

TOPIC-PROMINENCE AND COORDINATE CONVERBAL STRUCTURES IN WUTUN¹

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Marja Kaurila

Helsinki University, Finland
E-mail: mapeltom@gmail.com

Abstract. *In this article, I will discuss topic-prominence, verb serialization and converbal constructions in the Wutun language. I will show that the basic sentence structure together with the case system is best analyzed in the light of the inheritance that Wutun has as a topic-prominent Sinitic language related to Chinese. In complex sentences, the verbs and the arguments are concatenated into complex structures that take the form of converbal constructions, showing a strong Tibetan influence. I will show that, irrespective of the semantic relationship, the linkage between the component clauses is best analyzed as coordinate despite of the formal asymmetry.*

Key words: *topic-prominent; transitivity; topic; focus; verb serialization; converbal construction; verb recategorization*

1. INTRODUCTION

In this article, I will discuss topic-prominence and coordinate converbal structures in the Wutun language. Wutun is a mixed Sinitic language spoken in three villages in Tongren County in China Gansu–Qinhai multi-national area and strongly affected by Amdo Tibetan. Combining structures from two topic-prominent Sino-Tibetan languages, where Chinese is an accusative type verb serializing language and Tibetan an ergative language with converbal structures, Wutun is a good example of the baseness of the topic-com-

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¹ Abbreviations used in this paper are: A = agent; ABL = ablative; ASS = associative; ASSERT = assertative; BA = ba-construction; BEI = bei-construction; CAUS = causative/causative complement; CL = classifier; CMT = completive complement; COND = conditional; CONJ = conjunctive; CONT = continuative; DAT = dative; DCL = declarative; DISJ = disjunctive; DO = auxiliary do; EGOPH = egophoric; ERG = ergative; EXT = extent; FACT = factual; FOC = focus; GEN = genitive; IMM.FUT = immediate future; IMP = imperative; IMPRF = imperfective; INDIR = indirect; INSTR = instrumental; IRL = irrealis; L = location; LOC = locative; MOD = modal; NEG = negation; NZR = nominalizer; P = patient; PAUC = paucative; PHS = phase; PL = plural; PRF = perfective; PRES = present; PROG = progressive; PST = past; PURP = purposive; QST = question; RES = resultative; RLS = realis; RST = resultative complement; S = subject; SOC = sociative; SPEC = specific; STR = structural particle; STS = status; SUBJ = subjective; TEST = testimonial; TOP = topic; VOL = volutative.

ment relation under the surface argument marking. It is also a good example of the relationship between topic-prominence and the occurrence of coordinate converbs on one hand and of the analogy between verb serialization and converbal constructions on the other hand.

2. SOME ASPECTS OF SENTENCE STRUCTURES IN CHINESE AND TIBETAN

Li and Thompson (1976: 459) divide languages into subject-prominent, where the basic relation is subject–predicate, and topic-prominent, where the basic relation is topic–comment. In the Indo-European language type, the syntactic structure is based on the transitive/intransitive patterns together with the thematic hierarchy of the semantic roles and a strict relationship between the subject and the predicate.

In topic-prominent languages, on the other hand, one of the primary factors determining the linking from semantics to syntax is the referential status of the participants, while the semantic roles are of secondary importance. Unlike the subject, which is always an argument of the predicate and assigned based on the thematic hierarchy, the sentence initial topic is in a rather loose relationship with the rest of the sentence. Shi (2000: 386) defines the topic as an NP that precedes the clause and is related to a position inside the clause; it sets the frame for the sentence, while the clause that adds information to the topic is the comment.

The verb in topic-prominent languages is neutral in respect to the argument structure (cf. Tournadre 2003: 80). Topic-prominent languages do not distinguish the concept of transitivity, and varying degrees of transitivity can be expressed by the presence or absence of agents and by the choice of verb forms (Vollmann (2007: 357). Instead of syntactic passives, the rearrangement of the semantic–pragmatic relations is performed by verb recategorizations (Vollmann 2007: 360).

Mandarin Chinese is an accusative type topic-prominent language where the agent and the patient are distinguished by the word order, while the topic/subject, which can be unmarked or marked by a topic-particle, takes the clause initial position (Li and Thompson 1981: 86). The default topic/subject is the agent (id.: 87), and it may be preceded by a (frame-) topic (id.: 88) and followed by another unmarked NP which is both topical and focal (id.: 163). In (1), the agent *ta* 'he' in the initial position is the topic and precedes the verb phrase. The patient *bao* 'newspaper' follows the verb and is part of the verb phrase. The preposition phrase *zai tushuguan* 'at the library' precedes the verb and is also a part of the verb phrase:

Mandarin Chinese (Li & Thompson 1981: 157)

- (1) *Tā zài tūshūguǎn kàn bào*
 he:A:TOP at library read newspaper:P
 'He is at the library reading the newspaper.'

In (2), the patient *na zhi gou* 'that dog', which takes the initial position and is marked by the topic-particle *a*, acts as the (frame-)topic. It is followed by the agent *wo* 'I', which functions as the (topic-)subject:

Mandarin Chinese (Li & Thompson 1981: 86)

- (2) *Nà zhī gǒu a, wǒ yǐjīng kàn guo le*
 that CL dog:P TOP I:A:SUBJ already see EXP PHS
 'That dog, I have already seen it.'

In (3), the unmarked NP *zhe ge wenti* 'this question', defining the limits for the theme, acts as the (frame-)topic in the initial position. It is followed by the agent *ge ren* 'each person', which acts as the (topic-)subject:

Mandarin Chinese (Li 1986: 40, analysis mine)

- (3) *Zhè ge wèntí, kǒngpà gè rén*
 this CL question:TOP probably each person:A:SUBJ
 'As for this question, each person
yǒu gè rén - de kànfǎ
 exist each person - STR opinion:P
 probably has his own opinion.'

The verb in Mandarin can take any orientation allowed by the system. This is shown in (4), where the topic and subject positions are merged. The verb in (4a) is patient orientated, and the patient *cai* 'dish' acts as the topic/subject; in (4b), the verb is agent orientated, and the agent *yi ge chuan bai yifu de ren* 'a person wearing white clothes' acts as the topic/subject; and, in (4c), the verb is location orientated, and the location *chuang qian baxianzhuo shang* 'in front of the window on the Eight Immortal's table' acts as the topic/subject:

Mandarin Chinese (Li 1986: 24, 77, analysis mine)

- (4) a. *Cài shāo hǎo le,*
 dish:P:TOP/SUBJ cook be.ready PRF:PHS
dào zài huāpíng pánzi - lǐ,
 turn.upside.down be flower.vase plate - in
 'The dishes were cooked ready, put on the plates with flower vases painted on them, and
- b. *yī ge chuān bái yīu - de rén*
 one CL wear white clothes - STR person:A:TOP/SUBJ
jiē guò qù, shàng lóu le.
 receive pass go go.up stairs PRF:PHS
 a person wearing white clothes took them upstairs.'
- c. *Chuāng - qiánbāxiānzhuō - shàng*
 window - in.front.of Eight.Immortal's.table - on:LOC:TOP/SUBJ
fàng le yī ge cháhu, liǎng ge chábei.
 put PRF one CL teapot two CL teacup
 'In front of the window on the Eight Immortal's table, there were put one teapot and two teacups there.'

Finally, another unmarked NP, which is both topical and focal, such as *zhe xin* 'this letter' in (5), can occur between the subject and the verb phrase:

Mandarin Chinese (Li 1986: 23, analysis mine)

- (5) *Nǐ shuō wǒ zhè xìn zěnmē xiě ne?*
 you say I:TOP/SUBJ this letter how write MOD
 'What do you think, how should I write this letter?'

To resettle the semantic–pragmatic relations, Mandarin has a system of *bei*- and *ba*-constructions, where the *bei*-construction is one of the many passive constructions and the *ba*-construction is the corresponding active, as shown in (6):

Mandarin Chinese (He et al. 1983: 405, analysis mine)

- (6) *huōzhe (nǐ) bǎ lǎohu dǎ sǐ,*
 either you:A:TOP/S BA tiger:P hit die
huōzhe (nǐ) bèi lǎohu chī diào,
 or you:P:TOP/S BEI tiger:A eat drop.off
èr zhe bì jū qí yī.
 the.two must occupy its one
 'Either (you) kill the tiger, or (you) are eaten up by the tiger, [you] must choose one.'

Example (6) shows that, in the *bei*-construction, the patient is in the topic position, while, in the *ba*-construction, the agent is in the topic position and the patient in a preverbal position (cf. Li 1986: 222). The preverbal position, taken by the patient in the *ba*-construction and by the agent in the *bei*-construction, is a position marked on the verb by a preposition. The NP in this position is both topical and focal and shows the most immediately involved constituent in the predication. Following Kaurila (forth), I define this NP as the topic of the verb phrase, or the focus. The participant in focus in Mandarin can be the patient (goal), marked by the preposition *ba*; the (adversative) agent, marked by the preposition *bei* (*rang/jiao/gei*); or the experiencer, marked by the preposition *gei*.

Tibetan, on the other hand, is a topic-prominent ergative language, where the agent and the patient are distinguished by the ergative/absolutive case-marking (Vollmann 2007: 358), and the verbs are orientated towards specific participant roles, primarily towards an agent, a patient, an absolutive (uninvolved), or an experiencer (possessor/location). The topic/subject, which can be marked by a topic-particle, takes the clause initial position (Tournadre 2003: 282). The basic sentence structure in Tibetan is shown in (7), where, in (7a), the verb *byas* 'did' in both clauses is agent orientated, and both the agent *ngas* 'I' in the first clause and the agent *khong gis* 'he' in the second clause take the ergative case-marking. The ergative marked agent *ngas* 'I' in the first clause and the ergative marked agent *khong gis* 'he' in the second clause, which both take the topic-particle *ni*, also act as the topic. In (7b), the verb *'dug* 'exist' in the first and the second clauses and the verb *dgos* 'need' in the third clause are all experiencer orientated, and the possessor/experiencer *khyed rang* 'you' in these clauses takes the dative/locative case-marking. Finally, the patient *dus tshod* 'time' in the first clause, *go skabs* 'opportunity' in the second clause, and *ngul* 'money' in the third clause, which all take the topic particle *ni*, act as topics of their clauses:

Lhasa Tibetan (Tournadre 2003: 283, analysis mine)

- (7) a. *ngas ni ma byas/*
 I:ERG TOP NEG do:PST
khong gis ni byas ma song/
 he ERG TOP do:PST NEG CMT:TEST
da sus byas pa red/
 then who:ERG do:PST PRF:ASSERT
 'As for me, I didn't do [it], as for him, he didn't do [it]. Who then is the one that did [it]?'
 b. *khyed rang la dus tshod ni 'dug/*
 you DAT/LOC time TOP exist:TEST
go skabs ni 'dug/ dngul ni 'dug/
 opportunity TOP exist:TEST money TOP exist:TEST
da khyed rang la gzhan dag ga re
 then you DAT/LOC other what
dgos kyi 'dug/
 need IMPRF.TEST
 'As for the time, you have [that], as for the opportunity, you have [that], as for the money, you have [that]. What else then do you still need?'

Tibetan does not have a syntactic voice, but has instead a verb recategorization system consisting of causative and resultative verb forms. In addition to changes in the root, the causative/resultative opposition is marked by two separate complement verbs (light verbs) in Amdo Tibetan. Both complement verbs mark completion, but the verb *btang* 'make' adds a causative (active) meaning, while the verb *song* 'become' adds a resultative (spontaneous) meaning. In this system, a verb followed by the causative complement verb *btang* has an active meaning, as shown in (8a), but when no agent is present, the verb gets a passive interpretation, as in (8b):

Amdo Tibetan (Wang 1995: 27, 61, analysis mine)

- (8) a. *khur ges dros ja 'thungs btang tha/*
 he:ERG lunch drink:PST CAUS.CMT PHS:DISJ.TEST
 'He had a lunch.'
 b. *di nas khang ba soma gzig las btang gzig/*
 there house new SPEC work CAUS.CMT DISJ.INDIR
 'A new house was built there.'

A verb followed by the resultative complement verb *song*, on the other hand, has a spontaneous meaning, as shown in (9a), but when there is an agent present, the verb gets a middle passive meaning and the agent an interpretation of an effector or a cause, as shown in (9b) and (9c):

Amdo Tibetan (Wang 1995: 14, 61, 96, analysis mine)

- (9) a. *zha yes gnyid song gzig/*
 child fall.asleep CMT.RES DISJ.INDIR
 'The child fell asleep.'

- b. *dmag dpon cha'o gis 'thab 'dzing gi las 'gan*
 officer PL ERG mission GEN duty
grub song kha gzig red/
 get.accomplished RES.CMT likeness SPEC be:DISJ.ASSERT
 'The mission seems to have got accomplished by the officers.'
- c. *tshag par de rlung gis khyer song gzig/*
 newspaper that wind ERG carry RES.CMT DISJ.INDIR
 'The newspaper was taken away by the wind.'

The loose relationship between the verb and the arguments in topic-prominent languages is also manifested in the structure of complex sentences, which take the form of verb serialization or a converbal structure. Instead of nominalizations, the deranking of the verb present in complex structures is shown in transitivity changes, which are a consequence of temporal-aspectual or relational interdependences between the concatenated verbs. In verb serializing structures, the decreasing level of transitivity taking place along with the concatenation of the component verbs is shown in the verb's inability to take certain verbal markers. In converbial constructions, there is a formal asymmetry between the final maximum verbal form, on which the shared verbal categories are marked, and the medial verbs, which undergo transitivity changes and take the relational marking. The loose relationship between the verbs and the arguments makes it possible to have a very limited inventory of markers to show various interdependences, the final interpretation depending on the level of the structure, i.e. on the level of overlapping of the described events.

The following examples in Chinese show how the deranking of the verb in the form of decreasing degree of transitivity can take place without any formal asymmetry and may be manifested in the verb's inability to take certain verbal markers. Example (9) shows the deranking of the main verb in complex predicates in clause internal serial verb constructions. In (9a), the predicate is a transitive accomplishment verb *gai* 'cover', which expresses the activity and the change. In (9b), the predicate is a resultative construction, where the main verb *gai* 'cover' gets an intransitive activity interpretation and expresses the activity alone. It is directly followed by another verb *hao* 'be good', which expresses the result of the activity. Finally, in (9c), the predicate is a modifying construction, where the main verb *gai* 'cover' gets a stative topical interpretation and barely names the activity. It takes a mediating particle *de* and is followed by another verb *jin* 'be tight', which expresses the quality of the activity:

Mandarin Chinese (Li 1986: 125, 311, analysis mine)

- (10) a. *Wǒzǒng yǒu shí nián*
 I surely exist ten year
bù gài bèizi shuì jiào le.
 NEG cover blanket sleep sleep PRF:PHS
 'I have surely slept at least ten years without having a blanket.'
- b. *Tā zuótiān wǎnshang bèizi*
 he yesterday evening blanket
méi gài hǎo, zháoliáng le.
 NEG cover be.good catch.a.cold PRF:PHS
 'He didn't cover himself by a blanket properly last night, and now he's got a cold.'

- c. *Gàer gài - de bù jǐn.*
 lid cover - STR NEG be.tight
 'The lid isn't on tight.'

When the semantic relationship between the verbs gradually loosens, the restrictions on the first verb disappear, and the participating verbs are relatively free, being able to take any verbal marking. This can be seen in (11), where the verb serialization strategy is used on to describe a linear sequence of successive events. In (11), the first verb *guan* 'shut' takes the perfective particle *le*, the second verb *dao* 'fall' followed by the coverb *zai* 'be' is unmarked, and the third verb *meng* 'cover' takes the resultative particle *zhe*:

Mandarin Chinese (Li 1986: 131, analysis mine)

- (11) *Tā guān le mén dǎo zài chuáng - shang*
 he shut PRF door fall be bed - on
méng zhe tóu kū.
 cover RES head cry
 'He closed the door, fell on the bed, and cried with his head covered.'

Moreover, as Bisang (1995: 139) notices, verb serialization can also be used in establishing a certain relation between two events. Like in the modifying construction in (10c), the first verb in these constructions functions as the topic that presents an event for the second verb to establish a relation. This is shown in (12), where the relationship between the clauses is consequential in (12a); and conditional in (12b):

Mandarin Chinese (Li 1986: 129, 130, analysis mine)

- (12) a. *Wǒ wéifǎn jìlǜ ài pīpíng le.*
 I violate discipline suffer criticize PRF:PHS
 'Because of violating the discipline, I was criticized.'
 b. *Wǒ wéifǎn jìlǜ yào ài pīpíng.*
 I violate discipline will suffer criticize
 'If I violate the discipline, I will be criticized.'

Tibetan, on the other hand, differs from Chinese in that converbial constructions and verb serialization occur side by side, as can be seen in (13). In (13a), the verb *bshad* 'say' and the verb *btang* 'send; make, cause' form a serial verb construction, where the verb *bshad* functions as the main verb and the verb *btang* gives it a past completive meaning. Both verbs are unmarked and both can form a sentence on their own. In (13b), however, the first verb *bshad* 'say' takes the purposive particle *la*, and thereby the structure has a future completive meaning. Even though the first verb in (13b) is neither unmarked nor able to form a sentence on its own, the converbial structure is analogous to the serial verb construction in (13a) and should be analyzed in an analogous way.

Amdo Tibetan (Dorje 2004, lecture notes, analysis mine)

- (13) a. *ngas khur ge 'a bshad btang nga/*
 I:ERG he DAT/LOC say CAUS.CMT SUBJ
 'I told [it] to him.'
 b. *ngas khur ge yong na/ bshad la btang/*
 I:ERG he come COND say PURP CAUS.CMT
 'When he comes, I will tell him.'

Converbial constructions in Tibetan can also be used to establish a certain semantic relation between two events. The topical interpretation of the first verb in these constructions can explain the occurrence of the nominalizing particle *pa* on the non-final verb. In (14), the converbial construction is used to establish a consequential relation:

Lhasa Tibetan (Sherab 1996: 63, analysis mine)

(14)	<i>Lam</i>	<i>la</i>	<i>mo da</i>	<i>mang po</i>	<i>'gro</i>	<i>pas/</i>
	road	LOC	car	many	go	NZR:CAUS
	<i>lug phrug</i>	<i>de</i>	<i>mo da'i</i>	<i>brdzi</i>	<i>ba'i</i>	<i>nyin kha</i>
	lamb	that	car:GEN	knock.down	NZR:GEN	danger
	<i>yod</i>	<i>pa</i>	<i>red/</i>			
	exist	NZR	DISJ.FACT			

'Because of many cars driving on the road, the lamb is in danger to be knocked down by a car.'

Finally, Tibetan makes a distinction between coordinate and subordinate clause connectives. In (15) and (16), the clause connectives *pa'i rkyen gyis* 'by the reason of' and *pa'i tshe* 'in the time of', formed by a relational noun, are subordinate, while the causal clause connective *pas/bas* 'and thus', formed by the instrumental case particle *-s* and a mediating nominalizer *pa*, and the conditional clause connective *na* 'as for', formed by the locative case particle *na*, are coordinate:

Written Tibetan (Bosson 1969: 119, analysis mine)

(15)	<i>blun po</i>	<i>bya ba</i>	<i>la</i>	<i>sbyar</i>	<i>na//</i>	
	fool	task	LOC	attach:PST	COND	
	<i>don</i>	<i>nyams</i>	<i>de</i>	<i>yang nyams</i>	<i>par</i>	<i>'gyur//</i>
	matter	perish	that	also perish	NZR:PURP	become:PRES
	<i>zhes</i>	<i>gsungs</i>	<i>pa</i>	<i>'dis/</i>	<i>myong</i>	<i>goms</i>
	so	say:PST	NZR	this:INSTR	experience	custom
	<i>gang</i>	<i>yang</i>	<i>med</i>	<i>pa'i</i>	<i>rkyen</i>	<i>gyis</i>
	what	also	not.exist	NZR:GEN	reason	INSTR
	<i>rang</i>	<i>bzhan</i>	<i>gnyis</i>	<i>phungs</i>	<i>su</i>	<i>'gyur</i>
	self	others	two	perish	PURP	become:PRES
	<i>de</i>	<i>mi</i>	<i>byed</i>	<i>par</i>	<i>bstan</i>	<i>pa ste/</i>
	that	NEG	do:PRES	NZR:PURP	show:PST	NZR CONT

'If the fool is given a task, the matter will be ruined, and [the fool] himself also will be ruined. These words show that, because of having no experience at all, both [the fool] himself and the others will perish, and thus this [kind of thing] should not be done, that's what [the above words] tell...'

With coordinate connectives, such as *pas/bas* in (15) and also in (16), the order of the clauses is iconic, and the semantic relation, marked by the connective on the first verb, is always established with the verb that follows. Change of the order of the clauses will break the chain, such as the chain of the event and its consequence in (15) and in (16). Thus, the fixed order is not only due to the syntactic rules, which demand that a clause with the verb taking the finite marking must end the chain, but it is also due to the iconicity, present in a clause chain, and caused by the independent nature of the coordinated clauses (cf. Haspelmath 1995: 14). Example (16) shows that a clause taking the connec-

tive *pas/bas* 'and thus' can actually end a chain, but also in that case the relation is established with what follows, i.e. with all that was said: 'and thus it is [as was said]':

Written Tibetan (Bosson 1969: 116, analysis mine)

(16)	<i>ci</i>	<i>ste</i>	<i>bzang pa'i</i>	<i>spyod pa</i>	<i>zhig</i>				
	what	CONT	good:GEN	behavior	SPEC				
	<i>byung</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>yang</i>	<i>de</i>	<i>ni</i>				
	happen	COND	also	that	TOP				
	<i>gzhan</i>	<i>ngo</i>	<i>bskor</i>	<i>ba'i</i>	<i>bslu 'khrid</i>				
	others	head	turn.round	NZR:GEN	deception				
	<i>bcos ma'i</i>	<i>rnam thar</i>	<i>yin</i>	<i>te</i>					
	false:GEN	story	be	CONT					
	<i>bzang po'i</i>	<i>rigs</i>	<i>dang</i>	<i>'phrad</i>	<i>pa'i</i>	<i>tshe</i>			
	good:GEN	kind	SOC	get.in.touch	NZR:GEN	time			
	<i>rang</i>	<i>tshugs</i>	<i>ma</i>	<i>thub</i>	<i>pa</i>				
	self	keep	NEG	be.able	NZR				
	<i>de'i</i>	<i>rang bzhin</i>	<i>dka' tshogs</i>						
	that:GEN	own.nature	difficulty						
	<i>med</i>	<i>par</i>	<i>shed</i>	<i>nus</i>	<i>pas</i>	<i>so/</i>			
	not.exist	NZR:PURP	know	be.able	NZR:CAUS	DCL			

'If [a bad person] happens to behave well, it is to deceive others, and when [he] gets in touch with good people, he cannot persist in [his good behavior], his true nature comes out without difficulty, and thus it is [as was said].

The example (16) shows the independent nature of the clause taking the connective *pas*. It is coordinate with the main clause that precedes it, giving the reason for all that was said.

In summary, Chinese and Tibetan are two topic-prominent languages of the same language family. In looking at the surface structures, they seem to differ very much. The internal relations under the surface argument marking are, however, very similar, and constructions that are analogous to each other can be found at all levels of the syntactic structure. Wutun is a unique combination of these two languages.

3. BASIC SENTENCE IN THE WUTUN LANGUAGE

Both Chinese and Tibetan represent the East Asian topic-prominent language type, where the loose relationship between the verb and its arguments and the acknowledgment of various levels of transitivity give rise to non-obligatory positions and indeterminacy in the structure of the basic sentence. Multiple simultaneous perspectives are possible: the (clause) topic, related to a position inside the clause, sets the framework for the predication, the focus (the topic of the verb phrase), predictable by the verb form, shows the most immediate participant in the predication, and the recategorization systems of the verb give possibilities to change the orientation of the verb itself. These choices for perspectives are also found in Wutun, which has a basic sentence structure with slots for topic and focus, and a verb recategorization system consisting of several complement verbs. The Wutun examples are my own material and come from native speakers, mostly

Xiawu Dongzhou, from Wutun Xiazhuang village, and Myrtle Cairangji, from Wutun Jiancangma village.

Wutun is a mixed Sinitic language, where the basic grammatical categories come from Chinese, but the overall syntactic structure is strongly affected by Amdo Tibetan. Both the actor complex and the undergoer complex are weakly developed, and instead of two macroroles, both the actor and the undergoer are split into several distinct roles. Example (17) shows various roles in the actor complex. In (17a), the agent role precedes the patient; in (17b), the effector role is marked by the instrumental case; in (17c), the experiencer, in (17d), the receptor, and, in (17e), the possessor are marked by the dative case:

- (17) a. *Xo Wang san wanx he - she - gu - lio.*
 Xo Wang:A three bowl:P drink - RST - CMT - PRF
 'Xo Wang has eaten three bowls of rice.'
- b. *Qho - ha qelok - liangge gang - gu - lio*
 bridge - FOC flood - INSTR flush - CMT - PRF
ze li.
 DO DISJ.TEST
 'The bridge has been carried away by the flood.'
- c. *Gejhai - na xen xai - ge yo - di li.*
 self - DAT new shoe - SPEC want - PROG DISJ.TEST
 'He (himself) wants a pair of new shoes.'
- d. *Nga - ha pio shek - li mi - lai.*
 I:DAT - FOC ticket hand - in NEG - come
 'I didn't get the ticket.'
- e. *Nga - ha ma liang - ge yek.*
 I:DAT - FOC horse two - SPEC exist
 'I have two horses.'

Example (18) shows various roles in the undergoer complex. In (18a), an inanimate patient is unmarked and immediately precedes the verb; in (18b), an animate patient is marked by the dative case; in (18c), the location, and, in (18d), the goal are followed by a localizer instead of taking a case-marking; in (18e), the source is marked by the ablative case; in (18f), the instrument is marked by the instrumental case; in (18g), the goal, followed by a localizer, precedes the theme; in (18h), the receptor, marked by the dative case, precedes the theme; and, in (18i), the time distribution is marked by the dative case:

- (18) a. *Ngu chabi da pe - lio.*
 I:A teacup:P hit broke - PRF
 'I broke the teacup.'
- b. *Ngu nia sha - zhe.*
 I you:DAT kill - IMM.FUT
 'I will kill you.'
- c. *Ngu - jhege dalek - li co - di yek.*
 I - PAUC block.of.flats - in live - PROG CONJ.EGOPH
 'We are living in the block of flats.'
- d. *Gu congkang - li qhi - gu - lio.*
 he shop - in go - CMT - PRF
 'He went to the store.'

- e. *Aga dadada gguan - la lai - lio.*
 elder.brother just temple - ABL come - PRF
 'My brother just came from the temple.'
- f. *Gu agu shetek - liangge zhaze da pe - lio.*
 that boy stone - INSTR window hit broke - PRF
 'That boy broke the window by a stone.'
- g. *Gu joze - she huaiqa - ge hong - she - gu - lio.*
 he table - on book - SPEC put - RST - CMT - PRF
 'He put a book on the table.'
- h. *Ni nga je huaiqa ka - lio.*
 you I:DAT this book give - PRF
 'You gave this book to me.'
- i. *Jhang ngu nia bantian - na din - lio - de re.*
 today I you:DAT half.a.day - DAT wait - PRF - STS DISJ.FACT
 'Today, I have been waiting for you half a day.'

Similar to both Chinese and Tibetan, Wutun is also a topic-prominent language. The topic sets a framework for the predication, supplying the primary perspective. The (topic)-subject (cf. Japanese *-ga*) takes the clause initial position, as shown in (19a), it may be preceded by a frame topic (cf. Japanese *-wa*), as shown in (19b), and followed by another topical NP, as shown in (19c):

- (19) a. *Ngu yegai - ge xai - lio.*
 I:A:TOP/S letter - SPEC write - PRF
 'I wrote a letter.'
- b. *Je - ge dondak gu xen shang - di li.*
 this - SPEC thing:TOP he:A:S heart hurt - PROG DISJ.TEST
 'As for this thing, his heart is hurt because of it.'
- c. *Ni tiema gu lu - she - la*
 you:A:TOP/S bike that road - on - ABL
lu a-ge - she - la qhi - de zhong li...
 road which - on - ABL go - STS be.right DISJ.TEST
 'As for going by the bike on the road, from which road it is right for you to go...'

The focus, i.e. the topic of the verb phrase, can add another perspective. The Wutun focus marker *-ha* most probably originates from the Mandarin disposal marker *ba*, which forms a pair with the passive marker *bei* in a 'voice-like' system of verb recategorization.

In Wutun, *-ha* has lost its 'voice-like' function on the verb, and the language has developed a separate system of verb recategorization based on verb-complement constructions. However, even though the changed status of *-ha* in some respect may resemble the dative/accusative case of accusative languages, the basic sentence structure in Wutun shows no subject-object dichotomy, marked by a nominative-accusative case system. Moreover, the marker *-ha* is non-obligatory and can be taken by various participant roles. Thus, *-ha* is best analyzed as a focus marker, marking a constituent that is both topical and focal, i.e. the most immediate constituent in the predication. The constituent marked by *-ha* in Wutun belongs to the comment in the basic topic-comment relation. It is an argument of (BECOME) **pred'**(z, y) in the logical structure [**do'**(x, \emptyset)] CAUSE

[BECOME **pred'**((z), y)] (cf. LaPolla & Van Valin 1997: 109). The argument of **do'**(x, ...), on the other hand, cannot be chosen as focus.

Example (20) shows possible choices for focus in the undergoer-complex. In (20a), when both the patient and the recipient are present, the recipient is usually chosen as focus; in (20b), the patient, in (20c), the recipient, in (20d), the possessor, in (20e) the goal and, in (20f), the time distribution are chosen as focus:

- (20) a. *Hama - liangge qhichai nga - ha ka - gu - lio.*
 parents - two:SPEC car I:DAT - FOC give - CMT - PRF
 'My parents gave the car to me.'
- b. *Ngu huacek-de - ge - ha lak - la - gu - lio.*
 I camera - SPEC - FOC lose - EXT - CMT - PRF
 'I lost my camera.'
- c. *Nga - ha pio shek - li mi - lai.*
 I:DAT - FOC ticket hand - in NEG - come
 'I didn't get the ticket.'
- d. *Apa - ha nek do yek li.*
 father - FOC yak many exist DISJ.TEST
 '[My] father has many yaks.'
- e. *Gu cokdde - ha qhi - de - ge mang - ma,*
 he meeting - FOC go - STS - SPEC be.busy - RLS
huan ra xhe - ma mi - lio.
 food also drink - RLS NEG - finish
 'He was so busy to go to the meeting that he could not finish eating.'
- f. *Gejhai dico yizek - ha din - gu - lio ze li.*
 himself hour one - FOC wait - CMT - PRF DO DISJ.TEST
 'He has waited for an hour.'

Moreover, when a role in the actor-complex is part of the comment, it can be chosen as focus. In (21a), the causee and, in (21b), the experiencer are chosen as focus:

- (21) a. *Gu nga - ha pa kan qhi sho li.*
 he I:DAT - FOC friend see go tell DISJ.TEST
 'He told me to go see a friend.'
- b. *Gu - ha e - di li.*
 he - FOC be.hungry - PROG DISJ.TEST
 'He is hungry.'

Finally, the *-ha*-construction is a device for changing the pragmatic relations of the semantic roles, while the argument structure remains unchanged. The Wutun *-ha*-construction functions so that, in the Wutun equivalent of the Chinese *ba*-construction, the unmarked agent is the topic and takes the initial position, and the *-ha*-marked patient, which is both topical and focal, takes a position inside the comment. In the Wutun equivalent of the Chinese *bei*-construction, on the other hand, the *-ha*-marked patient, which is both topical and focal, takes the initial position. In Wutun, the constituent marked by *-ha* and all the constituents that follow it belong to the comment in the basic topic-comment relation. Thus, when the *-ha*-marked patient takes the initial position, the agent is detopicalized and removed from the topic relation into the comment. As an NP

inside the verb phrase, the agent is now both topical and focal, and has a status that is very similar to the status of the agent of the Chinese *bei*-construction. Moreover, since both the agent and the patient are present in the *-ha*-construction, the verb in the *-ha*-construction can take any orientation allowed by the system.

Example (22) shows *-ha*-constructions in the function of the Chinese *ba*-construction with varying orientations of the verb. In (22a), the verb taking the completive complement *-gu* is patient orientated; in (22b), the verb taking the causative complement *-ge* is causee orientated; in (22c), the verb taking the resultative complement *-she* is agent orientated; and, in (22d), the verb taking the progressive marker *-di* is agent orientated:

- (22) a. *Gek shai - ha nio se - gu - lio.*
 dog:TOP/S snake - FOC bite die - CMT - PRF
 'The dog bite the snake dead.'
- b. *Ngu-de wa gu maqo - ha*
 my son:TOP/S that bird - FOC
hi - gu - ge - lio ze li.
 fly - CMT - CAUS - PRF DO DISJ.TEST
 'My son has let the bird fly away.'
- c. *Gejhai mian - ha momo ze - ma*
 self:TOP/S dough - FOC steamed.bread DO - RLS
rek - she - ma li.
 roll - RST - RES DISJ.TEST
 'The dough has been rolled into steamed bread by me.'
- d. *Ngu nia - ha din - di yek.*
 I:TOP/S you - FOC wait - PROG CONJ.EGOPH
 'I am waiting for you.'

Example (23) shows *-ha*-constructions in the function of the Chinese *bei*-construction with varying orientations of the verb. In the passive *-ha*-construction, the verb often takes the perfective aspect-marker *-lio* followed by the third person testimonial evidential *li*. This structure shows the distance and the non-active role of the speaker, seen in (23a), and in (23c), while, in (23b), where the speaker is in the agent role, this structure is not used. In (23a), and in (23b), the verb taking the completive complement *-gu* is patient orientated; while, in (23c), the verb taking the resultative complement *-she* is agent orientated:

- (23) a. *Haba - ha qhichai nia si - gu - lio ze li.*
 dog - FOC car knock die - CMT - PRF DO DISJ.TEST
 'The dog has been knocked dead by the car.'
- b. *Je huaiqa - ha ngu kan - gu - lio.*
 this book - FOC I read - CMT - PRF
 'This book was read by me.'
- c. *Bianshe - ha gek qe - she - lio ze li.*
 dumpling - FOC dog eat - RST - PRF DO DISJ.TEST
 'The dumplings have been eaten by the dog.'

As (22) and (23) show, in addition to the topic, which shows the primary perspective, and the focus, which shows a secondary perspective, Wutun has a 'voice-like' verb re-categorization system where a voice complement can be added to change the orientation of the verb itself. The system has the following voice complements:

-la 'extent'

The voice complement *-la* expresses extension in space or time (cf. Burmese, Wheatley 2003: 203). It is partly lexicalized into the verb stem, especially with verbs of Tibetan origin. It is common with verbs expressing state, as in (24a); process, as in (24b); displacement or transition, as in (24c); and verbal act, as in (24d):

(Qinghai minzu xueyuan 1983: 44(c), 45(a), alysis mine)

- (24) a. *Ngan-de paye hen yak - la yek.*
 Our home.land very be.beautiful - EXT CONJ.EGOPH
 'Our home land is very beautiful.'
- b. *Qodian jek - la - gu - lio ze li.*
 pagoda collapse - EXT - CMT - PRF DO DISJ.TEST
 'The pagoda has collapsed.'
- c. *Jhoze yak - la - de - ge zzhek - la - she!*
 table be.nice - EXT - STR - SPEC put - EXT - RST
 'Put the table nicely!'
- d. *Ni bai - qhi,*
 you NEG:IMP - go
nia Lama ssung - la - di yek, gu a...
 you:DAT lama say - EXT - PROG CONJ.EGOPH that MOD
 'Don't go, the Lama says it to you, doesn't he, ...'

It is also used with all types of verbs to express purpose, intention or possibility, as shown in (25):

- (25) *Je yi jian - li chong liang - ge*
 this one room - in bed two - SPEC
hong - she qhe li
 put - RST be.possible DISJ.TEST
liang - ge ren qhu - la li.
 two - SPEC person live - EXT DISJ.TEST
 'It is possible to put two beds in this one room for two people to live [in it].'

-she 'resultative'

The voice complement *-she* is agent orientated and expresses that the action by the agent has been finished with a result. It can be used in active sentences that express the action and the result, as in (26a); or in resultative sentences that express the result of an action, as in (26b):

- (26) a. *Ngü men so - she - lio.*
 I door lock - RST - PRF
 'I locked the door.'

- b. *Zek - she huazhe - ge gua - she - ma li.*
 wall - on picture - SPEC hang - RST - RES DISJ.TEST
 'There is a picture hanging on the wall.'

-*gu* 'completive'

The voice complement *-gu* is patient orientated and expresses that the action that the patient undergoes has reached an endpoint. It is typically used in passive sentences, where, in the absence of the agent, the verb must be patient orientated, as shown in (27):

- (27) *Ngu-de dico tek - gu - lio ze li.*
 my watch steal - CMT - PRF DO DISJ.TEST
 'My watch has been stolen.'

Similarly, when verb serialization is applied to form complex resultative verbs, the latter verb, expressing the result, must be patient orientated, taking the voice complement *-gu*, as shown in (28):

- (28) *Ngu laixa xai - ma lio - gu - lio.*
 I homework write - RLS finish - CMT - PRF
 'I got my homework finished.'

The voice complement *-gu* can also be used to express change with stative or anticausative verbs, as in (29a); to mark a spatial end point, as in (29b); or to mark a temporal end point, as in (29c):

- (29) a. *Ngu-de ana lo - gu - ma li.*
 my mother be.old - CMT - RES DISJ.TEST
 'My mother has turned old.'
- b. *Ren yidaze lai - gu - lio ze li.*
 people all come - CMT - PRF DO DISJ.TEST
 'All the people have arrived.'
- c. *Xo Wang san nian - na jjha yek*
 Xo.Wang three year - DAT Chinese language
jjhang - la - gu - lio ze li.
 study - EXT - CMT - PRF DO DISJ.TEST
 'Xo Wang has been studying Chinese for three years [until now].'

-*ge* 'causative'

The voice complement *-ge* is receptor/causee orientated and gives the verb an applicative or a causative meaning. Example (30) shows the applicative meaning with verbs *quan-ge* 'to put on' in (30a) and *to-gu-ge* 'to take off' in (30b), and the causative meaning with the verb *xhe-ge* 'to cause to drink' in (30c):

- (30) a. *Ana galamala - ha xen quandi*
 mother child - FOC new clothes
quan- ge - di li.
 put.on - CAUS - PROG DISJ.TEST
 'Mother is putting new clothes on the child.'

- b. *Adia... zhawa - de ro - ha... mai - she - ma*
 monk disciple - STR dead.body - FOC bury - RST - RLS
zanxhan yidaze to - gu - ge - ma...
 coat all.together take.off - CMT - CAUS - RLS
 'The monk...buried the body of the disciple..., and took off the coat with all the clothes (for him), and...'
- c. *Gu - jhege nga - ha zek xaige xhe - ge - lio.*
 he - PAUC I:DAT - FOC wine much drink - CAUS - PRF
 'They made me drink a lot of wine.'

The voice complement *-ge* may also give a verb an optative meaning, as in (31a), or it may change a stative verb active for imperative marking, as in (31b):

- (31) a. *Ngu gu - ha da lai - ge - zhe.*
 I he - FOC then come - CAUS - IMM.FUT
 'I wish him to come.'
- b. *Kuai - ge da, che - gu - lio.*
 be.quick - CAUS IMP be.late - CMT - PRF
 'Quickly, or else [you] will be late!'

qhi (go)/ *lai* (come) 'purposive'

The voice complements *qhi* 'go' and *lai* 'come' give the verb a purposive meaning, as shown in (32), where, in (32a), the purposive verb is *qhi* 'go'; and, in (32b), the purposive verb is *lai* 'come':

- (32) a. *Gu pa kan qhi - gu - lio.*
 he friend see go - CMT - PRF
 'He went to see a friend.'
- b. *Da xhe lai ba,*
 now drink come MOD
ngu - jhege xhe - de jjorai kada ze lai.
 I - PAUC eat - STR while conversation DO will
 'Come to eat, we will talk while eating.'

sho (tell) 'jussive'

The voice complement *sho* 'tell' gives the verb a jussive meaning, as shown in (33):

- (33) *Nia nga a - ge qan sho li?*
 you:DAT I:DAT who - SPEC advise tell DISJ.TEST
 'Who told you to advise me?'

4. COMPLEX STRUCTURES IN THE WUTUN LANGUAGE

Both Chinese and Tibetan are languages where the concatenation of verbs together with their arguments leads to the levelling of the semantic contrast between the component clauses at the syntactic level of complex sentences. The linkage is coordinate and the

order of complement clauses iconic. Wutun, which shows a strong Tibetan influence in complex sentences that take the form of converbal constructions, has a small number of clause linkage markers, attached on medial verbs and showing various temporal–aspectual or relational meanings, while the shared verbal categories are marked only once on the final verb. The interpretation of the markers depends on the level of the linkage, and the same markers may occur at different levels of the structure. As defined by Bisang (1995: 145), structures corresponding to verb serialization in a broad sense, including juxtaposition, modifying verb serialization, governing verb serialization, etc., and structures corresponding to verb serialization in a narrow sense, including resultative verbs, directional verbs, tense-aspect-mood verbs, coverbs, etc., are found in Wutun also.

Similar to Tibetan, serial verb constructions and converbal structures occur together in Wutun and are best analyzed in an analogous way. In descriptions of linear sequences of successive events, where the successive clauses are in a temporal–adverbial relationship with each other, the non-final verbs take the realis-marker *-ma*, while, in descriptions where a conditional–temporal relation is established between two events, the non-final verbs take the irrealis-marker *-ra* (*-la*), and finally, in modifying constructions, in which a modal, an aspectual, or an evidential statement, or a statement of quality or degree, is added on the description of an event, the non-final verbs take the status-marker *-de* (*-di*). In addition, adverbial elements, such as *-ra* 'also' and *-da* 'then', can be used to add a concessive, purposive, or consequential meaning, and aspectual elements, such as *-gu* 'completive', *-di* 'progressive' and *-ta* 'phase', can be added to express anteriority, immediacy, or phase change.

The order of the clauses in complex sentences follows the principle of iconicity so that, with the realis-marker *-ma*, the order of the clauses follows the temporal order of the events, with the irrealis-marker *-ra* (*-la*), the first clause presents an event, and the second clause establishes a relation, and, with the status-marker *-de* (*-di*), the first clause presents an event, and the second clause gives a modal, aspectual, or some other evaluation. The iconicity of the order can be seen in (34), where the clause linkage marker in (34a) is the irrealis-marker *-ra*; in (34b) and in (34c), the realis-marker *-ma*; and, in (34d), the status-marker *-de*:

- (34) a. *Ya da kek be - tin - la - da,*
 well then mouth NEG - listen - IRL - then
 'Well, since (you) don't listen the advice, then
- b. *nia ra yen - she, sho - ma,*
 you:DAT also take.along - RST say - RLS
 '[I] will take you along', said [the monk], and then,
- c. *da adia - da zhawa liang - ge du*
 then monk - and disciple two - SPEC alone
 then the monk and the disciple the two of them
jaze bi - she - ma,
 basket carry.on.back - RST - RSL
 took baskets on their back, and then
- d. *xhen - dio (- de yo) - de re.*
 walk - must (- STS must) - STS DISJ.FACT
 had to start walking.'

The above markers may occur at various levels of the structure, the interpretation depending on the tightness of the linkage, as can be seen in the case of the irrealis-marker *-ra* in (35), where (35a) is a structure which has a temporal–conditional meaning and corresponds to a modifying construction in verb serialization in a broad sense; (35b) is a structure which expresses a propositional attitude and corresponds to a governing construction in verb serialization in a broad sense, and (35c) is a structure which expresses a modal meaning and corresponds to tense–aspect–mood verbs in verb serialization in a narrow sense:

- (35) a. *Gu nia - ha nguwo song - ra,*
 he he:DAT - FOC thing present - IRL
nia gga - la - di - de bai li.
 you:DAT like - EXT - PROG - STS not.be DISJ.TEST
 'Although he gives things to you, it does not mean that he loves you.'
- b. *Ngu ddang - da - ra, ni bai - qhi.*
 I think - make - IRL you should.not - go
 'I feel that you should not go.'
- c. *Ngu-de yenze - de ban - ge hen - gu - ra*
 my money -STR half - SPEC divide - CMT - IRL
ddo - la li.
 want - EXT DISJ.TEST
 'I want to share half of my money.'

Moreover, in the same construction, different choices of the marker are often possible. Example (36) shows the resultative construction, where, in (36a), the construction has a resultative meaning and so the realis-marker *-ma* is chosen, while, in (36b), the structure has a potential meaning and so the status-marker *-de* is chosen:

- (36) a. *Gu yidaze qe - ma lio - gu - ge - ma li.*
 he all eat - RLS finish - CMT - CAUS - RES DISJ.TEST
 'He has eaten up everything.'
- b. *Ngu huan xhe - de lio - gu - ge*
 I food drink - STS finish - CMT - CAUS
be - qhe li.
 NEG - be.able DISJ.TEST
 'I cannot finish my food.'

Structures corresponding to verb serialization in a narrow sense are shown in (37–41). Example (37) shows resultative and directional verbs. The structure can be simple, i.e. the verbs together describe one event and have a shared argument structure, as shown in (37a), or the structure can be complex, i. e. there is partial overlapping of descriptions of two events and a partial sharing of arguments between the two verbs, as shown in (37b–d). With resultative verbs, the second verb is always patient orientated. If the structure is complex, the second verb must take the voice complement *-gu*, as in (37b), or some other marker of patient orientation. With directional verbs, the second verb may be patient orientated, as in (37c), or agent orientated, as in (37d):

- (37) a. *Ni huaiga kan man - lio - gu - la,*
 you book read finish - PRF - CMT - IRL
nga - ha qen qhui - la ka.
 I:OBL - FOC give go.out - STS give
 'When you have finished the book, give it back to me.'
- b. *Jjhangdai - she yegai xai - ma man - gu - ma li.*
 exercise.book - on letter write - RLS be.full - CMT - RES DISJ.TEST
 'The exercise book has been written full of letters.'
- c. *Rek je gejhai tai - ma qhi - gu - lio ze li.*
 meet this self take - RLS go - CMT - PRF DO DISJ.TEST
 'He took the meat away.'
- d. *Cairang cha tai - ma lai - lio.*
 Tserang tea take - RLS come - PRF
 'Tserang brought the tea.'

Example (38) shows tense-aspect-mood verbs. Tense-aspect-mood verbs have aspect complements, such as the inceptive aspect complement *kai* 'start' in (38a), the inchoative aspect complement *qhe* 'get, become' in (38b), and the purposive aspect complement *lai* 'come, will' in (38c); and modal complements, such as the complement verb *qhe* 'be able' in (38d), and the complement verb *qhen* 'manage' in (38e):

- (38) a. *Je - ge awu kuu kai - da liotek mi - yek.*
 this - SPEC boy cry start - then end NEG - exist
 'This boy burst out crying endlessly.'
- b. *Ngu - jhege do - di - da, Caimojhe Ayi - ra*
 I - PAUC arrive - PROG - then Caimojhe ant - and
gejhai - de nixhe Caimojjhai - liangge gga - la qhe - lio.
 self - STR daughter Caimojjhai - two be.happy - EXT get - PRF
 'Once we arrived, ant Caimojhe and her daughter Caimojjhai got happy.'
- c. *Gu tiyi ze - ma, ngu - jhege yidaze*
 I suggestion DO - RLS I - PAUC all
bianshe qe qhi lai, sho li.
 dumpling eat go will say DISJ.TEST
 'He suggested that all of us would go to eat dumplings.'
- d. *Gu je - ge ganqongzangma - ge*
 he this - SPEC suitcase be.clean - CAUS
xi - gu qhe - de bai li.
 wash - CMT be.able - STS not.be DISJ.TEST
 'He is not able to wash this suitcase clean.'
- e. *Ana ra nga sho - ma*
 mother also I:DAT say - RLS
xinfu - ge - gu be - qen li.
 be.convinced - CAUS - CMT NEG - manage DISJ.TEST
 'Even my mother saying [it] cannot convince me.'

Examples (39–41) show coverbs. Coverbs are verbs that add a meaning to the meaning of the main verb. Various deontic and epistemic meanings can be added by existential verbs, such as *yek* 'exist' in (39a) and *mi* 'not exist' in (39b), and equative verbs, such as *hai* 'be' in (39c) and *bai* 'not be' in (39d), or modal verbs, such as *yo* 'must' in (39e):

(Qinghai minzu xueyuan 1983: 39 (e), analysis mine)

- (39) a. *Gu ngu - jhege - de yida qhi - de yek.*
 he I- PAUC -STR together go - STS exist
 'He is willing to go together with us.'
- b. *Gu ni ddang - da - di - de gu - dera*
 he you think - make - PROG - STS that - PL
qe - di mi li.
 eat - PROG not.exist DISJ.TEST
 'He is thinking you so much [that] he cannot eat anything.'
- c. *Gu jhege - dera mi - jhan - de hai li - a!*
 he some - PL NEG - see - STS be DISJ.TEST - MOD
 'How could he have been unable not to have seen those!'
- d. *Gu ngoma-de lai - de re,*
 he surely come - STS DISJ.FACT
be - lai - de bai li.
 NEG - come - STS not.be DISJ.TEST
 'He will surely come, [he] can't be not coming.'
- e. *Dang-de sa, kuai - de yo li!*
 fast run be.quick - STS need DISJ.TEST
 'Run fast, you need to go quickly!'

Coverbs can also add an aspectual meaning, such a durative meaning by the durative verb *co* 'stay' in (40a), or they can add an evidential meaning, such as a factual meaning by the factual verb *re* 'be' in (40b), a testimonial meaning by the testimonial verb *li* 'come' in (40c), or an evidential meaning by an evidential verb, such as *xang* 'look like' in (40d), or *jedo* 'feel' in (40e):

(Qinghai minzu xueyuan 1983: 51 (d), analysis mine)

- (40) a. *Gu ren - jhege - de xenqhi gaga-de*
 he person - PAUC - STR voice small
sho - di - de gu guan - di mi li,
 say - PROG - STR that notice - PROG not.exist DISJ.TEST
han menzai sho - de co - di li.
 still like.that say - STS stay - PROG DISJ.TEST
 'Not noticing the people talking in a low voice, he continued to go on speaking.'
- b. *Gu ra da jhi tian xai - ra kek - de re*
 he also then some days rest - IRL be.possible - STS DISJ.FACT
 'He is also now able to rest a couple of days.'
- c. *Dondak gu - ge ren - dera*
 thing that - SPEC person - PL
jedo - gu - lio ze li.
 know - CMT - PRF DO DISJ.TEST
 'That thing has been noticed by people.'

- d. *Yi-tian laiga wanlan - ma - da*
 whole.day work do - RLS - then
hua - de jedo - lio.
 be.exhausted - STS feel PRF
 'Having been working the whole day, he felt exhausted.'
- e. *Gu chong - she co - she - ma, goba - ge*
 he bed - on sit - RST - RLS way - SPEC
ddang - da - di - de - ge xang li.
 think - make - PROG - STS - SPEC seem DISJ.TEST
 'He sat on the bed, and looked like he was thinking what to do.'

Moreover, the imperative verb *hong* 'put' in (41a) adds an imperative meaning; the purposive verb *qhi* 'go' in (41b) adds a purposive meaning; and the applicative verb *ka* 'give' in (41c) adds an applicative meaning:

(Qinghai minzu xueyuan 1983: 46 (a), analysis mine)

- (41) a. *Ngü - a ssawa ssawa - ge sho - de hong!*
 I - DAT clear.clear - CAUS say - STS put
 'Make (it) clear to me!'
- b. *Ni jhang zio xhui - de qhi - zha?*
 you today swim - STS go - IMM.FUT:QST
 'Are you going to swim today?'
- c. *Ngü nia yegai xai - de bi - ge yo - de ka.*
 I you:DAT letter write - STR pencil - SPEC borrow - STS give
 'I will lend you a pencil to write letters.'

Structures corresponding to verb serialization in a broad sense involve first of all temporal-adverbial constructions taking the clause linkage marker *-ma*, such as in (42–44). In (42a), the latter clause gives the purpose for the action described in the former clause; in (42b), the former clause gives the reason; in (42c), it gives the means; and in (42d), it gives the manner for the action described in the latter clause. The order of the clauses is iconic, either sequential or simultaneous:

- (42) a. *Ngü bangongshe - li qhi - ma*
 I office - in go - RLS
dianhua da - ma manba qho dai.
 telephone make.a.call - RLS doctor call VOL
 'I went to the office to make a phone call to call for a doctor.'
- b. *Xhui da - ma qo gang - gu - lio ze li.*
 water be.big - RLS bridge flush - CMT - PRF DO DISJ.TEST
 'Because the water is flooding, it carried the bridge away.'
- c. *Gaigan xitai nama maco gu - la - ma*
 teacher method all.kinds use - EXT - RLS
ngu - jhege - ha lhoche ze - lio.
 I - PAUC - FOC teaching DO - PRF
 'The teacher was teaching us by means of using all kinds of methods'
- d. *Gu nian hong - gu - ma sho - di li.*
 he face red - CMT - RLS say - PROG DISJ.TEST
 'He speaks blushing.'

Example (43) shows a sequence of several successive events, where the order of the clauses is iconic with the temporal order of the events:

- (43) *Adia yi-qang kuu - ma,*
 monk a.while cry - RLS
zhawa - de ro - ha tu - li xema - li mai - she - ma,
 monk - STR dead.body - FOC earth - in sand - in bury - RST - RLS
zaxhan yidaze to - gu - ge - ma,
 coat all.together take.off - CMT - CAUS - RLS
gejhai tai - she - ma, bi - she - ma,
 himself fold - RST - RLS take.on.the.back - RST - RLS
da menzai tek san - ge ke - gu - ma,
 then so kowtow three - SPEC kowtow - CMT - RLS
adia shang qhi - gu - lio.
 monk go.up go - CMT - PRF

'The monk cried for a while, and then [he] buried the body of the disciple into the earth, and took off the coat with all the clothes, and then he folded them himself, and then took them on his back, and so then kowtowed three times, and after that the monk continued further up towards [Tibet].'

The adverbial element *-da* 'then' can be used together with the realis-marker *-ma* to emphasize the consequential relationship, or it can be used together with the progressive element *-di* to emphasize immediacy, as shown in (44):

- (44) *Tin qhe - di - da da,*
 get.sick get - PROG - then then
zhawa - de mi - ho - ma - da,
 disciple - STR NEG - be.good - RLS - then
xhen li xhen li - da,
 walk DISJ.TEST walk DISJ.TEST - then
zhawa mi - wa - la - ma - da,
 disciple NEG - have.means - EXT - RLS - then
banlu - she da zhawa se - gu - lio - de re.
 halfway - on then disciple die - CMT - PRF - STS DISJ.FACT
 'Once the disciple got ill, his [condition] did not get any better, and [they] walked and walked, and then the disciple couldn't any more, and so on the way, the disciple died.'

Second, structures corresponding to verb serialization in a broad sense involve temporal–conditional constructions taking the clause linkage marker *-ra (-la)*, such as in (45–54). In (45a), the verb takes the irrealis-marker *-ra (-la)*, and the structure will get a meaning, such as 'if (sth will happen) ..., then ...'; in (45b), the verb takes the status-marker *-de* followed by the irrealis-marker *-ra (-la)*, and the structure will get a meaning, such as 'if (sth would have happened) ..., then ...'; in (45c, 45d), the verb takes the irrealis-marker *-ra (-la)* followed by the adverbial element *-da* 'then', and the structure will get a meaning, such as 'if only...', 'only if...' or 'since...'. In each case the first verb presents a topic and the second verb establishes a relation:

(Chen 1986: 39 (b,c), analysis mine)

- (45) a. *Ngu nia be - wanlan sho - ra,*
 I you:DAT NEG - do tell - IRL
ni zui ho be - wanlan - da ho li.
 you be.best NEG - do - then be.good DISJ.TEST
 'If I tell you not to do [it], then you should not do [it].'
 b. *Nia - ha yoshe mi - de jedo - de - ra,*
 you:DAT - FOC key no.exist - STS know - STS - IRL
ngu men so - de bai li.
 I door lock - STS not.be DISJ.TEST
 'If I had known that you don't have a key, I wouldn't have locked the door.'
 c. *Nang-nga ka - ra - da shai - li lai!*
 home give - IRL - then home - in come
 'If only you get free, come home!'
 d. *Da kek be - tin - la - da,*
 then mouth NEG - listen - IRL - then
nia ra yen - she sho - ma,...
 you:DAT also lead - RST say - RLS
 'Since you don't listen, I'll take you with [me], [he] said, and then...'

In (46), the verb takes the irrealis-marker *-ra (-la)* followed by the adverbial element *-ra* 'also', and the structure will get a meaning, such as 'although', 'even if':

- (46) *Jhitang - ha pan - la - gu - la - ra,*
 many.times - FOC fail - EXT - CMT - IRL - also
ye be - qai - la li.
 heart NEG - broke - EXT DISJ.TEST
 'Even if I failed many times, [I] would not lose my heart.'

In (47a), the verb takes the irrealis-marker *-ra (-la)* preceded by the aspectual element *-ta* 'phase', and the structure gets a meaning 'until'; in (47b), the verb takes the irrealis-marker *-ra (-la)* followed by the adverbial element *-da* 'then', and the structure gets a meaning 'when'; and, in (47c), the verb takes the irrealis-marker *-ra (-la)* preceded by the aspectual element *-gu* 'completive', and the structure gets a meaning 'after':

- (47) a. *Zang - li do - ta - la,*
 Tibet - in arrive - PHS - IRL
san - ge yai - ma she-wu tian
 Three - SPEC month - and fifteen day
xhen dio - de re, sho li.
 walk must - STS DISJ.FACT REPORT TEST
 'Until arriving in Tibet, [one] must walk three months and fifteen days that's what people say.'
 b. *San - ge yai - ma she-wu tian xhen - la - da,*
 three - SPEC month - and fifteen day walk - IRL - then
Zang - li do - di men-de - ge hai li.
 Tibet - in arrive - PROG like.that - SPEC be DISJ.TEST
 'When having been walking three months and fifteen days, then [one] will arrive in Tibet, it used to be like that.'

- c. *Zang jja - la - gu - la,*
 Tibet visit - EXT - CMT - IRL
waiqai yek mi - yek, ajia - ge yek - de - ge da
 hardship exist NEG - exist monk - SPEC exist - STR - SPEC then
dangma da alek - ge xu - la - ma...
 long.ago then lama - SPEC ask - EXT - RLS
 'After leaving for Tibet, whether there would be hardships, there was a monk
 that went to ask a lama [this] long ago, and...'

Moreover, the irrealis-marker *-ra (-la)* can be used in many grammaticalized structures. It can be attached to a verb describing an action or a state to add a modal (deontic) evaluation, as shown in (48), where, in (48a), the modal verb is *kek* 'be possible', and, in (48b), the modal verb is *ddo-la* 'want':

- (48) a. *Nga-mu qhichai mai - la be - kek yek.*
 I:DAT-ASS car buy - IRL NEG - be.possible CONJ.EGOPH
 'We cannot buy a car.'
 b. *Ngu ssama qe - la be - ddo - la li.*
 I food eat - IRL NEG - want - EXT DISJ.TEST
 'I don't want to eat.'

If the emphasis is on the effect, the realis-marker *-ma* is chosen instead of *-ra (-la)*, as shown in (49a), where the modal verb is *ma-la* 'have no means', and if the emphasis is on the consequence, the adverbial element *-da* 'then' is chosen, as shown in (49b), where the modal verb is *wa-la* 'have means':

- (49) a. *Rai - ma, men - ma,*
 hot - RLS suffocate - RLS
daxi co - ma ma - la li.
 these.days live - RLS have.no.means - EXT DISJ.TEST
 'It is hot and suffocating, and so life has been impossible these days.'
 b. *Adia, ni*
 monk you
zang jja - la - gu - da wa - la li.
 Tibet visit - EXT - CMT - then have.means - EXT DISJ.TEST
 'Monk, it's possible for you to visit Tibet.'

The irrealis-marker *-ra (-la)* can also be attached to a verb describing an action to give an interrogative pronoun a universal meaning, such as 'whatever', 'whoever', 'wherever' etc., as shown in (50), where, in (50a), the interrogative gets the meaning 'whatever', and, in (50b) it gets the meaning 'wherever':

- (Chen 1986: 38 (a), analysis mine)
 (50) a. *Gejhai - jhege ma - ge wanlan - ra*
 himself - PAUC what - SPEC do - IRL
wanlan - ge, nowa bai - ze!
 do - CAUS stop NEG.IMP - DO
 'Whatever they do, let them do, don't stop (them)!'

- b. *A - li hai - la, menzai, lha hua - ma*
 where - in be - IRL so God paint - RLS
da menzai wanlan - di - de - ge hai li.
 then so do - PROG - STS - SPEC be DISJ.TEST
 'Wherever you may be, it is like that, [they] go everywhere painting tankas.'

Furthermore, the irrealis-marker *-ra* (*-la*) can be attached to some verbs to form a conventionalized structure. The verb *kan* 'look' followed by the irrealis-marker *-ra* is used to form a comparative structure, shown in (51):

- (51) *Je - ge ban - de lhoma kan - la*
 this - SPEC class - STR student look - IRL
gu ban - de lhoma wu - ge do.
 that class - STR student five - SPEC be.many
 'Compared to this class, that class has five students more.'

The verb phrase *huai hong* 'to put an example' or *yang jjhok* 'to lift an example' followed by the status-marker *-de* and the irrealis-marker *-ra* forms a structure with a meaning 'for example', as shown in (52), where the verb in (52a) is *huai hong* 'put an example', and the verb in (52b) is *yang jjhok* 'to lift an example':

- (52) a. *Zang - de banlu - she da huai hong - de - ra*
 Tibet - STR half.way - on then example put - STS - IRL
yi - ge yai - ma shewu tian...
 one - SPEC month - and fifteen day
 'Half way to Tibet, for example something like one month and fifteen days or so, ...'
- b. *...ngan-de je - ge Raigong be - ten - de*
 our:ASS this - SPEC Regong NEG - be.in.harmony - STR
yang jjhok - la - de - ra,
 example lift - EXT - STS - IRL
Zang - de hua ra zaige do li,...
 Tibet - STR words also quite be.much DISJ.TEST
 'where our this [language] differs from Regong, to take an example, so there is also quite a lot of Tibetan in it, [but]...'

Moreover, the irrealis-marker *-ra* (*-la*) can be attached to the verb phrase *sho qhi* 'say go' to give a definition; or it can be attached to the verb phrase *kan qhi* 'look go' to give an epistemic evaluation, as is shown in (53), where the verb phrase in (53a) is *sho qhi* 'say go'; and the verb phrase in (53b) is *kan qhi* 'look go':

- (Lee-Smith 1996: 895 (b), analysis mine)
- (53) a. *Je - ge - de rejjen ngoma zzhamo*
 this - SPEC - STR tanka.tradition essence that.kind.of
sho - ma qhi - la,
 say - RLS go - IRL
da Waiwo - de zzojjen hai yek, ...
 then Nepal - STR painting.tradition be CONJ.EGOPH
 'To say the essence of this tanka tradition, then it is a Nepal painting tradition, ...'

- b. *Ngan-jhai - de nani - dera sho - lio - de - ge*
 ourselves - STR ancestor - PL say - PRF - STS - SPEC
kan - ma qhi - ra
 look - RLS go - IRL
Nanjing - ra Sichuan - ra lai - lio - de.
 Nanjing - ABL Sichuan - ABL come - PRF - STS
 'Our ancestors say that it looks like they come from Nanjing and Sichuan.'

The irrealis-marker *-ra (-la)* can also be attached to verbs of being to introduce a theme, or to verbs of saying or thinking to introduce a verbal act, as is shown in (54), where the verb, in (54a), is *hai* 'be' and, in (54b), *ddang-da* 'think':

- (54) a. *Ayi - jhege hai - la,*
 woman - PAUC be - IRL
zowo da tian zhong - ma...
 the.most.important then field cultivate - RLS
 'As for women, the most important for them is to work in the field,...'
 b. *Ngu ddang - da - ra, ni bai - qhi.*
 I think - make - IRL you should.not - go
 'I think that you should not go.'

Finally, structures corresponding to verb serialization in a broad sense involve modifying structures taking the clause linkage marker *-de (-di)*, such as in (55–56). In (55a), the irrealis-marker *-ra* is used to introduce an activity, and then the status-marker *-de* is attached to the verb of activity to add a statement about the quality of the activity. In (55b), the status-marker *-de* is attached to a verb describing a state to add a statement about the degree of the intensity of the state:

- (55) a. *Gu huaiqa nian - ra nian - de kuaili ya.*
 he book read - IRL read - STS be.fast DISJ.TEST MOD
 'As for reading a book, he reads very fast.'
 b. *Gu ni ddo - di - de*
 hey ou like - PROG - STS
gu - dera qe - di mi li.
 that - PL eat - PROG not.exist DISJ.TEST
 'He is likes you so much that he is not eating anything.'

If the activity or the state for which a statement of the quality or of the degree of the intensity is added is taking place in space and time, the realis-marker *-ma* can be used, as shown in (56), where (56a) describes the quality of an activity, and (56b) the degree of the intensity of a state:

- (56) a. *Gu sa - ma kuai li.*
 he run - RLS be.fast DISJ.TEST
 'He runs fast.'
 b. *Gu gga - la - ma*
 ta be.happy - EXT - RLS
nianze xian - ge bian - gu - ma li.
 eye line - SPEC change - CMT - RES DISJ.TEST
 'He is so happy that his eyes are narrowed into a line from laughter.'

5. CONCLUSION

In this article, I have shown that Wutun is best analyzed as a topic-prominent language where the basic relation of topic-comment in simple sentences is reflected in the structure of complex sentences in the coordinate nature of the linkage and in the iconicity of the order of component clauses. I have shown that the basic sentence structure in Wutun is best analyzed in the light of its origin in the Mandarin grammar and that the Tibetan influence is shown in converbial constructions, which follow the same principles as the coordinate clause connectives in Tibetan.

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TOPIKALIZACIJA I KO-ORDINATNE KONVERBALNE STRUKTURE U JEZIKU VUTUN

Marja Kaurila

Vutun je jezik u kome pojava različitih nivoa tranzitivnosti i posebnog markiranja semantičkih i pragmatičkih uloga dovode do stvaranja rečenične strukture koje ukazuju na različite stepene naglašenosti sa obzirom na izloženu topikalnost. Labavi odnos koji postoji između glagola i njegovih argumenata u osnovnoj rečenici reflektuje se na strukture složenih rečenica u kojima se glagoli zajedno sa svojim argumentima nalaze u konkatenciji i prerastaju u serijalne ili konverbalne konstrukcije. Obavezna postavka u komponencijalnim klauzama kako u deskripciji rečeničnih sukcesivnih događaja tako i u deskripciji semantičke relacije između dva događaja nije diktirana samo skupom semantičkih pravila već i ikoničnošću koja je prisutna u ko-ordinatnim strukturama.

Ključne reči: *topikalizacija, tranzitivnost, tema, fokus, glagolska serijalizacija, konverbalna konstrukcija, glagolska rekatégorizacija*