive PROH FUT.REM QUOT
 (so that) illness and such won't come.””

2.2.3. Patient marking

The Na patient marker *tɔ³¹* is a postposition which marks a human non-actor. Like agentive *nu³³*, its use is non-obligatory, and it is attested quite rarely in the corpus. *tɔ³¹* grammaticalized from allative *tɔ³¹* to mark patient in the type of anti-ergative/patient marking found in some Tibeto-Burman languages, as discussed in LaPolla (1992).⁵ The patient marker *tɔ³¹* appears to be used for disambiguation; however, analysis of *tɔ³¹* PAT remains highly tentative because of lack of data, and there may be other factors which motivate patient marking. In example (10), the agent is ellipsed and the patient argument ‘those helping his family’ receives patient marking to clarify its grammatical role.

- (10) t^hu³³ æ¹³ Ga³¹ Ga¹³ t^hu³³-tɕ^hi³³ tɔ³¹
 3SG.PRO family help 3PL.PRO PAT
 ‘It is said (that) (he) was very hard on those
 T:ɕinami.10
 wɔ³³-yĩ³³ zɰwæ¹³ tsi¹³.
 be hard on INTS REP
 helping his family.’

In example (11), *hĩ³³* ‘people’ and *k^hu³³-p^hæ³³-tɕi¹³* ‘young people’ receive patient marking. The agent, the goddess *Gemu*, is ellipsed and the verb ‘protects’ is understood from the previous sentence; thus the argument structure would be unclear without patient marking. It is also possible that patient marking is used because the speaker self-corrects, ‘...people, young people...’ so that listeners do not receive the reading that ‘people’ should be interpreted as the agent and ‘young people’ as the object: i.e. ‘people courting young people.’

- (11) t^hi¹³ hĩ³³ tɔ³¹ k^hu³³-p^hæ³³-tɕi¹³ tɔ³¹ fu³³-fu³³ la³³
 so people PAT young people PAT court and
 ‘So, (she also protects) people, young people courting and
 T:Gemu.51
 t^hu³³-ni¹³ a³³-wɔ³³ a³³-da³³-a³³-mi³³ du³³-sɔ³³ zɰwɣ³³
 this way home father-mother at all say
 such things parents say
 mɔ³³-tɕ^h wɣ³³.
 neg-permit
 (they) do not permit.’

⁵ The languages with patient markers which seem likely cognate with Na are: Achang *te⁵⁵*; Lahu *thà?*; Lisu *te⁵⁵*; Namuyi *de⁵⁵*; Naxi *to⁵⁵* (LaPolla 1992: 3-4).

2.3. Contrastive focus / switch in actor

The agentive marker *nu*³³ also often is used to mark contrastive focus and switch in actor. There can be significant semantic overlap between contrastive focus and switch in actor, because when there is a switch in actor, there often is an implicit contrast between the actions of the first and second actors. In some cases, it can be difficult to see whether *nu*³³ is marking contrastive focus or a switch in actor because of this semantic overlap.

A distinctive characteristic of the contrastive focus/switch in actor usage of *nu*³³ is that it can mark intransitive verbs. In (12), ‘follow’ is an ambitransitive verb, but it is intransitive here, as *pi*³¹ *ly*³³ *gi*¹³ ‘after the wine lees’ is an oblique. In (13), ‘labor’ is intransitive.

In example (12), the narrator is describing how a series of animals were brought down to earth from the heavens. Thus, *nu*³³ is used to contrast ‘pigs’ with the other animals just discussed in the text.

- (12) *bo*¹³ *nu*³³ *pi*³¹ *ly*³³ *gi*¹³ *di*³³ *lə*³³-*ts*^h*u*³³ *zɛ*³³
 pig AGTV lees after follow ACCOMP-COME PERF
 ‘The pigs came following after the wine lees...’
 ET:Tso deluyizo.269

In (13), *nu*³³ is used to contrast the actions of the goddess Zhimuku with those of mortals. This contrast between the two is also set up by marking each actor as a topic using the topic marker *dzo*³³ and using parallel clause structure. Although the contrastive focus reading for *nu*³³ is more salient in this example, there is also a switch in actor.

- (13) *ʃ*³¹-*sɣ*³³ *ku*³¹ *hi*³³ *dzo*³³ *pi*³³ *li*³³ *pi*³³ *ts*^h*u*³¹ *zo*³³ *dzo*³³
 1INC.PRO people TOP pilipitsizo⁶ TOP
 ‘... (when) we humans, when ‘pilipitsizo’
 ET:Tso deluyizo.7
- t*^h*æ*³³ *ni*³³ *ɬi*³¹ *ku*³³ *lɔ*³¹-*yi*³³ *zu*³¹ *mu*³³ *ku*³³ *nu*³³ *dzo*³³
 often daytime labor Zhimuku AGTV TOP
 would often labor during the day, Zhimuku
- t*^h*ɑ*³³ *hæ*³³ *q*^h*ɥ*³³ *ta*³¹ *lɔ*³¹-*yi*³³.
 often night only labor
 would often labor only at night.’

In (14), *nu*³³ is used for contrastive focus: previously the protagonist Tsodeluyizo cheated the woman and her family by telling them that his land yields silver and gold, but the silver and gold were too heavy to be brought to their home to show them. As the young woman is now tricking Tsodeluyizo, *nu*³³ is used to draw a parallel in the narrative to his previous actions. The example has an ellipsed patient, but the agentive marking is not acting to

⁶ Term of humility used by the Na to refer to themselves.

disambiguate grammatical relations here. Use of the agentive may also add a reading of volitionality or agency to the woman's act of trickery.

- (14) $\tilde{\text{ɕ}}^{13}$ $\text{t}^{\text{h}}\text{u}^{33}$ $\text{ɕ}^{\text{ɕ}}^{33}$ $\text{d}\text{z}\text{ɔ}^{33}$ mi^{31} $\text{z}\text{ɕ}^{13}$ **nu^{33}**
 INTERJ this time TOP woman AGTV
 'Oh, this time, it was the *woman*
 T:Tsodeluyizo.166
 $\text{q}\text{æ}^{13}$ ni^{33} $\text{z}\text{ɛ}^{33}$.
 trick CERT.STR PERF
 (who) tricked (him).'

In (15), nu^{33} is used to mark contrastive focus on 'one person.' I had asked the speaker how work is allotted in the family, and had assumed in my question that the head of household allotted the work based on discussion with another consultant. Here, she uses nu^{33} to emphasize that, contrary to my assumption, the work is not allotted by one person, but that women are responsible for some work while men are responsible for other work. Note that at first glance, the agentive in this example might seem to be marking an indefinite because du^{33} 'one' is often used in indefinite expressions. However, du^{33} wu^{33} receives a reading of 'one (specific) person' here because from the discourse context it is clear that the expression refers to a head of household.

- (15) $\text{t}^{\text{h}}\text{u}^{33}$ $\text{t}^{\text{h}}\text{i}^{13}$ a^{33} $\text{w}\text{ɔ}^{33}$ $\text{k}\text{w}\text{ɔ}^{33}$ $\text{d}\text{z}\text{ɔ}^{33}$ mi^{31} $\text{z}\text{ɕ}^{13}$ ni^{33}
 this so home LOC TOP women COP
 'Well, at home, women
 T:Saozi.10
 $\text{p}\text{ɛ}^{31}$ $\tilde{\text{ɕ}}^{31}\text{-bu}^{33}$ $\text{l}\text{ɔ}^{33}$ $\text{d}\text{z}\text{ɔ}^{33}$ $\tilde{\text{ɕ}}^{31}\text{-bu}^{33}$ $\text{l}\text{ə}^{33}\text{-y}\tilde{\text{i}}^{33}$,
 then REFL.POSS work TOP REFL.POSS ACCOMP-do
 do their own work themselves; men
 $\text{p}^{\text{h}}\text{æ}^{31}\text{-t}\text{ɕ}\text{i}^{33}$ ni^{33} $\text{p}\text{ɛ}^{31}$ $\tilde{\text{ɕ}}^{31}\text{-bu}^{33}$ $\text{l}\text{ɔ}^{33}$ $\tilde{\text{ɕ}}^{13}$ $\text{l}\text{ə}^{33}\text{-y}\tilde{\text{i}}^{33}$,
 man COP then REFL.POSS work REFL ACCOMP-do
 do their own work themselves,
 du^{33} wu^{33} **nu^{33}** *anpai* (loan) $\text{t}^{\text{h}}\text{u}^{33}\text{-ni}^{13}$ $\text{m}\text{ə}^{33}\text{-d}\text{z}\text{ɔ}^{33}$ ni^{33} .
 one CLS AGTV arrange this-way NEG-EXIST CERT.STR
 (it) isn't arranged (by) *one person*.'

In (16), we can see the semantic overlap between switch in actor and contrastive focus. The narrator has been describing a ceremony for blessing a new house in which different people play different roles. In the sentence just preceding (16), he has explained how it is the son's duty to light the hearth fire. The use of nu^{33} highlights the switch in actor from son to daughter; however, it also serves to contrast the different roles that the son and daughter perform in the ceremony.

- (16) t^hi¹³ mu³³-zɔ³³ t^hu³³ lu³³ nu³³ dzo³³
 so woman this CLS AGTV TOP
 ‘Then, the *woman*
 T:Fangzi.32
 dʒi³³ t^hu³³ tɕ^hɔ¹³ t^hu³³-tsu³¹.
 water this CLS DUR-boil
 boils the ladle of water.’

2.4. With direct speech complements

Agentive *nu*³³ has a related usage in which it appears with direct speech complements. In such cases, *nu*³³ acts as an utterance complement taking predicate; this usage is notable because *nu*³³ is not derived from a verb. Although it is not uncommon for *nu*³³ to act as an utterance complement taking predicate, it is more common for speakers to use other verbs of speaking. It gives a somewhat generic verbum dicendi reading, similar to English “... he *goes*...” or “... she’s *like*...”. This type of agentive marking can occur when there has not been a change in speaker; thus, this usage is distinct from the switch in actor usage of *nu*³³. Agentive marking with verba dicendi also occurs in Ao (Coupe 2007: 164) and Khumi (Peterson, current volume).

In this direct speech complement usage, *nu*³³ is still occurring with volitional action (speech), but the second argument role is filled by a complement rather than a patient or object, and *nu*³³ acts as the utterance predicate. In Na, utterance complement taking predicates typically extrapose to precede the complement rather than appearing in the clause-final verb slot (Lidz 2010). Thus, *nu*³³ appears directly following the agent in the morphological slot reserved for agentive marking, rather than clause-finally in the morphological slot for verbs. As complements are typically fairly heavy, one might argue that *nu*³³ serves to aid processing by delineating the speaker from the complement; however, indirect speech complements do not use *nu*³³. The use of *nu*³³ with direct speech complements but not indirect speech complements may be related to the greater sense of agency and volitionality associated with direct speech, but further research is needed on this issue.

Examples (17) and (18) illustrate *nu*³³ acting as an utterance predicate with direct speech complements.

- (17) mu³³ ɲɔ³³-tæ³³-mi³³ bu³³ a³³-mi³³ nu³³
 girl horizontal-eyed woman POSS mother AGTV
 ‘The horizontal-eyed woman’s mother said,
 T:Tso deluyizo.132
 ts^hu³³-ɲi³³ dzo³³ lo³¹ tsi³³ ze³³ gu³¹-ta³³ la³³ pi³³.
 today TOP hand fasten PERF above-drop QUOT
 “Today, bind (his) hands (together) (and) drop (him) (from) above.”’

There are a number of different ways to account for this phenomenon: 1. the agentive and the emphatic are two separate and unrelated but homophonous morphemes; 2. the emphatic usage is basic and when *nuw*³³ marks agents, it is highlighting them rather than acting as a real agentive; 3. the emphatic usage is basic, but *nuw*³³ is in the process of being reanalysed as an agentive marker, thus accounting for its usage as both an emphatic and an agentive marker; or 4. the agentive usage is basic, but *nuw*³³ is in the process of undergoing semantic extension to an emphatic marker, thus accounting for its usage as both an emphatic and an agentive marker.

Explanation 1 is unlikely because it does not account for the semantic link of saliency that the contrastive focus use of the agentive and the emphatic share. Additionally, native speakers consider *nuw*³³ to be one word with different uses, not two homophonous words.

Explanation 2 is possible, and such an analysis would account nicely for the contrastive focus/switch in actor and viewpoint tracking usages of *nuw*³³. However, this is not an optimal analysis: it does not account for the readings of agency and volitionality that often occur with *nuw*³³ marking of agents, and it does not account for the fact that patients and objects do not take *nuw*³³ marking—if *nuw*³³ were solely an emphatic marker, presumably patients and objects should be able to be marked.

Explanation 3 presents a number of difficulties. The agentive usages of *nuw*³³ are quite clear, so that if the emphatic was undergoing reanalysis, the process would be fairly far along. It is not necessarily problematic for an element undergoing a process of grammaticalization to retain its original use, and in fact, Na has a number of postpositional markers which have undergone grammaticalization and retain their original uses. More importantly, there is not a clear way to motivate a process of grammaticalization from emphatic to agentive. Furthermore, agentives and ergatives are quite widely attested in the Tibeto-Burman linguistic area, but none to my knowledge have been found to develop from an emphatic marker. Lastly, Na *nuw*³³ has its source in an ablative marker. One could argue that it developed from ABLATIVE > EMPHATIC > AGENTIVE, though this analysis retains the problem of motivating EMPHATIC > AGENTIVE.

Explanation 4 seems most likely. In this analysis, the contrastive focus usage of the agentive, which highlights the marked constituent as salient, undergoes semantic extension to mark saliency on non-nominals. This analysis, however, is not without difficulties. LaPolla (1995: 216) argues for a grammaticalized continuum from optional ergativity to systemic ergativity. If Na is allowing semantic extension of an agentive to an emphatic marker, the marker's scope is broadening significantly rather than becoming systemic. However, semantic change is never predictable, and there may be multiple grammaticalization pathways available. Additionally, Na *nuw*³³ has become a sociolinguistic marker indicating that a speaker comes from Yongning or one of several adjacent villages, and this likely has an effect on usage.

*nu*³³ EMPH appears with adverbials (21) and (22), temporal phrases (23), locative phrases (24), verbs (25), and surprisingly, even the accomplished marker (26).

- (21) wɣ³³-wɔ³³ gɣ³³ t^hæ̃³³ **nu**³³ su³³-dzu³³ bi³³
 in the mountains side often EMPH tree on
 ‘In the mountains, *often* (wood from) trees flew by (and)
 T:Tso deluyizo.43
 tɕwɣ³³ su³³-dzu³³ dze³³ lə³³-hu³³.
 caught on tree fly ACCOMP-GO
 caught on (other) trees.’

- (22) t^hu³³ mi³¹ zu¹³ t^hu³³ wu³³ dʒɔ³³ t^hæ³³ **nu**³³
 this woman this CLS TOP often EMPH
 ‘It is said that this woman *often*
 T:Tso deluyizo.111
 dʒi³³-pu¹³ pɣ³³ lu³¹ ku¹³ tsi¹³.
 water barrel carry on one’s back FUT.ABL REP
 would carry a water barrel on (her) back (to the spring to fill it).’

Example (23) is from a section of text in which the protagonist, Tso deluyizo, is presented with a series of Herculean tasks by the parents of the woman he would like to marry, in order to test his worth. One trial is to cut down nine hundred trees to clear land for planting. Here, the hopelessness of his situation is indicated by the use of *nu*³³ to mark the adverbial *du*³³ *ni*³³ ‘one day’: *in one day*, he could only cut down one tree.

- (23) ɕi³³ ts^hu¹³ pu¹³ hu³³ pi³¹ mi³³ pɔ¹³ hu³³
 tree cut send go axe INSTR go
 ‘(They) sent (him) to go cut down trees, (so) (he) went with an axe,
 T:Tso deluyizo.179
 du³³ ni³³ **nu**³³ du³³ dzu³³ la³¹ ts^hu¹³ wɔ³³
 one day EMPH one CLS only cut ABLT
 (but) *in one day*, (he) was only able to cut down one tree,
 ʃ³³ tɕ^hi³³ zɰwæ¹³ ni³³ zɛ³³.
 has no hope INTS CERT.STR CSM
 (so) (he) felt completely hopeless.’

In (24), *nu*³³ is used for emphasis on the locative phrase *t^hu*³³ *kwɔ*³³ ‘here.’

- (24) t^hi¹³ t^hu³³ kwɔ³³ nu³³ lə³³-si³³-si³³.
 SO this LOC EMPH ACCOMP-KNOW.RECIP
 ‘So, (they) met *here*.’
 T:Tsoodeluyizo.113

In (25), *nu*³³ marks the verb ‘give’. This example is also from a section of text in which Tsoodeluyizo navigates the series of Herculean tasks in order to prove his worth as a potential husband. Thus, there is emphasis on ‘give’ to remind the listener that the father is contemplating giving his daughter in marriage to Tsoodeluyizo; therefore, these tests are necessary.

- (25) t^hi¹³ t^hu³³ nu³³ ku¹³ ni³³ ɔ¹³
 SO 3SG.PRO AGTV test CERT.STR INTERJ
 ‘So, he would test (him), oh!;
 T:Tsoodeluyizo.160
- tɔ³¹ tɔ³¹ mi³³ nɔ¹³ mɣ³³ ki³³ nu³³ ki³³ hɔ³³
 intend REFL girl give EMPH give FUT.DES
 (he) intended to *give* his daughter (to him);
- zɔ³³-tu³³ t^hu³³ a³¹-hɔ³³ mɛ³³-hɔ³³?
 family succeed QM-FUT.DES NEG-FUT.DES
 would the family succeed or not?’

Example (26) is particularly interesting because *nu*³³ marks the accomplished marker, so that the listener receives the reading that Tsoodeluyizo should definitely go and set up a family, with the emphatic *nu*³³ being used to stress that this action should be accomplished.

- (26) lə³³-nu³³ lə³³-bi³³ zɔ³³-hɔ³³ zɔ³³ tu³³ yĩ³³
 ACCOMP-EMPH ACCOMP-GO should family make
 ‘(He) *should go*,
 T:Tsoodeluyizo.248
- bi³³ zɔ³³-hɔ³³ ni³³ nɔ³¹ t^hi¹³ ɛ̃³¹-tɕi¹³ pɣ³³ tɔ³¹
 go should CERT.STR but so chick all
 (he) should go set up a family, even though
- mɛ³³-dzɔ³³ ni³³ mɛ³³.
 NEG-EXIST CERT.STR CERT.M
 (he) didn’t have even a baby chick, oh!’

3. CONCLUSION

Agentive marking, like ergative marking, marks an argument as the agent within a clause. However, ergative marking is at heart a syntactic phenomenon, while agentive marking has semantic and pragmatic bases. Rather than simply marking case, agentive marking in Na has a complex constellation of uses: it appears

when there is clause structure ambiguity, such as occurs with non-canonical word order or an ellipsed patient; it yields readings of volitionality and agency on the part of the marked nominal; it marks contrastive focus and switch in actor; it tracks shift in viewpoint within narrative discourse; it acts as an utterance predicate with direct speech complements; and it has also undergone semantic extension to an emphatic marker, as has been shown above. Importantly, although agentive marking often appears when there is clause structure ambiguity, agentive marking does not always resolve the ambiguity; agentive marking does not always appear when there is clause structure ambiguity; and agentive marking occurs when there isn't clause structural ambiguity. However, structural ambiguity rarely results in true ambiguity.

In order to understand optional case marking as a wider phenomenon, further research should focus on eliciting unattested patterns: when there are gaps in attested patterns, syntactic markers tend to give simple readings of ungrammaticality, but pragmatic markers often can give unusual readings—for example, that an action was unintended or unexpected. Such data can give us a much richer understanding of how a marker operates. More data on patient marking also are needed. In Na, agents very frequently ellipse. However, most of the time, no patient marking appears. This is in direct contrast with agentive marking in Na: patients do not often ellipse, but when they do, agentive marking often occurs. Additionally, preliminary elicitation work indicates that agentive and patient marking can appear in the same clause, but more work is needed to understand what kinds of reading this gives.

A key question for further study is whether the ergative and agentive marking found in the Tibeto-Burman area are a part of historical Tibeto-Burman or a language contact phenomenon. There are some strong similarities in the accounts of such marking in the Tibeto-Burman area (Coupe 2007; Chelliah 2009; Hyslop 2010; Genetti 2007; Tournadre 1991; and those in the current volume); however, many of these languages are in contact with ergative languages of the Himalayas. The Na have long been in contact with Tibetan, Newar, and Indic languages through their work as traders along trade routes which extend through Lhasa to Kathmandu and Delhi. They also adhere to Tibetan Buddhism, with some speakers fluent in liturgical Tibetan, and live intermixed with Tibetan populations in northern Yunnan and western Sichuan. The prestige languages of the Himalayas are ergative, but they are typologically very different from Na, particularly with respect to obligatory inflectional morphology. Is agentive marking the result of a highly analytic language adopting ergativity through language contact? Much more data is needed, in the form of detailed accounts of ergative and agentive marking from analytic Tibeto-Burman languages, both from those with significant language contact with ergative Himalayan languages such as are spoken in Sichuan and Yunnan, as well as those from analytic Tibeto-Burman languages outside the Himalayan linguistic area, such as the Tibeto-Burman languages of Burma, Thailand, and Vietnam.

TEXT EXCERPT

The horizontal-eyed woman's mother said, "Today, bind his hands together and drop him from above. Tsodeluyizo said, "Vertical-eyed woman, wait a minute, I have my name, my place produces gold and silver." He said, "I am from Ge'er, at the end of the earth; you may not look down upon me, our land often yields gold, silver, and such." "The road was long and arduous; it's not possible to carry silver and gold on one's back such a long distance," he said and tricked them in this way. So, her daughter's father spotted him. The father saw him and said, "Today the girl will have a skirt-wearing ceremony, the girl will have a pants-wearing ceremony, cut him down, kill him"; he said to cut him down with a knife and he took out a knife from his waist. He said, "I am going to kill him." Tsodeluyizo spoke to the vertical-eyed girl in this way. "To my place, the landscape is long, the road is long, a little boy would not withstand it; the valleys are long, the road is long, and I have many sheep and cattle, such; but the trip was difficult, and I didn't herd them here. Later, I will bring them here." So he said "Huh!" and put his knife back in its case. So, we will test whether a family on our land would succeed or not. The two parents coerced them. As for the girl, as for giving her, they would give her to him).

mu¹³ ɲa³³-tæ³³-mi³³ bu³³ a³³-mi³³ nu³³
 girl horizontal-eyed woman POSS mother AGTV

The horizontal-eyed woman's mother said,

Tsodeluyizo.132

ts^hu³³-ɲi³³ dʒo³³ lo³¹ tsi³³ zo³³ gu³¹-ta³³ la³³ pi³³.
 today TOP hand fasten PERF above-drop QUOT

"Today, bind (his) hands (together) (and) drop (him) (from) above.

ts^ho³¹ du³³ lu³³ yi³³ zo³³ nu³³ ho³³ nu³¹-mi³³
 Tsodeluyizo AGTV INTERJ girl

Tsodeluyizo, (he) said, "Vertical-eyed woman,

Tsodeluyizo.133

ɲa³³-tsu³³-mi³³ a³¹ su³³ ɣɣ³³ t^hæ³³ ɲa³³ my³³
 vertical-eyed woman wait 1SG.PRO name

wait a minute, I have my name,

ɲa³³ t^hu³³-di³¹ tsu³¹ p^hu¹³ ɲɣ³³ hæ³¹ ni³³ pi³³ ni³³.
 1SG.PRO DUR-EXIST.P place silver gold COP QUOT CERT.STR

my place produces gold and silver."

ɲa³³ my³³ ʃwæ³¹ ku³³ ø³¹ ni³³ no³³
 1SG.PRO at the end of the earth Ge'er COP 2SG.PRO

(He) said, "I am (from) Ge'er, at the end of the earth; you

Tsodeluyizo.134

hæ³³ pi³³ mə³³-t^hɑ¹³ ɲɑ³³-sɣ³³ ku³¹ mɤ³³-di³³ kwɔ³³ dzɔ³³
 look down on NEG-POSSIB 1EXC.PRO land LOC TOP
 may not look down upon (me), our

t^hæ̃³³ ɲɤ³³ hã³¹ lɑ³³ t^hæ¹³ t^hu³³ ni³³ pi³³.
 often silver gold and such yield CERT.STR QUOT
 land often yields gold, silver, and such.”

zɣ¹³ mi³³ lə³³-sɛ̃³³ lə³³-zɰwæ¹³ zɛ³³ ɲɤ³³ hã³¹
 road ACCOMP-long ACCOMP-strong PERF silver gold
 “The road was long (and) arduous; it’s not possible to carry silver (and) gold
 Tsodeluyizo.135

lə³³-pɣ³³ pɣ³³ pɔ³¹-yɔ³³ mə³³-t^hɑ¹³ pi³³
 ACCOMP-carry on one’s back bring NEG-POSSIB QUOT
 on one’s back (such a long distance),” (he) said (and)

qæ¹³ ni³³. t^hi¹³ t^hu³³ mɤ¹³ ɑ³³-da³³ nu³³
 trick CERT.STR SO 3SG.PRO girl father AGTV
 tricked (them) (in this way). So, her daughter’s father
 Tsodeluyizo.136

lə³³-tɔ³³ ni³³. ɑ³³-da³³ lə³³-tɔ³³ hɔ̃³³ ts^hu³³-ɲi³³
 ACCOMP-see CERT.STR father ACCOMP-see INTERJ today
 spotted (him). The father saw (him) (and) said, “Today
 Tsodeluyizo.137

mɤ³¹-zɔ³³ t^hæ̃³³-ki¹³ hɔ³³ nu³¹-mi³³
 girl skirt-wearing ceremony FUT.DES girl
 the girl will have a skirt-wearing ceremony, the girl

ɬi³³-ki¹³ hɔ³³ lə³³-su¹³ lə³³-da¹³ pi³³
 pants-wearing ceremony FUT.DES ACCOMP-kill ACCOMP-cut down QUOT
 will have a pants-wearing ceremony,⁷ cut (him) down, kill (him)”;

su³¹-t^hi¹³ pɔ¹³ da¹³ pi³³ bi³³ yi³¹-tɕæ¹³ kwɔ³³
 knife INSTR cut down say go waist LOC
 (he) said to cut (him) down with a knife” (and) (he) took out a knife from

su³¹-t^hi¹³ gu³¹-pu¹³. lə³³-su¹³ bi³³ zɛ³³
 knife above-take out ACCOMP-kill FUT.IMM CSM
 (his) waist. (He) said, “(I) am going
 Tsodeluyizo.138

⁷ Note that this should read, “...and the boy will have a pants-wearing ceremony...” The narrator misspoke here.

pi³³ ni³³. t^hi¹³ mə³³-ni³³... nu³¹-mi³³ ɲa³³-tsu³³-mi³³
 QUOT CERT.STR SO NEG-COP girl vertical-eyed woman
 to kill (him).” (So it’s not...) Tsodeluyizo spoke to

Tsodeluyizo.139

ts^hɔ³¹ du³³ lu³³ yi³³ zɔ³³ ki³³ t^hu³³-ni¹³ zɔw³³ ni³³.
 Tsodeluyizo DAT this way say CERT.STR
 the vertical-eyed girl in this way.⁸

ɲa³³ mɣ³³ ɲa³³ t^hu³³-di³¹ ku³³ ʂæ³³ zɔ¹³
 1SG.PRO sky 1SG.PRO DUR-EXIST.P landscape be long road
 “(To) my place, the landscape is long, the road

Tsodeluyizo.140

ʂæ³³ zɛ³³ zɔ³³-hɔ̃³³ t^hu³³-mə³³-hɔ̃³³ lo³³ ʂæ³³
 be long PERF little boy DUR-NEG-withstand valley be long
 is long, a little boy would not withstand (it); the valleys are long,

zɔ¹³ ʂæ³³ zɛ³³ ts^hi¹³ p^hu³³ dʒi³³-yɔ³³ ni³³.
 road be long PERF goat cow be many CERT.STR
 the road is long, (and) (I) have many sheep and cattle.⁹

ɲa³³ mɣ³³ ɲa³³ di³³ kwɔ³³ t^hæ̃¹³ yi³³ la³³ yɔ³³
 1SG.PRO sky 1SG.PRO place LOC such cow and sheep
 In my land, (I) have cattle and sheep,

Tsodeluyizo.141

t^hu³³ t^hæ̃¹³ dʒɔ³³ ni³³ lə³³-ɔ̃³³ zɛ³³ lə³³-di¹³
 this such EXIST CERT.STR ACCOMP-difficult PERF ACCOMP-drive
 such; (but) (the trip) was difficult, (and) (I) didn’t

t^hu³³-mə³³-mæ³³. gi¹³ pɔ³¹-yɔ³³ tsɔ³³ yĩ³³ ni³³.
 DUR-NEG-catch up after bring FUT CERT.STR
 herd (them) (here). Later, (I) will bring (them) (here).”

Tsodeluyizo.142

t^hi¹³ hɔ̃³³ pi³³ su³¹-t^hi¹³ lə³³-wɔ¹³ t^hu³³-tɕ^hwæ¹³ hu³³.
 SO INTERJ say knife ACCOMP-return DUR-insert go
 So (he) said “Huh!”, (and) put his knife back (in its case).

Tsodeluyizo.143

t^hi¹³ ɔ̃³¹-sɔ³³ ku³¹ mɣ³³-di³³ kwɔ³³ zu³³-tu³³ t^hu³³
 SO 1INC.PRO land LOC family succeed
 So, (we) (will) test (whether) a family on our land

Tsodeluyizo.144

⁸ The narrator says, “The vertical-eyed woman’s daughter spoke to Tsodeluyizo...” when he means to say, “Tsodeluyizo spoke to the vertical-eyed woman’s daughter...”

⁹ It would be too difficult for a shepherd boy to herd the goats and cattle such a long way.

ɑ³¹-hɔ³³ mə³³-hɔ³³ ɕɣ¹³ ni³³ zɛ³³.
 QM-FUT.DES NEG-FUT.DES try CERT.STR PERF
 would succeed or not.

ɑ³³-da³³-ɑ³³-mi³³ ni³³ ku¹³ nu³³ ku¹³ ni³³ zɛ³³.
 parents two CLS AGTV coerce CERT.STR PERF
 The two parents coerced (them).¹⁰
 Tsodeluyizo.145

mu¹³ dʒɔ³³ ki³³ dʒɔ³³ ki³³ hɔ³³ ni³³.
 girl TOP give TOP give FUT.DES CERT.STR
 As for the girl, as for giving (her), (they) would give (her to him).
 Tsodeluyizo.146

ABBREVIATIONS

1SG.PRO	1st person singular pronoun	FUT.IMM	future immediate
1INC.PRO	1st person plural inclusive pronoun	FUT.REM	future remote
1EXC.PRO	1st person plural exclusive pronoun	FUT.DES	future predictive (desire)
2SG.PRO	2nd person singular pronoun	FUT.ABL	future predictive (ability)
3SG.PRO	3rd person singular pronoun	INSTR	instrumental
3PL.PRO	3rd person plural pronoun	INTERJ	interjection
ABL	ablative	INTS	intensifier
ABLT	abilitive	LOC	locative (temporal/spatial)
ACCOMP	accomplished	NEG	negative
AGTV	agentive	PAT	patient
CERT.M	certainty: epistemic marker	PERF	perfective aspect
CERT.STR	certainty: epistemic strategy	POSS	possessive
CLS	classifier	POSSIB	possibility
COP	copula	PROH	prohibitive
CSM	change of state marker	QM	question marker
DAT	dative	QUOT	quotative evidential
DEL	delimitative aspect	RECIP	reciprocal
DUR	durative	REFL	reflexive pronoun
EMPH	emphatic	REFL.POSS	possessive reflexive pronoun
EXIST	existential: generic	REP	reported/hearsay evidential
EXIST.P	existential: used with items perpendicular to a plane	TOP	topic marker

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¹⁰ The parents coerced them by setting up a long string of tests that Tsodeluyizo would need to pass in order for them to give him their daughter.

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