LINGUISTICS OF THE TIBETO-BURMAN AREA
VOLUME 15:2 — FALL 1992

The trichotomy of the Tibetan subject

Wang Zhijing
Tibet University, Lhasa

1. The Triple Subject in Tibetan.

1.1. The subject in Tibetan is of three types: the psychological, the logical, and the grammatical. The psychological subject may be exemplified by the following sentence:

1. su^{54} ku?^{13} mɛ?^{132} ŋɛ?^{132} ha^{54}k'o^{11} ki^{54}jø?^{132}.
   su sgug med qas hago giyod[1]
   who wait NOM. I know PARTICLE
   I know who is to wait for/who you are waiting for.

The logical subject may be divided into agent subject (Example 2), instrumental subject (3), causative subject (4), possessive subject (5), and identifying subject (6):

2. sy?^{52} ɬ'e:^{55} tu ?
   sus vkhyer vdug
   who take PART.
   Who took it away?

3. tʂ'i?^{132} ɕə^{54} ki^{54}re.
   gris gzheg kyired
   knife chop PART.
   Chop it with a knife.

4. tɕ'aŋ^{55} kɛ si^{13}ɕa.
   chag gis bzhi shag
   highland barley wine AGENT MARKER[2] intoxicate
   The highland barley wine intoxicates.

---

[1] In each example sentence, the first line is a transcription of the modern Lhasa pronunciation, while the second line spells the same words in a transliteration of Written Tibetan (WT). The author represents the WT velar nasal /ŋ/ by "q" (e.g., qas /ŋas/ in Ex. 1), and writes *a-chung*, usually transcribed by *h* with a subscript dot /ḥ/, as "v" (e.g., vkhyer /ḥkhyer/ in Ex. 2). Aspiration is indicated by an apostrophe in the Lhasa version, but by an *-h* in the WT transcription. [Ed.]

[2] For words ending in vowels, the agent marker is realized as a mutation, for example, when ŋa^{13} (qa) 'I' is in the agent function, it has the phonetic form of ŋɛ?^{132}/ŋɛ?^{132} (qas); when it is in the dative, it becomes ŋa:^{35} (qar).

5. k'ɔŋ^{55}la rok^{11}pa^{54} tu?^{11} kɛ?^{54} ?
   khog la rogspa vdug gas
   he assistant have PART.
   Has he got an assistant?

6. raŋ^{35} su^{54} jĩ^{11}pa?
   raq su yinpa
   you who be
   Who are you?

A comparison between (1) and (2-6) shows that the psychological subject and the logical subject are usually separated and independent from one another. But in certain situations, the psychological subject, the grammatical subject, and the agent (logical) subject are closely related to each other. The three may all coincide (Ex. 7); two may coincide while the other is separate (Ex. 8); or all may be separate (Ex. 9):

7. ŋɛ?^{132} mi?^{52} tiɛ̃:^{55}ko
   qas mig bstan go
   I let look[3]
   I'll let you look at it.

8. k'aŋ^{55}pa^{54} ŋɛ?^{132} mi?^{52} tiɛ̃:^{55}ko
   khaqpa qas mig bstan go
   room I let look
   The room, I'll let you look at (it).

9. raŋ^{35}la k'aŋ^{55}pa^{54} ŋɛ?^{132} mi?^{52} tiɛ̃:^{55}ko
   raq la khaqpa qas mig bstan go
   you room I let look
   You, the room, I'll let (you) look at (it).

As a result of the separation, "the room" in Ex. 9 becomes the grammatical subject. In Ex. 8, the psychological subject and the grammatical subject are collectively realized in "the room," while the agent subject is separated out. By the triple subject in Tibetan we mean the three types of subject—the psychological, the grammatical and the logical—when they are separated from each other.

---

[3] mi?^{52}tiɛ̃:^{55} (mig bstan) is ambiguous. As a word, it means 'to let (sb) look at (sth)'; as a word group, it means 'to let (sb) look at one's eyes'. In this paper, it is used in the first sense.

1.2. The psychological subject.

The psychological subject is the starting point of a message the speaker conveys; it is what the clause is concerned with. The grammatical subject is the basis of a proposition; it is what a predicate refers to. The agent subject is the performer of an action. There is usually more than one function in a grammatical unit. For example, "I" in (7) is, at the same time, the starting point of a message, the psychological subject; the basis of a proposition, the grammatical subject; and the performer of an action, the agent subject. It is the realization of all three subjects. In (8), "the room" is the starting point of a message and the basis of a proposition. It is the realization of both the psychological subject and the grammatical subject. In (9), "you" is the starting point of a message, the psychological subject; "the room" is the basis of a proposition, the grammatical subject; while "I" is the agent subject. Of the three types of sentences (7), (8) and (9), (7) is the most usual, while (9) is the most unusual, showing the separation of the three subjects.

The word order in Tibetan is "Su-O-P", which is the basis of any grammatical analysis of Tibetan. If the word order changes, the object is moved to the initial position; we may call this "forward movement." Forward movement does not occur at random. It is a regular means of expressing grammatical relations, and there are reasons for it. Forward movement introduces a pause in speech after the forwarded object, which does not exist originally. The sentences of column B with a pause after the forwarded object are in sharp contrast to those in column A:

A *B*

10.

ŋɛ$^{?132}$	raŋ^{35}ki	kɛ$^{?54}$tɕ'a^{54}	raŋ^{35}ki	kɛ$^{?54}$tɕ'a^{54}	ŋɛ$^{?132}$
qas	raq gi	skadcha	raq gi	skadcha	qas
I	your	words	your	words	I
ko^{13}ts'y$^{?52}$	ma^{11}	suŋ^{35}	ko^{13}ts'y$^{?52}$	ma^{11}	suŋ^{35}
mgotshod	ma	soq	mgotshod	ma	soq
understand	not	PART.	understand	not	PART.
I don't understand what you've said.			What you've said I don't understand.		

11.

ŋa^{13}	ɟ'ɛ?^{55}raŋ^{55}	la	kə^{11}
qa	khyedraq	la	dga
I	you	love	

ki?^{52}
gis
PART.
I love you.

ɟ'ɛ?^{132}raŋ^{55}	la	ŋa^{13}
khyedraq	la	qa
you	love	I

kə^{11}	ki?^{52}
dga	gis
	PART.

You are the one I love.

The change of word order signifies a change in the information structure, hence also a change in the grammatical categories. The movement of the object in the sentences of column A to the initial position in the sentences of column B changes the new information into the given, so that the object is also changed into the subject. We call this kind of subject the psychological subject. Forward movement causes the word order in Tibetan to change from "Su-O-P" to "Su_1-Su_2-P." It is characteristic of the psychological subject in Tibetan that it occurs with the word order of "Su_1-Su_2-P."

In the construction "*Nkɛ + Nla + N + V*," *Nla* may be forwarded to the initial position, changing from a dative object to the psychological subject:

12. *Nkɛ + Nla + N + V --> Nla + Nkɛ + N + V*

a.

raŋ^{35}	kɛ	ŋa:^{13}	ja?^{52}	ti^{13}	tsuŋ^{52}	ta!
raq	gis	qar	gyag	vdi	btsoqs	thaq
you	A.M.[4]	I	yak	this	sell	PART.

Please sell the yak to me.

b.

ŋa:^{35}	raŋ^{35}	kɛ	ja?^{52}	ti^{13}	tsuŋ^{52}	ta!
qar	raq	gis	gyag	vdi	btsoqs	thaq
I	you	A.M.	yak	this	sell	PART.

Me, please sell the yak to (me).

Similarly, N may also be forwarded to the initial position, changing from an accusative object to the psychological subject:

---

4 The author uses the abbreviation "A.M." to mean "agent marker" (i.e., ergative marker). [Ed.]

13. N*kɛ* + N*la* + N + V --> N + N*kɛ* + N*la* + V

a. raŋ^{35} kɛ ŋa:^{35} ja?^{52} ti^{13} tsuŋ^{52} ta
raq gis qar gyag vdi btsoqs thag
you A.M. I yak this sell PART.
Please sell the yak to me.

b. ja?^{52} ti^{13} raŋ^{35} kɛ ŋa:^{13} tsuŋ^{52} ta
gyag vdi raq gis qar btsoqs thaq
yak this you A.M. I sell PART.
The yak, please sell (it) to me.

Both N *la* and N may be forwarded to the initial position as the psychological subject. This reveals that the psychological subject is only related to the initial position, and does not have anything to do with the type of object that is moved.

1.3. The grammatical subject.

The grammatical subject is distinguishable from the psychological subject. There will be no grammatical subject if there is no N or only one N before the agent subject. When the Tibetan subject is separated into three elements, they usually occur in this order: the psychological first, the grammatical second, and the agent last. This order is fixed, and does not vary with the type of object that is forwarded.

1.4. Grammatical structure and semantic structure.

There are two structures co-existent in a Tibetan sentence. One is the grammatical structure, such as Subject-Predicate, Modifier-Head, Predicator-Object, or Predicator-Complement. The other is the semantic structure, involving notions like agent, accusative, dative and action. For example:

14a.	nɛ?^{132}	mo^{11}raŋ^{35}la	pa^{54}sɪ^{54}	nø?^{13}	pajĩ
	qas	moraqla	spase	nyos	payin
	I	her	ticket	buy	ASP.
GR.[5]	Su	O_1	O_1	P	
SEM.	agent	dative	accusative	action	
	I've bought her a ticket.				

[5] *GR.* = "grammatical"; *SEM.* = "semantic." [Ed.]

14b.	pa^{54}sɪ^{54}	ȵɛ?^{132}	mo^{11}raŋ^{35}la	ȵø?^{13}	pajĩ
	spase	qas	moraqla	nyos	payin
	ticket	I	her	buy	ASP.
GR.	Su_1	Su_2	O	P	
SEM.	accusative	agent	dative	action	
	The ticket, I've bought (it) for her.				

14c.	pa^{54}sɪ^{54}	mo^{11}raŋ^{35}la	ȵɛ?^{132}	ȵø?^{13}	pajĩ
	spase	moraqla	qas	nyos	payin
	ticket	her	I	buy	ASP.
GR.	Su_1	Su_2	Su_3	P	
SEM.	accusative	dative	agent	action	
	The ticket, her, I've bought (it) (for her).				

14d.	mo^{11}raŋ^{35}la	pa^{54}sɪ^{54}	ȵɛ?^{132}	ȵø?^{13}	pajĩ
	moraqla	spase	qas	nyos	payin
	her	ticket	I	buy	ASP.
GR.	Su_1	Su_2	Su_3	P	
SEM.	dative	accusative	agent	action	
	Her, the ticket, I've bought (it) (for her).				

Sentences 14a-d are of the same semantic structure, i.e., "I" is the agent, "her" is the dative, and "the ticket" is the accusative. But they have four different grammatical structures. That is to say, there is no one-to-one correspondence between the grammatical structure and the semantic structure. The changes of grammatical structure in 14b-d correspond to a phonetic change and a change in information structure resulting from the object's forward movement. This shows that the forward movement of the object will entail a change in the correspondence between the grammatical structure and the semantic structure. The object forwarded will not remain an object.

2. The Triple Subject and Double Object.

2.1. The Su-P structure which contains a double object in the predicate has the following structure:

N*kɛ* + N*la* + N + V.

The three Ns before the V may be in any order among themselves without affecting the semantic structure of the sentence. For example:

15a. N*kɛ* + N*la* + N + V

nɛ?132	ƚ'i^{54}la	to^{54}	te:^{55}	pajĭ
qas	khyila	lto	ster	payin
I	dog	food	give	ASP.

I've fed the dog.

15b. N*la* + N*kɛ* + N + V

ƚ'i^{54}la	nɛ?132	to^{54}	te:^{55}	pajĭ
khyila	qas	lto	ster	payin
dog	I	food	give	ASP.

The dog I've fed.

15c. N + N*kɛ* + N*la* + V

to^{54}	nɛ?132	ƚ'i^{54}la	te:^{55}	pajĭ
lto	qas	khyila	ster	payin
food	I	dog	give	ASP.

The food, I've fed (it) to the dog.

15d. N*la* + N + N*kɛ* + V

ƚ'i^{54}la	to^{54}	nɛ?132	te:^{55}	pajĭ
khyila	lto	qas	ster	payin
dog	food	I	give	ASP.

The dog, the food, I've fed.

15e. N + N*la* + N*kɛ* + V

to^{54}	ƚ'i^{54}la	nɛ?132	te:^{55}	pajĭ
lto	khyila	qas	ster	payin
food	dog	I	give	ASP.

The food, the dog, I've fed (to it).

Whether it is in 15b, 15c, 15d, or 15e, N*la* is always the dative, N the accusative, N*kɛ* the agent. The semantic relation between V and N*kɛ*, N*la*, and N does not vary with their positions relative to each other. Hence, 15b-e are four variants of 15a. It is characteristic of the Su-P structure containing a double object in the predicate to have four grammatical variants. From the fixed order of the triple subject, i.e., with the agent subject last, we know that 15b and 15c, where N*kɛ* is the second subject, are not related to the triple subject; hence they will not be discussed here.

2.2. Forwarded double object.

When the double object is forwarded, there are two possible orders: either N *l a* is before N or N is before N *l a*. The same sentence 16a after the object's forward movement will always result in the two structures of 16b and 16c. If we are to compare these Su-P structures, the structure of 16a will have to be compared with both the structures of 16b and 16c at the same time. For example:

16a. ŋɛ^{132} raŋ^{35}la ʈu^{11}nor^{35} tsi^{52}tʂɛ^{52}ko
qas raqla rgyuno rtsis sprad go
I you property entrust
I'll entrust the property to you.

16b. raŋ^{35}la ʈu^{11}nor^{35} ŋɛ^{132} tsi^{52}tʂɛ^{52}ko
raqla rgyunor qas rtsis sprad go
you property I entrust
You, I'll entrust the property (to you).

16c. ʈu^{11}nor^{35} raŋ^{35}la ŋɛ^{132} tsi^{52}tʂɛ^{52}ko
rgyunor raqla qas rtsis sprad go
property you I entrust
The property, you, I'll entrust (it) (to you).

The same relationship holds between sentence 17a and the two structures with fronted objects, 17b and 17c:

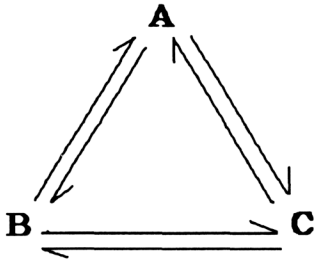
17a. ŋɛ^{132} kan^{35}la?la ji^{11}ke^{52} ʈɛ:^{55} ts'a:^{55}
qas rgan lags la yige skyel tshar
I teacher letter send already
I've given the letter to the teacher.

17b. kan^{35}la?la ji^{11}ke^{52} ŋɛ^{132} ʈɛ:^{55} ts'a:^{55}
rgan lags la yige qas skyel tshar
teacher letter I send already
The teacher, I've given the letter (to him).

17c. ji^{11}ke^{52} kan^{35}la?la ŋɛ^{132} ʈɛ:^{55} ts'a:^{55}
yige rgan lags la qas skyel tshar
letter teacher I send already
The letter, the teacher, I've given (it) (to him).

From the examples, one may see clearly that 16a and 17a are Su-P structures containing a double object, while 16b-c and 17b-c are Su-P

structures containing a triple subject, though the subjects in 16b/17b and in 16c/17c are different from each other. All these sentences are Su-P structures. They contain the same words, but the relative positions of N *kɛ*, N *la*, and N are different in each. This positional difference may be seen as a result of the backward movement of N *kɛ* in 16a/17a, or the forward movement of N *la* and N in 16b/17b, and that of N and N *la* in 16c/17c. Therefore, these sentence types are of equal status. They are mutually dependent, and any one of them may be seen as the result of N movement from another.



Matrices of Transformational Relationships

In this triangle, there are three transformational relationships: one between A and B, one between A and C, and one between B and C. The triple subjects in B and C are transformationally derived from A. That is, the pairings A↔B and A↔C both show a relationship of transformation between a Su-P structure containing a double object and one containing a triple subject. The third pairing (B↔C) is a relationship of transformation between two Su-P structures both containing a triple subject.

3. The Prerequisite for the Triple Subject.

3.0. The following four sentences (18-21) have the same structure:

N*kɛ* + N*la* + N + V

18.	ŋɛ?^{132}	ɬ'i^{54}la	to^{54}	te:^{55}	pajĩ
	qas	khyila	lto	ster	payin
	I	dog	food	give	ASP.
	I've fed the dog.				

19. ɲɛ$^{?132}$ raŋ^{35}la tʂ'y$^{?55}$k'aŋ^{55} tʂ'ə^{11}tʂi$^{?52}$tɕ'ɛ$^{?132}$
qas raq la khruskhaq gras grig byas
I you bathtub prepare

ts'a:^{55}
tshar
finish
I've prepared the bathtub for you.

20. ɲɛ$^{?132}$ k'ɔŋ^{55}la to^{54} lɔŋ^{52} pajĩ
qas khoq la lto sloqs payin
I him food beg ASP.
I've got some food for him.

21. ɲɛ$^{?132}$ mo^{11}raŋ^{35}la pa^{54}sɪ^{54} ɲø$^{?13}$ pajĩ
qas moraq la spase nyos payin
I her ticket buy ASP.
I've bought her a ticket.

3.1. The N1a and N in (18) are the freest among the four sentences in terms of their position of occurrence. They may participate in two other sentence-types which have a triple subject of the form N*1a* + N + N*kɛ* + V and N + N*1a* + N*kɛ* + V. The V in (18) is always in the same semantic relation with the three Ns, no matter which position these Ns occupy. Verbs of this kind have an intrinsic semantic component of "giving", and are in a fixed relation to the giver, the receiver and the given. They are thus known as three-vector verbs, and the giver, the receiver and the given are the three vectors. These three vectors of the verb are the semantic source of the triple subject. Not only is the triple subject dependent on the verb, but the relevant transformations are also dependent on it. Thus we can say that the existence of a three-vector verb is the prerequisite to the formation of a triple subject. Verbs of this category include ʈɛ:^{55} 'send', ɕu$^{?52}$ 'hand', ləp^{52} 'teach', tsɔŋ^{52} 'sell', tʂa$^{?52}$ 'give', and p'y:^{55} 'present'.

3.2 Examples 19 and 18 are of the same structure, but they are not identical. Ex. 18 may be transformed into two structures of types 16a and 16b, while (19) may only be transformed into a structure of type 16a:

19. ɲɛ^{132} raŋ^{35}la tʂ'y^{55}k'aŋ^{55} tʂ'ə^{11}tʂi^{52}tɕ'ɛ^{132}
qas raq la khruskhaq gras grig byas
I you bathtub prepare

ts'a:^{55}
tshar →
finish
I've prepared the bathtub for you.

22. raŋ^{35}la tʂ'y^{55}k'aŋ^{55} ɲɛ^{132} tʂ'ə^{11}tʂi^{52}tɕ'ɛ^{132}
raq la khruskhaq qas gras grig byas
you bathtub I prepare

ts'a:^{55}
tshar
finish
You, I've prepared the bathtub (for you).

23. ɲɛ^{132} raŋ^{35}la ʈ'i^{54} ka^{52} ko →
qas raq la khyi bkag go
I you dog ward off
I'll ward off the dog for you.

24. raŋ^{35}la ʈ'i^{54} ɲɛ^{132} ka^{52} ko
raq la khyi qas bkag go
you dog I ward off
You, I'll ward off the dog (for you).

But sentences like (19) may not be transformed into a structure of type 16c:

19. ɲɛ^{132} raŋ^{35}la tʂ'y^{55}k'aŋ^{55} tʂ'ə^{11}tʂi^{52}tɕ'ɛ^{132}
qas raq la khruskhaq gras grig byas
I you bathtub prepare

ts'a:^{55}
tshar →
finish
I've prepared the bathtub for you.

25. *tʂʻy$^{?55}$kʻaŋ^{55} raŋ^{35}la ȵɛ$^{?132}$ tʂʻə^{11}tʂi$^{?52}$tɕʻɛ$^{?132}$
*khruskhaq raq la qas gras grig byas
bathtub you I prepare

tsʻa:^{55}
tshar
finish
*The bathtub, you, I've prepared (for you).

23. ȵɛ$^{?132}$ raŋ^{35}la ʈʻi^{54} ka$^{?52}$ ko
qas raq la khyi bkag go →
I you dog ward off
I'll ward off the dog for you.

26. *ʈʻi^{54} raŋ^{35}la ȵɛ$^{?132}$ ka$^{?52}$ ko
*khyi raq la qas bkag go
dog you I ward off
*The dog, you, I'll ward off (for you).

This is a major difference between (19) and (18). The V 'prepare' in (19), unlike the verb 'give' in (18), refers to the ways and means of doing something which contains a notion of "service." Sentences with verbs referring to "service" can also be transformed into Su-P structures with a triple subject[6], which, incidentally, is a major difference between Tibetan and Chinese. The triple subject sentence with a "service" verb has its

6 The vector of a verb is related to its object in the strict sense. The relationship between a verb with a "service" meaning and its related noun does not constitute the verb's vector.

unique transformation: **N*la*** + N + **N*kɛ*** + V → **N*la*** + N + **N*kɛ*** + V + ro^{52}tɕ'ɛ^{132} (rogs-byas).[7,8] For example:

22. raŋ^{35}la tʂ'y^{55}k'aŋ^{55} ȵɛ^{132} tʂ'ə^{11}tʂi^{52}tɕ'ɛ^{132}
raq la khruskhaq qas gras grig byas
you bathtub I prepare

---

7 In the construction **N*la*** + N + **N*kɛ*** + V, the substitution of ki^{54} ʦ'əp^{52} tɕ'ɛ (gi tshap byas) for the 'la' of **N*la***, or the substitution of V + rok^{132}tɕ'ɛ (rogs-byas) for the V in it, will both result in a transformation which is possible only when the V has a "service" semantic component. For example:

(a) mo^{11}raŋ^{35}la pa^{54}ʂɿ^{54} ȵɛ^{132} ȵø^{13} pajĩ
moraq la spase qas nyos payin
her ticket I buy ASP.
I've bought her a ticket.

(b) mo^{11}raŋ^{35}ki ʦ'əp^{52}tɕ'ɛ pa^{54}ʂɿ^{54} ȵɛ^{132} ȵø^{13} pajĩ
moraq gi tshab byas spase qas nyos payin
her for ticket I buy ASP.
I've bought a ticket for her.

8 This transformation is ambiguous: V + rok^{132} tɕ'ɛ may form a serial verb structure or a temporary compound verb. In this paper, it is used in the second sense.

The following sentences also have transformations into **N*la*** + N + **N*kɛ*** + V and **N** + **N*la*** + **N*kɛ*** + V, and may form a triangular matrix. However, as the **N*la*** in them is not a dative, they are considered irrelevant to the question of triple subject caused by the movement of double object, and will not be discussed here:

ȵɛ^{132} mo^{11} tiɛ:^{113}ke^{52} taŋ^{55}ko
I her here call
I've asked her to come here.

ȵɛ^{132} raŋ^{35} pu^{132}la ȵɛ:^{55}ko
I you inner room cause to sleep
I'll put you up in the inner room.

ȵɛ^{132} raŋ^{35} sa^{11}k'aŋ^{35}la tʂ'i^{52}ko
I you dining hall take
I'll take you to the dining hall.

ȵɛ^{132} po^{11}mo^{54} p'ə^{55}jy:^{55}la taŋ^{55}ko
I girl home town send
I've sent the girl to her home town.

ȵɛ^{132} k'ɔŋ^{55} naŋ^{35}la tɛ̃^{11}tʂɛ̃:^{35}ɸy^{13}ko
I him home invite
I've invited him home.

ts'a:^{55}
tshar →
finish
I've prepared the bathtub for you.

27. raŋ^{35}la tʂ'y?^{55}k'aŋ^{55} nɛ?^{132}
raq la khruskhaq qas
you bathtub I

tʂ'ə^{11}tʂi?^{52}tɕ'ɛ?^{11} ro?^{52}tɕ'ɛ?^{132} ts'a:^{55}
gras grig byas rogs byas tshar
prepare help to finish
I've prepared the bathtub for your sake.

24. raŋ^{35}la ʈ'i^{54} nɛ?^{132} ka?^{52}ko
raq la khyi qas bkag go →
you dog I ward off
I'll ward off the dog for you.

28. raŋ^{35}la ʈ'i^{54} nɛ?^{132} ka?^{54} ro?^{52}tɕ'ɛ?^{132} ko
raq la khyi qas bkag rogs byas go
you dog I ward off help PRT
I'll help you to ward off the dog.

Verbs with a "service" semantic component in Tibetan are an open class. Examples include ka?^{52} 'ward off', tɕ'e^{52} 'open', ɕa?^{52} 'chop', tʂ'ə^{11}tʂi?^{52}tɕ'e?^{132} 'prepare', tɕ'i? 'wipe', sɛ?^{52} 'kill', and tɔŋ^{35} 'knock (at the door)'.

3.3 Similarly to (19), (20) may not be transformed into a structure of type 16c. For example:

29a. nɛ?^{132} k'ɔŋ^{55}la to^{54} lɔŋ^{52} pajĩ
qas khog la lto sloqs payin →
I him food beg ASP.
I've got some food for him.

29b. *to^{54} k'ɔŋ^{55}la nɛ?^{132} lɔŋ^{52} pajĩ
*lto khoq la qas sloqs payin
food him I beg ASP.

30a. ŋɛ^{132} tʂə^{54}ɕi^{52}la pa^{52} jo^{52} pajĭ
qas bkrashis la lpags gyos payin →
I Zhaxi barley flour knead ASP.
I kneaded the barley flour for Zhaxi.

30b. *pa$^{?}$ tʂə^{54}ɕi^{52}la ŋɛ^{132} jo^{52} pajĭ
*lpags bkrashis la qas gyos payin
barley flour Zhaxi I knead ASP.

Also similarly to (19), (20) may be transformed as follows:

N*la* + N*kɛ* + V → N*la* + N + N*kɛ* + V + ro^{52}tɕ'ɛ^{132}

For example:

31a. k'ɔŋ^{55}la to^{54} ŋɛ^{132} lɔŋ^{52} pajĭ
khoq la lto qas sloqs payin →
him food I beg ASP.
I've got some food for him.

31b. k'ɔŋ^{55}la to^{54} ŋɛ^{132} lɔŋ^{52} ro^{52}tɕ'ɛ^{132} pajĭ
khoq la lto qas sloq rogs byas payin
him food I beg help to ASP.
I helped him to get some food.

32a. tʂə^{54}ɕi^{52}la pa^{52} ŋɛ^{132} jo^{52} pajĭ
bkrashis la lpags qas gyos payin →
Zhaxi barley flour I knead ASP.
I kneaded the barley flour for Zhaxi.

32b. tʂə^{54}ɕi^{52}la pa^{52} ŋɛ^{132} jo^{52} ro^{52}tɕ'ɛ^{132} pajĭ
bkrashis la lpags qas gyos rogs byas payin
Zhaxi barley flour I knead help to ASP.
I helped Zhaxi to knead the barley flour.

Ex. 20, like (19), may be transformed into a sentence like 16b, as well as into the structure N*la* + N + N*kɛ* + V + ro^{52}tɕ'ɛ^{132} which is peculiar to (19). This shows that the V in (20) has a semantic component of "service". However, (20) is also different from (19) in that it has the following transformation:

N*la* + N + N*kɛ* + N → N*kɛ* + N + V + N*la* + te:^{55} ('give'):

31a. k'ɔŋ^{55}la to^{54} ɲɛ?^{132} lɔŋ^{52} pajĩ
khoq la lto qas sloqs payin →
him food I beg ASP.
I've got some food for him.

33. ɲɛ?^{132} to^{54} lɔŋ^{52}tɕ'ɛ k'ɔŋ^{55}la te:^{55} pajĩ
qas lto sloqs byas khoq la ster payin
I food beg him give ASP.
I've got some food to give him.

32a. tʂə^{54}ɕi?^{52}la pa?^{52} ɲɛ?^{132} jo^{52} pajĩ
bkrashis la lpags qas gyos payin →
Zhaxi barley flour I knead ASP.
I kneaded the barley flour for Zhaxi.

34. ɲɛ?^{132} pa?^{52} jo^{52}tɕ'ɛ tʂə^{54}ɕi?^{52}la te:^{55} pajĩ
qas lpags gyos byas bkrashis la ster payin
I barley flour knead Zhaxi give ASP.
I kneaded the barley flour to give to Zhaxi.

Ex. 20 is in a transformational relationship with these last four sentences. The verb 'beg' in (20) is synonymous with the verbs 'beg' and 'give' in (31a/33), which shows that 'beg' has a semantic component of "giving". Ex. 20 is also in a transformational relationship with (31b), and the verb 'beg' is also synonymous with the verb 'help to beg'. But the verb 'help to beg' only has the semantic component of "service", not that of "giving". To "give" and to "serve" are usually two separate actions, but in a verb like that in (20) these two meanings are collapsed, resulting in the ambiguity of (20).

Verbs of the "service" type can also form a sentence with triple subject. Therefore we must redefine the double object structure as one of N *la*/N + N/N *la* + V with a transformation of the 16c type. This is a double object structure in the strict sense. Only when the N referring to the thing to be given and received occurs in the initial position will it signify that the V has an intrinsic "giving" meaning. When N *la* occurs in the sentence-initial position, it is indeterminate whether the V has a semantic component of "giving" or not. It is the sentence-initial position of N that is the only criterion by which to judge whether a construction is a double object structure, or whether a verb has three vectors.

3.4. Similar to (18), (21) has a transformation of the 16c type:

21. ȵɛ^{132} mo^{11}raŋ^{35}la pa^{54}sɪ^{54} ȵø^{13} pajĩ
qas moraq la spase nyos payin
I her ticket buy ASP.
I've bought her a ticket.

35. pa^{54}sɪ^{54} mo^{11}raŋ^{35}la ȵɛ^{132} ȵø^{13} pajĩ
spase moraq la qas nyos payin
ticket her I buy ASP.
The ticket, her, I've bought (it) (for her).

This shows that the verb 'buy' has a semantic component of "giving". Similar to (19), (21) may also be transformed as follows:

36a. mo^{11}raŋ^{35}la pa^{54}sɪ^{54} ȵɛ^{132} ȵø^{13} pajĩ
moraq la spase qas nyos payin
her ticket I buy ASP.
I've bought her a ticket.

36b. mo^{11}raŋ^{35}la pa^{54}sɪ^{54} ȵɛ^{132} ȵo^{11} ro^{52}tɕ'ɛ^{132} pajĩ
moraq la spase qas nyo rogs byas payin
her ticket I buy help to ASP.
I helped her to buy a ticket.

This shows that the verb 'buy' also has a semantic component of "service". In verbs of the (20) type, the semantic component of "giving" and that of "service" are complementary to each other; but in verbs of the (21) type, these two meanings are incompatible with each other. Hence, (21), unlike (18), (19), and (20), is a type of its own. Verbs of type (21) include ȵo^{13} 'buy', taŋ^{55} 'post/mail' and tɕ'i^{13} 'write'.

A Comparison of Structures 18, 19, 20, and 21

	sample verbs	*number of subjects*	*semantic component*		*vectors of verb*
			"giving"	*"service"*	
18	te:^{55} 'give'	2	+	—	3
19	ka?^{52} 'ward off'	1	—	+	2
20	lɔŋ^{52} 'beg'	2	+ / +		3/2
21	nɔ^{13} 'buy'	3	+	+	3

Figure 2

REFERENCES

Halliday, M. A. K. 1990. *Introduction to Functional Grammar.* Selected translation into Chinese by Xu Lin in *Linguistics Abroad*, 4.

Zhu, Dexi. 1985. "The verb *gei* and other related questions of syntax." *Researches in the Grammar of Modern Chinese.* Beijing.