

Once Again on the Agreement of the Tangut Verb

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The present article is a supplement to our article that appeared earlier in this journal and in which, in spite of the concepts that have been established by M.V. Sofronov, we presented evidence that the Tangut verb does agree in person and in number with the subject and sometimes also with the object. Three auxiliary words, namely nga^2 , na^2 , and ni^2 are affixed to the verb to indicate either the object or the subject of the verbal action but which, in their original function, represent pronouns of the first person singular, the second person singular and the first or second person plural respectively. Whereas we were correct in indicating the capability of the Tangut verb to agree with both the subject and the object of the verbal action, we erroneously associated these affixes with verbal lexical categories. From the research on this subject, it was determined that the rules for the agreement of the Tangut verb are more complex than initially put forth.

Before proceeding with a more detailed analysis, it is necessary to point out that third person pronouns and substantives, singular or plural, are not reflected in the conjugation of the Tangut verb. We have already written about this, albeit only with hypothetical examples. We did establish that in Tangut there is

verbal agreement only with the first and second person pronouns, whether singular or plural.

Intransitive Verbs

The agreement of intransitive verbs does not present any difficulties. The verb agrees with the noun that functions as the object of the action. The following examples can be cited:

- 1) nga² sie¹-ndIe¹-nIwo¹ riə²-ldIe²-nga² (12 ts)

I ? ? back PERF-come-1st

'I (=the official) just arrived from another state'^b

- 2) mei¹ swen¹ tha² si² nga² tsi¹ mi¹-khwa¹ si¹-nga² (12 ts)

Mei sun PERF die I and/but soon die-1st

'Mei Sun has died and I too will die soon'

- 3) thi² su mi¹ ndzIe¹ In¹ In¹ tsi¹ nga² kem² riə²-ldIe²-na² (12 ts)

? ? not ? ? ? and/but I ? PERF-come-2nd

'(You) at such an improper time, humbling yourself, came to me'

- 4) ni² ndzIe¹-la¹ ni¹-ndo² riə² Ihie² na² (LK VI)

you quickly house-to PERF -return-2nd

'You, quickly return home'

5) 你 飯 吃 後 再 吃 飯 好

(Nevskii, I, 285)

$\underline{ni^2-nI^2}$ $\underline{tIe^1}$ $\underline{riə^2}$ $\underline{thi^2}$ $\underline{ni^2}$ $\underline{rIe^1}$ $\underline{tha^2}$ $\underline{sia^1}$ $\underline{ni^2}$
you-PL time PERF -eat- PL PERF-go- PL

'When you have eaten the food, then go'

6) 你 飯 吃 後 再 吃 飯 好

(LK V)

$\underline{xiwe^2}$ $\underline{we^1}$ $\underline{ni^2-IdIe^2}$ $\underline{mbu^1}$ $\underline{i^1}$ $\underline{mbi^2}$ $\underline{ndo^2}$ $\underline{zu^1-ndzie^1}$ $\underline{nda^2}$ $\underline{.I^1}$
Fei I arrive-come because all official to command word
 $\underline{siu^1}$ $\underline{zəw^1-sia^1}$ $\underline{ni^2-la^1}$ $\underline{zi^1}$ $\underline{ni^2-nI^2}$ $\underline{ti^2}$ $\underline{wuo^1-ni^2}$ $\underline{.I^1}$
Shu send-messenger arrive-come when you-PL do not stand-PL

'Since Fei I arrived, (...Wang) ordered all the officials: when the emissary (of the kingdom of) Shu arrives, you do not arise'

It should be pointed out that the noun functioning as the subject of the action of the intransitive verb is frequently omitted. In those instances, the person of the subject of the verbal action is indicated solely by an auxiliary noun, an agreement indicator. For example:

7) 你 飯 吃 後 再 吃 飯 好

(LK VIII)

$\underline{pI^1}$ $\underline{nə}$ $\underline{na^2}$ $\underline{mu^1}$ $\underline{rie^2}$ $\underline{ndIn^2}$ $\underline{si^1-nga^2}$
thou die-1st

'Let it be this evening (I) die before your eyes'

8) 你 飯 吃 後 再 吃 飯 好

(12 ts)

ngi² * * * mi¹ ngu²-na² ta¹ thIn² ei²
 one not weep-2nd
 '(Your) son died, why do (you) not weep?'

When, however, the subject of the verbal action is a pronoun of the first or second person, singular or plural, the use of the agreement indicators following intransitive verbs is optional. For example:

9) 能 在 地 獄 經 (LK VI)

nga² ndIei¹ k^hiu¹ ndzie¹
 I be located
 'I am located in hell'

10) 能 在 地 獄 經 經 (S)

na² via¹ tha² si¹ nIwo¹ lhio xwa² lie¹
 you father PERF die back retreat what await
 'Your father died, (but you) do not retreat, what do you await?'

Transitive Verbs

With transitive verbs the agreement takes place according to two principal rules, namely:

- a) When in a clause governed by a transitive verb, the agent or the subject of the action is expressed by a pronoun of either the first or second person, singular or plural, the transitive verb will agree with this pronoun irrespective of its function within the clause. Thus, in two identical clauses in which there

b) When in a clause with a transitive verb there are present the pronouns of the first and second person, singular or plural, the verb agrees with the pronoun that fulfills the function of object. Thus in a clause such as "I strike you" the verb agrees with "you", whereas in the clause "You strike me" the verb agrees with "me". Hence both clauses have a similar agreement and in both cases the verb is followed by the auxiliary *na*². The following examples can be quoted:

(LK IIII)

'I (=the official) beat the ruler of Hsia (called) Chao, but it was not (the case) that (I) beat Yao (or) Shan'

(LK IV)

'(Tsao Tsao) said: I fear that the people surrounding (me) will kill me'

- 13) 梅 氏 經 經 姓 看 姓 經 經 姓 經
 姓 好

(LK VI)

ni² pha¹ ngi²-mbIn² ndI²-siei¹-na²; nga² mbIn² vie¹
 you one-wife take - 2nd I wife be?
 mI¹ ngIe¹ .I¹
 not want?

'(The wife of Tz'u-chu) said: You take yourself another wife;
 I do not want to be your wife'

- 14) 梅 氏 經 經 姓 看 姓 經 經 姓 經
 姓 好

(12 ts)

mei¹swen² ma¹-na² na² khē¹-na² tsi¹ thIn²-kie² ngu²-kiwa²-na²
 Mei Sun formerly thee hate-2nd and/but so weep-weep-2nd

'Mei Sun formerly hated you, (but) you weep so'

- 15) 梅 氏 經 經 姓 看 姓 經 經 姓 經
 姓 好

(S)

nga²-mi² sie¹-u² zie¹ * * * zwon²=vie¹-ni²
 we at first river crossing guard-PL

'At first we guard the river crossings'

- 16) 梅 氏 經 經 姓 看 姓 經 經 姓 經
 姓 好

(Nevskii, II, 368)

ni² tIn¹ nga² .In¹ ldIe¹ thI¹-nga² ka¹ tha¹ tsi¹ vie² thI²-na²
 you if I - OBJ away drive-1st and PERF drive-2nd

'If you already drive me out, then (you) drive her out too'

17) 侬 勿 忧 子 能 救 你

(LK VI)

ni² ti² sɿwə¹ - ɬiei nga² - mi² ngɿu² - na²
you do not worry I + mi² = we save - 2nd

'Do not worry, we will save you'

18) 你 存 心 救 你

(Sofronov, I, 218)

nga² - ni² - .In¹ viə² ngɿu² - na²
I - PL - OBJ PERF-save-2nd

'You save us'

As is the case with the intransitive verbs, with transitive verbs the pronouns can be omitted and then only the auxiliary noun, the agreement indicator, indicates the person of the agent or the object. As can be seen in examples 22 and 23, there are instances when, simultaneously, the noun which is the agent of the action and the noun which is the object of the action are omitted. The following examples can be quoted:

19) 你 何 不 爱 好 人

(12 ts)

thIn² - sɿwo² tsia¹ ndzɿwo² mi¹ ndziu¹ - nga²
why virtuous people not love - 1st

'Why do (I) not love virtuous people?'

20) 你 何 不 杀 人

(LK II)

xwa² - nɿwo¹ ndzɿwo² sa¹ - nga²
why people kill - 1st

'Why do you slay people?'

21) 飛 飛 好

(LK VII)

 $\underline{\text{khwI}^2 - \text{ni}^2} .\text{I}^1$

cut - PL

'(The three brothers) said: Let us cut down (this bush of Tzu-chin-shu)'

22) 隨 衆 赴 殲 敵 前 將 羅 經 隨 衆 殲 敵

(S)

thI^2 $\text{nga}^1\text{-ri}^2$ nda^1 kha^1 pI^1 mI^1 ndiu^1 ta^1 $\text{thI}^2\text{-tI}^1$ $\text{sa}^1\text{-nga}^2$.I
 this army affair on advise who appears if this-time kill-1st

'(Ch'ao She) said: If there appears such a person as will give advice in the manner of this army, I will immediately execute (him)'

23) 我 好 經 統 將 殲 敵

(Zapiski)

 $\text{mIo}^1 - .\text{I}^1$ mi^1 ni^2 ku^1 $\underline{\text{sa}^1 - \text{na}^2}$

I - OBJ not listen kill-2nd

'If you will not listen to me, I will kill (you)'

As was the case with the intransitive verbs, the use of the auxiliary particle for agreement indication is optional after transitive verbs. For example:

24) 我 能 讀 清 楚 這 本 書 嗎 (S)

thi² a² - sq¹ re² iwa² mIo¹ zi² kI¹ - .iu¹
 this thirteen chapter treatise I thoroughly PERF -read

'This treatise of thirteen chapters I have read in full'

25) 你 能 殺 死 這 些 活 物 嗎 (suv)

lew¹ ni² - ndzêi - vie¹ tshjə¹ - zIe¹ - tsan¹ - tshju¹ sa¹ - sje²
 only you living beings kill-

'Only you killed living beings'

26) 你 能 理 解 嗎 (LK III)

ni² - nI² nga² - .In¹ tIei ***
 you - PL I - OBJ understand

'You understand me'

It should be pointed out, however, that special difficulties exist with regards to the agreement rules for transitive verbs.

First of all, with verbs having the meaning "to give", in addition to pronouns with the function of agent and/or object of the action, there also can occur another noun whose function is that of addressee of the action (ex. to give to someone). In those instances where the addressee of the action is expressed by either a pronoun of the third person or by a substantive, the verbal agreement occurs in accordance with the two basic rules expressed at the beginning of the article. When, on the other hand, the addressee of the action is expressed by a pronoun of the first or second person singular, the verb will agree with this pronoun, i.e. the rules of the verbal agreement for the addressee of the

'You lost my clothing and my cap, return (them) to me'

The rules of agreement for verbs of giving are by no means clear. We have not encountered clauses in which the noun which is the object of the action is expressed by a pronoun of the first or second person, singular or plural. We also did not encounter clauses in which, simultaneously, a noun with the function of object of the action and addressee of the action would be expressed by pronouns of the first or second person, singular or plural; i.e. clauses of the type "I turn you over to the enemy" and "The enemy will turn you over to me."

A second difficulty in the rules of agreement with transitive verbs occurs in those circumstances where the noun that functions as the object of the action has a possessive connotation which is expressed by a pronoun of the first or second person singular; no examples of the plural have been encountered. In these instances, the verb can agree with the possessive definition of the noun that functions as the object of the action; i.e. clauses of the type "He strikes my servant" and "He strikes me" are subject to the same rules of agreement. Examples are:

31) $\text{ndz}^1 \text{I}^2 \text{wo}^2 - \text{ngI}^2 \quad \text{nga}^2 - \text{In}^1 \quad \text{Ida}^2 \quad \text{kI}^1 - \text{zwon}^2 - \text{nga}^2$

(LK VII)

$\text{ndz}^1 \text{I}^2 \text{wo}^2 - \text{ngI}^2$ $\text{nga}^2 - \text{In}^1$ Ida^2 $\text{kI}^1 - \text{zwon}^2 - \text{nga}^2$
 people + ngI² = someone I-POSS hand PERF-grasp-1st

'Someone grasped my hand'

' (of Tz'u-chui) he said: Hang my head at the custom gate of the city. When the Yüeh army comes to smash (the kingdom of) Wu, let me see it'

30) 相 姓 孫 莊 許 見 許 孫 莊 姓 (Nevskii, II, 272)

ni² nga² .In¹ khwi pa² tha² - phi² na² si² vie²
 you I - POSS clothing & cap PERF-lose-2nd PERF (away)
 tsha² - vie¹ - nga²
 return- - 1st
 'You lost my clothing and cap, return (them) to me'

At present, it is unclear to us why in analogous situations the agreement in some instances takes place with the possessive definition of the noun that is the object of the action, and in other instances it takes place according to the rules of agreement for the Tangut intransitive verb.

As a final remark on the complications of the agreement rules with regards to the transitive verb in Tangut, it can be stated that nouns that have the function of the object of the action, of receiver with a possessive definition to the object of the action, are subject to the same rules. Furthermore, in the composition of the clause they are formulated by one and the same particle, namely 不 .In¹. In the following clauses, after the verb stands the appropriate auxiliary word, the indicator of agreement, and those nouns with which the verb agrees by means of this indicator, and affected by the suffix 不 .In¹.

languages (see the article of James Bauman, University of California, Berkeley - Bauman,1977).

NOTES

- 1) The abbreviations used in the Tangut examples are : LK : lei-lin; ts 12 : Twelve kingdoms; S : Sun Tzu's Art of War (translator's note: published in facsimile in K.B. Keping, Sun' Tszi v tangutskom perevode; Pamyatniki pis'mennosti vostoka XLIX, Moscow, 1979, pp. 477-578); Zapiski : Newly collected writings of parental love; Nevskii : N.A. Nevskii, Tangutskaya filologiya. Issledovaniya i slovar', 2 vols, Moscow, 1960; Sofronov : M.V. Sofronov, Grammatika Tangutskogo Yazika, 2 vols., Moscow, 1968. The unpublished texts are in the manuscript department of the Institut Vostokovedeniya, Ak. NAUK SSSR, Leningrad.
- 2) Parentheses indicate the approximate Russian (English) transcription as no reconstruction of the Chinese characters has been attempted.
- 3) Example 16 was wrongly translated in Kepping 1976, p. 227, no. 13 as "If you drive me out, then I will drive her out too."

LITERATURE

- 1) Bauman, 1977: James Bauman, A historical perspective on ergativity in Tibeto-Burman.
- 2) Kepping 1976: K.B. Kepping, Subject and Object Agreement in the Tangut Verb, Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 219-231.
- 3) Sofronov 1968: M.V. Sofronov, Grammatika tangutskogo yazika, 2 vols., Moscow, 1968.

EDITOR'S NOTES

^aAs a service to the readers of LTBA who may be interested in other aspects of Tangut, the editor (GWT) has provided interlinear glosses. Neither K.B. Keping nor Luc Kwanten should be held responsible for these.

Also of potential value to readers is the short bibliography of some of Keping's work found in LTBA 6.2:82.

^bSix of the seven Tangut markers of perfective aspect, which occur in complementary distribution with one another, are connected with etymons indicating direction of motion. These along with deictic motion verbs are discussed in Keping's LTBA article in 6.2:77-82.

^c[Matisoff's note in LTBA 2.2:230 fn.14] "The characters sha-men were used in Chinese to transliterate the Sanskrit word Śramaṇa 'Buddhist priest.'"