

## Copula Constructions in Rawang\*

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This paper discusses the various uses of the copula in the Rawang language, a Tibeto-Burman language of northern Myanmar, plus other types of copula like-constructions, with data taken mainly from naturally occurring texts.

Key words: Rawang, Tibeto-Burman, copula constructions, Sino-Tibetan

### 1. Introduction

The people who speak the Rawang language (possibly as many as 40,000 people) live in the far north of Kachin State in Myanmar (Burma), particularly along the Mae Hka ('Nmai Hka) and Maeli Hka (Mali Hka) river valleys. In the past they had been called 'Hkanung' or 'Nung', and have often been considered to be a sub-group of the Kachin. They are closely related to people on the other side of the Chinese border classified as either Dulong or Nu(ng) (see LaPolla 2001, 2003 on Dulong). In this paper, I will be discussing the copula constructions found in Rawang, using data of the Mvtwang (Mvt River) dialect of Rawang, which is considered the most central of those dialects in Myanmar and so has become something of a standard for writing and inter-group communication.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In the Rawang writing system (Morse 1962, 1963), which is used in this paper, most letters represent the standard pronunciations of English, except that *i* = [i], *v* = [ə], *a* = [a], *o* = [u], *q* = [ʔ], and *c* = [s] or [ts] (free variation; historically [ts]). Tones are marked as follows (using the letter *a* as a base): high falling tone: *á*, mid tone: *ā*, low falling tone: *à*. All syllables that end in a stop consonant (-p, -t, -q, -k) are in the high tone. Open syllables without a tone mark are unstressed. A colon marks non-basic long vowels. Four lines are used in the examples because of the many morphophonological changes that obscure the morpheme boundaries.

## 2. Typological overview

Rawang is verb-final, agglutinative, and with both head marking and dependent marking. Following are the different classes of verb (the citation form for verbs is the third person non-past affirmative/declarative form):

- Intransitives, which take the non-past affirmative/declarative particle (*ē*) alone in the non past (e.g. *ngōē* ‘to cry’) and the intransitive past tense marker (*-i*) in past forms (with third person argument); they can be used transitively only when they take valency-increasing morphological marking (causative, benefactive).<sup>2</sup>
- Adjectives, which are a subclass of intransitive verb, and so can be predicative without the copula. In citation they take the nominalizer *wē* (e.g. *tēwē* ‘big’), but when used as predicates function the same as other intransitive verbs.
- Transitives, which take the non-past third person object marker (*ò*) plus the non-past affirmative/declarative particle (*ē*) in non-past forms (e.g. *rìōē* ‘to carry (something)’) and the transitive past tense marker (*-à*) in past forms (with third person P arguments);<sup>3</sup> they can be used intransitively only when they take valency-reducing morphological marking (intransitivizing prefix, reflexive/middle marking suffix). In transitive clauses the agentive marker generally appears on the NP representing the A argument.
- Ambitransitives (labile verbs), which can be used as transitives or intransitives without morphological derivation (*ýmòē* / *vmē* ‘to eat’). There are both S=P type and S=A type ambitransitives.<sup>4</sup> With the S=P type, as in (1), below, adding an A argument creates a causative, without the need to use the causative prefix. With the S=A type, as in (2), use of the intransitive vs. the transitive form marks a difference

<sup>2</sup> Some stative intransitive verbs can take an oblique argument marked by the locative/dative marker *s̀vng*, e.g. *svrē* ‘to be afraid’, where the stimulus is marked as an oblique argument:

(i) *ngà vḡs̀vng svrēngē*  
*ngà vḡt-s̀vng svrē-ng-ē*  
 1sg dog-LOC afraid-1sg-N.PAST  
 ‘I’m afraid of dogs.’

<sup>3</sup> The transitive verb marking can also be added to some nouns to make transitive cognate noun-verb combinations, e.g. (*àng*)*chēr chēròē* ‘make/grow wings’, *pvlū pvlūòē* ‘lay out a mat’, *shòm shòmē* ‘The shòm (a type of bamboo that only ripens once in 50 years) are ripe.’ (Neither the causative or applicative markers are used to make verbs from nouns.)

<sup>4</sup> These refer to whether the single argument of the intransitive use of the verb corresponds to the A argument or the P argument of the transitive use.

between a general or habitual situation and a particular situation respectively. The difference is due partly to the nature of the P argument, and partly to the nature of general vs. specific action. That is, if the P is specific, then the transitive form must be used, but if the P is non-specific, it is not necessary to use the intransitive form. If no P is mentioned, then usually the intransitive form is used.

- (1) S=P type
- |    |                |                               |                  |                     |
|----|----------------|-------------------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| a. | <i>gvyaqē</i>  | ‘be broken, destroyed’        | <i>gvyaqòē</i>   | ‘break, destroy’    |
| b. | <i>gvyøpmē</i> | ‘be crumpled’                 | <i>gvyø:pmòē</i> | ‘crumple’           |
| c. | <i>dvtñē</i>   | ‘be broken, snapped (thread)’ | <i>da:tnòē</i>   | ‘break, snap’ (vt.) |
| d. | <i>bvløpmē</i> | ‘be folded’                   | <i>bvlø:pmòē</i> | ‘fold’ (vt.)        |
- (2) S=A type
- a. *àng v̄mē.*  
*àng v̄m-ē*  
 3sg eat-N.PAST  
 ‘He’s eating.’ or ‘He eats.’
- a’. *àngí yālòng v̄mpà á:mòē.*  
*àng-í yā-lòng v̄mpà v̄m-ò-ē*  
 3sg-AGT this-CL rice eat-3.TR.N.PAST-N.PAST  
 ‘He is eating this rice.’
- b. *àng pé zvtñē.*  
*àng pé zvt-ē*  
 3sg basket weave-N.PAST  
 ‘He weaves baskets.’ (general or habitual sense)
- b’. *àngí pé tiqch̀v̀ng za:tnòē.*  
*àng-í pé tiq-ch̀v̀ng zvt-ò-ē*  
 3sg-AGT basket one-CL weave-3.TR.N.PAST-N.PAST  
 ‘He is weaving a basket.’

### 3. Copula clauses

There is one copula verb in Rawang, *íē*, which has the form *óngē* in the 1sg person singular, as in line 7 of (4) below. The copula takes a special form of the negation particle: with all verbs except the copula the negation particle is pronounced [mə-] or [ma-], but with the copula it is pronounced [mũ-] (written *mò-*), as in line 3 of (4) below. It cannot be used in a normal causative sense, though it can take the precative marker (*laq-*), which is a sub-type of imperative (e.g. *cílchè laq-(mò)-í* ‘(Don’t) let him be a soldier’). It is an intransitive verb, and except for the special characteristics just mentioned, it is otherwise like other intransitive verbs in terms of person marking, tense/aspect marking, interrogative marking, applicative marking, and nominalization (see line 6 of (4) and line 2 of (8) for examples of nominalized copulas).

The copula is used for identity ((3) & (4)), and equation ((5)), though can be omitted in certain contexts, as in lines 4 and 9 in (4) below. The word order of a copula clause is always verb final.

The S of the copula clause does not take any semantic role marking, though it can take the topic marker, *nō*, as in line 1 of (4). The S of the copula clause can be omitted in certain contexts, as in lines 3, 4 and 7 of (4). It can also be quite complex, as in (5). There are no pivots in Rawang for cross-clause coreference (or other constructions), so there are no constraints in this regard on the S of the copula clause. If there is relativization, it is usually on the S of the copula clause (the head may be an NP or a classifier, as in (23), below).

The copula complement does not take any relational marking. It can be a plain noun, as in (3); a more complicated noun phrase, as in line 2 of (4); a postposition phrase, as in (6) and line 3 of (8); or an interrogative pronoun, as in (7), (9), and (10), the latter also showing that ‘cost’ is also expressed with a copula phrase.

- (3) *Wē vshòmgó nō zòngcè íē.*  
 [wē vshòm-gó]<sub>CS</sub> nō [zòngcè]<sub>CC</sub> í-ē  
 that three-CL TOP student be-N.PAST  
 ‘Those three people are students.’
- 1 (4) *Rvwàng mvshól yālòng nō*  
 [Rvwàng mvshól yā-lòng]<sub>CS</sub> nō  
 Rawang story this-CL TOP  
 ‘This Rawang story
- 2 *dvmshàrìí rīma:tnà wē mvshól íē, . . .*  
 [dvmshà-rì-í rīm-at-à wē<sup>5</sup> mvshól]<sub>CC</sub> í-ē  
 shaman-pl-AGT keep-DIR-TR.PAST NOM story be-N.PAST  
 is a story being kept by the shamans, . . .
- 3 *Ngái gō ngà nót kèní dvbū:ngò wē mō-í,*  
 [ngà-í gō ngà nót kèní dvbōng-ò wē]<sub>CC</sub> mō-í  
 1sg-AGT also 1sg mind from originate-3.TR.N.PAST NOM NEG-be  
 (This) does not come from me (is not something that originated with me),
- 4 *dārì vshaqwàngvnrìí dvmshàrìí gùng ráà wē,*  
 [dārì vshaq-wàngvnrì-í dvmshà-rì-í gùng rá-à wē]<sub>CC</sub> (**Ø Copula**)  
 long ago old-very.old-pl-AGT shaman-pl-AGT tell DIR-TR.PAST NOM  
 (it) was told by damshas and very old men of long ago,

<sup>5</sup> It would be possible to omit *wē* here; relative clauses such as this one may or may not involve the nominalizer.

- 5 *táng ỳngàrì shònò wē íē.*  
 [tá-ng ỳng-à-rì]<sub>CS</sub> [shòn-ò wē]<sub>CC</sub> **í-ē**  
 hear-1sg TMyrs(1<sup>st</sup>person)-TP-pl say-3.TR.N.PAST NOM **be-N.PAST**  
 what I will tell you is what I heard (from them).
- 6 *Íwē, t̀pnì t̀prāng n̄*  
**í-wē** [t̀pnì t̀prāng] n̄  
**be-that** in.detail complete.details TOP  
 Be that as it may, as for being complete and in detail,
- 7 *d̀vmshà m̀-óngà rvt*  
 [[(O CS) [d̀vmshà]<sub>CC</sub> m̀-í-ng-à] rvt]  
 shaman **NEG-be-1sg-1/2.I.PAST** because  
 since I am not a shaman,
- 8 *mv-g̀p mv-rà:l̀.*  
 mv-g̀p mv-rà:l̀-ò  
 NEG-cover NEG-think.of-3.TR.N.PAST  
 I cannot recall all,
- 9 *dvd̀vmr̀onshì d̀vngtē wā íē.*  
 [dvd̀vm-r̀on-shì]<sub>CS</sub> [d̀vngtē wā]<sub>CC</sub> **í-ē**  
 think-reach-R/M much only **be-N.PAST**  
 I can recall only this much.
- 10 *D̀vmshà ch̀vngwà:rì kà n̄ k̀m̀v̀m daq wē.*  
 [d̀vmshà ch̀vngwà:rì kà]<sub>CS</sub> n̄ [k̀m̀v̀m daq wē]<sub>CC</sub> **(O copula)**  
 shaman chief-pl word TOP reliable-DIR possible NOM  
 The words of the shaman chiefs are reliable.’ (LaPolla & Poa 2001:1-5)
- (5) *Vp̀vng Pū:ngí shvng̀t dvtú yà:ngà mvshól s̀vng cà:nò n̄*  
 [[[[Vp̀vng Pūng-í shvng̀t dvtú ỳng-à mvshól s̀vng] c̀n-ò n̄]  
 PN PN-AGT teach guide TMyrs-TR.PAST story LOC follow-3.TR.N.PAST PS  
 ‘Following the story taught by Apang Pong,
- dvtut dvtut tvnù:ngò n̄ wà ỳng-ì wē d̀mshà íē.*  
 [dvtut dvtut tvnùng-ò n̄] wà ỳng-ì wē]<sub>CS</sub> [d̀mshà]<sub>CC</sub> **í-ē**  
 in.continuation trace-3.TR.N.PAST PS do TMyrs-IP NOM damsha **be-N.PAST**  
 the damsha rites were handed down continually. (Lit.: That which follows the story  
 taught by Alang Pung and has been handed down continually is the damsha rites.)’  
 (LaPolla & Poa 2001:13)

- (6) *Kāyíng kèní èfē?*  
**(Ø CS)** [kā-yíng kèní]<sub>CC</sub> **è-f-ē**  
 WH-LOC from **N.1-be-N.PAST**  
 ‘Where are you from?’
- (7) *Lègā bok kāyíng fē?*  
 [lègā-bok]<sub>CS</sub> [kā-yíng]<sub>CC</sub> **f-ē**  
 book-CL WH-LOC **be-N.PAST**  
 ‘Where is the book?’
- 1 (8) *Wēdǐngtē dvshà rvgaqē té yàngshà wē ínò*  
 [wē-dǐngtē dvshà rvgaq-ē té yàng-shà wē]<sub>CC</sub> **f-nò**  
 that-much poor place-LOC grow TMyrs(1<sup>st</sup>person)-1pl.PAST NOM **be-PS**  
 ‘Growing up in a place with that much hardship,
- 2 *wēdō írì dvdǐmòē.*  
 [wē-dō í-rì] dv-dǐm-ò-ē  
 that-ADV **be-pl** CAUS-remember/think-3.TR.N.PAST-N.PAST  
 I remember things like that. (I remember those things.)
- 3 *Gvray Gvsǐngpè jējú kèní fē.*  
 [gvray gvsǐng-pè jējú kèní]<sub>CC</sub> **f-ē**  
 God-MALE grace from **be-N.PAST**  
 (It) is from God’s grace. (By God’s grace.)’ (LaPolla & Poa 2001:163-4)
- (9) *Yābok lègā kāgǒ dvpvt fē?*  
 [yā-bok lègā]<sub>CS</sub> [kā-gǒ dvpvt]<sub>CC</sub> **f-ē**  
 this-CL book WH-CL for **be-N.PAST**  
 ‘Who is this book for?’
- (10) *Kādǐngtē fē?*  
 [kā-dǐngtē]<sub>CC</sub> **f-ē**  
 WH-much **be-N.PAST**  
 ‘How much does (it) cost?’

As is the case with other verbs, when the copula is followed by a directional particle, it marks a change of state:

- (11) *ò yādō nèn-lōng kèní nō, vbaq ílōngē,*  
 ò yā-dō nèn-lōng kèní nō [vbaq]<sub>CC</sub> **f-lōng-ē**  
 uh this-ADV done-DIR from TOP solid.thing **be-DIR-N.PAST**  
 ‘Uh, when it becomes cooked, (it) becomes a solid thing,

*àngkè ílǒngē.*

[àng-kè]<sub>CC</sub> **í-lǒngē**  
 NFP-solid **be-DIR-N.PAST**  
 (it) becomes a solid thing.’

(LaPolla & Poa 2001:166-7)

The copula can be followed by *dǝngwā* ‘just like’ to express ‘be similar/the same’:

- (12) *Vmò, Gvmò nǝng Dvmò tiqlǒng ídǝngwāē.*  
 [vmò gvmò nǝng dvmò]<sub>CS</sub> [tiq-lǒng]<sub>CC</sub> **í-dǝngwā-ē**  
 Ameu Gameu and Dameu one-thing **be-just.like-N.PAST**  
 Ameu, Gameu and Dameu are the same.

The copula can take a modal auxiliary, and a second token of the copula for emphasis, as in (13):

- (13) *Àngdvtǝng àngdvtǝng nǝi èshò:nòrì shǝngbē tǝpnì tǝprāng,*  
 [àng-dvtǝng àng-dvtǝng nǝ-í è-shò-n-ò-rì] [shǝngbē tǝpnì tǝprāng  
 NFP-step NFP-step 2sg-AGT N.1-say-3.TR.N.PAST-pl all detail complete  
 What you say step by step must all be in detail and complete,

*cǝmrérì sǝng nǝi shèngø:tnò bǝnzàn frà íē.*  
 cǝmré-rì sǝng nǝ-í è-shvngø-t-ò bǝnzàn]<sub>CC</sub> **í-rà í-ē**  
 child-pl LOC 2sg-AGT N.1-teach-3.TR.N.PAST pattern/method **be-must be-N.PAST**  
 in the pattern of you teaching children. (LaPolla & Poa 2001:134)

The copula can be used in Tail-Head constructions, as in the second line of (14) (see also (6)):

- (14) *Vzǝmwàngrvgaq kèní shǝngcit ròlǝ:mì nò, . . .*  
 vzǝmwàng-rvgaq kèní shǝngcit **ròl-ǝm-ì nò**  
 forest-place from shǝngcit **pick-BEN-1pl PS**  
 ‘We picked shǝngcit (seungcit) from the forest, . . .’

*Rò:lì nò í dvgvp,*  
**ròl-ì nò í dvgvp**  
**pick-1pl PS be when**  
 After we (had) picked (seungcit),

*shǝng dǝngtut-rì, àngdǝng àngdǝng tutshài nò, . . .*  
 shǝng dǝng-tut-rì àng-dǝng àng-dǝng tut-shài-ì nò  
 tree CL-cut-pl NFP-section NFP-section cut-R/M+1pl-1pl PS  
 we cut the tree into short pieces, we cut it section by section, . . .’  
 (LaPolla & Poa 2001:134-5)

The copula can be used alone as answer to a question:

- (15) Q: *à:ngí dèshá nī?*  
 àng-í dv-è-shá nī  
 3sg-AGT INTR-N.1-know GUESS  
 ‘He knows you, I guess?’  
 A: *ó / íē / èshángē*  
 ‘Yes’ / ‘Yes’ / ‘(He) knows me.’

#### 4. Possession/existence

Usually possession is expressed by the verb *vdá*, as in (16), but an alternative is for the copula to take the benefactive applicative suffix to express possession, as in (17) (see LaPolla 2000 on the applicative suffix).

- (16) *Nōngmaq nō ròmñvng ànglí tiqcégó vdáiē.*  
 nōngmaq nō [ròmñvng ànglí tiqcé-gó] vdá-ì-ē  
 1pl TOP friend old ten-CL have-1pl-N.PAST  
 ‘We have ten old friends.’
- (17) *Yābok lègā kāgó íāòē.*  
 [yā-bok lègā]<sub>CS</sub> [kā-gó]<sub>CC</sub> í-ā-ò-ē  
 this-CL book WH-CL be-BEN-3.TR.N.PAST-N.PAST  
 ‘Who does this book belong to?’

If the equational clause involves an NP which includes the possessive suffix *-ò* (e.g. *ngà-ò* ‘mine’) then the clause will have a possessive sense. (There is generally no marking of genitives: *ngà gwìn chvng è-lù-a:tnò* [1sg cup CL N.1-take-DIR+3sg] ‘Bring me my cup!’):

- (18) *Yāchvng ngàò íē.*  
 yā-chvng ngà-ò í-ē  
 this-CL 1sg-POSS be-N.PAST  
 ‘This (cup) is mine.’
- (19) *Yābok lègā kāgòò íē?*  
 [yā-bok lègā]<sub>CS</sub> [kā-gó-ò]<sub>CC</sub> í-ē  
 this-CL book WH-CL-POSS be-N.PAST  
 ‘Whose book is this?’

For existential expressions the intransitive verb *vīē* is used:

- (20) *Vmè nō chòm yǐng v̄l-ē.*  
 vmè nō chòm-yǐng v̄l-ē  
 mother TOP house/home-LOC exist-N.PAST  
 ‘Mother is at home.’
- (21) *D̀vmshàkà v̄l-ē.*  
 d̀vmshà-kà v̄l-ē  
 damsha-language exist-N.PAST  
 ‘There is a damsha language.’ (LaPolla & Poa 2001:16)
- (22) *Yādō v̄lyàng.*  
 yā-dō v̄l-yàng  
 this-ADV be-TMyrs  
 ‘This was the way it was.’ (LaPolla & Poa 2001:2)

## 5. Naming

Naming can involve the transitive verb *gōdē*, as in line 4 of (23); the transitive verb *v̄lōē*, as in lines 5 and 6; or the copula, as in line 7:

- 1 (23) *J Shóng vdòng rým ílòng?*  
 shóng vdòng-rým í-lòng (relative clause with CL as head)  
 tree inside-inside be-CL  
 The thing that is inside the tree?
- 2 *M Ò, vdòng rým ílòng chaq á:mò nò,*  
 ò vdòng-rým í-lòng chaq-ým-ò nò  
 uh- inside-inside be-CL peel-BEN-3.TR.N.PAST PS  
 Uh, (they) peel off the skin (of) the thing that is inside (the tree),
- 3 *wēdō nī á:mò wē, b̀vng hó . . .*  
 wē-dō-nī ým-ò wē b̀vng hó  
 that-ADV-just eat-3.TR.N.PAST NOM thorn  
 and eat it just like that, though (it has) thorns.
- 4 *J Wēlòng s̀vng kādō ègō nòng-ē?*  
 wē-lòng s̀vng kā-dō è-gō nòng-ē  
 that-CL LOC WH-ADV N.1-call 2pl-N.PAST  
 How do you call that thing?
- 5 *M ākvt nòng mènóng ā:lòē.*  
 ā-kvt-òng mènóng v̄l-ò-ē  
 this-time-CL meneung call-3.TR.N.PAST-N.PAST  
 It’s called meneung.

6 *J Mènóng ā:lólá?*  
mènóng ʋl-ò-lá  
meneung call-3.TR.N.PAST-Q  
It is called meneung?

7 *M Ò, mènóng í-ē.*  
ò mènóng í-ē  
uh meneung be-n.past  
Uh, it is meneung.

(LaPolla & Poa 2001:152)

## 6. Attribution

Unlike in English, attribution of “adjectival” characteristics does not usually involve the copula;<sup>6</sup> attribution is generally done with adjectives, which function as intransitive predicates, as in (24), but for a slightly different rhetorical effect an adjective can be nominalized and then take the copula, as in (25).

(24) *Lègā bok tē-ē.*  
lègā bok tē-ē  
book CL big-N.PAST  
'The book is big.'

(25) *àngsvng è-kým kèní nō nà gō àngdál èí-ē.*  
àng-svng è-kým kèní nō nà gō àng-dál è-í-ē  
3sg-LOC N.1-believe from(if) TOP 2sg also PREF-stupid N.1-be-N.PAST  
'If you believe him, you are an idiot (a stupid one).'

## 7. Non-finite clause + copula constructions

Aside from being used in normal copula clauses that include two noun phrases, the copula is also used in a clause type where there is only one noun phrase, which is a nominalized clause. That the nominalized clause functions as a single constituent (i.e. the arguments of that nominalized verb are not arguments of the copula but of the nominalized verb) can be seen from the fact that even if a first or second person referent

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<sup>6</sup> That is, English uses the same copula clause structure for attribution which involves nominals and for attribution which involves adjectives, e.g. *He is a lawyer* and *He is tall*, whereas in Rawang, while attribution which involves nominals is usually done with a copula clause, because adjectives are a subtype of verb, attribution with adjectives usually is done with a clause in which the adjective is the predicating element.

is involved in the nominalized clause, the copula does not take person marking. The clauses have different meanings depending on the type of nominalization used.

### 7.1 Nominalization by the distal demonstrative *wē*

A common pattern is where an otherwise unmarked clause is nominalized by the distal demonstrative *wē*, and then followed by the copula. It is generally used to contrast referents ((26a-d)) or emphasize that something is in fact the case ((26e)), but can sometimes have something like a passive sense ((26f-g)). In contrastive clauses the copula often takes the contrastive prefix *dv-*.

- (26) a. *Mvnuqlòng wā è-úm nòng wē í-má?*  
 mvnuq-lòng wā è-úm nòng wē í-má  
 shoot-CL only N.1-eat 2pl NOM be-Q  
 ‘Is it only the shoots that you eat?’
- b. *Vdó dīwē dvíē nō, Vpūng nō mv-dī.*  
 Vdó dī-wē dv-í-ē nō Vpūng nō mv-dī  
 PN go-NOM CFP-be-N.PAST TOP PN TOP NEG-go  
 ‘Vdeu went, not Vpung.’
- c. *Zùngkaq dīwē dvíē nō . . .*  
 zùng-kaq dī-wē dv-í-ē nō  
 school-LOC go-NOM CFP-be-N.PAST TOP  
 ‘He’s going to school (not anywhere else).’
- d. *àng í lègā ríòwē dvíē nō . . .*  
 àng-í lègā rí-ò-wē dv-í-ē nō  
 3sg-AGT book carry-3.TR.N.PAST-NOM CFP-be-N.PAST TOP  
 ‘He’s carrying *books* (not something else).’ or ‘*He*’s carrying books (not someone else).’
- e. *àng dī bóiwē íē.*  
 àng dī bó-ì-wē í-ē  
 3sg go PFV-I.PAST-NOM be-N.PAST  
 ‘(Yes,) He went.’
- f. *Vpūng nō Vdóí vdóròwē íē.*  
 Vpūng nō Vdó-í vdór-ò-wē í-ē  
 PN TOP PN-AGT hit-3.TR.N.PAST-NOM be-N.PAST  
 ‘Vpung was hit by Vdeu.’

- g. *Vdó nō à:ngí dvtò:mò wē íē.*  
 Vdó nō àng-í dvtòm-ò-wē í-ē  
 PN TOP 3sg-AGT delay-3.TR.N.PAST-NOM be-N.PAST  
 ‘Vdó is by him delayed.’ (from Morse 1965:353)

## 7.2 Nominalization by the infinitive marker *-lvm*

The copula can be used in construction with an infinitive of a verb to express first person intention, as in (27)-(29):

- (27) *Zùng cṽnshìlvm íē.*  
 zùng cṽn-shì-**lvm** í-ē  
 school learn-R/M-INF **be-N.PAST**  
 ‘I am going to school.’
- (28) *Dṽmshàrì shòn yà:ngà dāng kèní kà dvha:tní.*  
 [[[dṽmshà-rì-í shòn yàng-à dāng kèní] [kà dvhat-í]  
 shaman-pl-AGT say TMyrs-TR.PAST regarding from word simple-INST  
 ‘(I will tell) in simple words in line with what the damsha says,
- vmò, gvmò nṽng dvmò wāwē nṽng vsṽng tvnècè*  
 [vmò gvmò nṽng dvmò wā-wē] nṽng [vsṽng tvnè-cè  
 ameu gameu and dameu call/say-NOM and person human-son
- būng rái dāng àngdōng kū shònlvm íē.*  
 būng rá-ì dāng]] àng-dōng-kū shòn-**lvm** í-ē  
 originate DIR-IP regarding PREF-short-ADV say-INF **be-N.PAST**  
 regarding Ameu, Gameu and Dameu and the beginning of man in short (version).’  
 (LaPolla & Poa 2001:18)
- (29) *Ngà nō paqká mò-í nìnō, wāy aqlvm íē.*  
 ngà nō paqká mò-í nì-nō wāy aq-**lvm** í-ē  
 1sg TOP tea NEG-be if-TOP wine drink-INF **be-N.PAST**  
 ‘I will either drink tea or wine.’ (Literally: ‘If I am not tea, it is wine drinking.’)

While first person intention usually involves the copula in this construction, as in (30a), the intransitive form of the ambitransitive verb *wāē* ‘to do’ can be used instead (use of *wāē* means the intention is more immediate), as in (30b), and this verb must be used, rather than *íē*, for 2nd and 3rd person, as in (30c-d).

- (30) a. *nōngmaq yōp-lvm í-ē.* ‘We are going to go to bed/sleep.’  
 1pl sleep-INF be-N.PAST  
 b. *nōngmaq yōp-lvm wà-ì-ē.* ‘We are going to go to bed/sleep (now).’  
 1pl sleep-INF do-1pl-N.PAST  
 c. *nà vm-lvm è-wā-ē.* ‘You are going to eat.’  
 2sg eat-INF N.1-do-N.PAST  
 d. *àng vm-lvm wā-ē.* ‘He is going to eat.’  
 3sg eat-INF do-N.PAST

### 7.3 Intransitivization and nominalization by *v-* *-shaq*

This construction is formed by adding the intransitivizing prefix *v-* before the verb and the nominalizer *-shaq* after the verb. The nominalized clause then functions as the copula complement of a copula clause. Morse (1965:353) discussed this as an adverbial clause subtype and called the two elements just mentioned “passive voice affixes” which, together with the copula, “manifest passive voice”. The examples in (31) are some of those given by Morse; those in (32) are from my own fieldwork.

- (31) a. *Shé nō vdúshaq íē.*  
 shé nō v-dú-shaq í-ē  
 gold TOP INTR-dig-PERF be-N.PAST  
 ‘The gold is dug.’ Morse (1965:353)
- b. *Lègā nō vríshaq íē.*  
 lègā nō v-rí-shaq í-ē  
 book TOP INTR-carry-PERF be-N.PAST  
 ‘The books have been carried.’ Morse (1965:353)
- (32) a. *Bangkà vpoqshaq íē.*  
 bangkà v-poq-shaq í-ē  
 door INTR-open-PERF be-N.PAST  
 ‘The door is open.’
- b. *Kōpī vrōngshaq íē.*  
 kōpī v-rōng-shaq í-ē  
 coffee INTR-brew-PERF be-N.PAST  
 ‘Coffee is/has been made.’
- c. *vm vdúrshaq íē.*  
 vm v-dúr-shaq í-ē  
 rice INTR-pound-PERF be-N.PAST  
 ‘The rice has already been pounded.’

While these clauses have the intransitive prefix and are nominalized, they can still take two NPs representing the A and P arguments, and the marking is the same as in the unmarked clause, except where the NP representing the P argument appears in topic position and is followed by the topic marker, as in (33b).<sup>7</sup>

- (33) a. *(Ngà-í) (àng-s̀v̀ng) lègā shàríshaq íē.*  
 ngà-í àng-s̀v̀ng lègā shv-v-rí-shaq í-ē  
 1sg-AGT 3sg-LOC book CAUS-INTR-carry-PERF be-N.PAST  
 ‘Books have already been sent (to him) (by me).’
- b. *àng nō (ngàí) dv̀ngké shaq íē.*  
 àng nō ngà-í v-d̀v̀ng-ké-shaq í-ē  
 3sg TOP 1sg-AGT INTR-finish-eat(defeat)-PERF be-N.PAST  
 ‘He has already been defeated (by me).’
- c. *à:ngí kōpī vrōngshaq íámì.*  
 àng-í kōpī v-rōng-shaq í-ám-ì  
 3sg-AGT coffee INTR-pound-PERF be-DIR-IP  
 ‘Coffee has been made by him.’
- d. *à:ngí ngàsv̀ng Yānggūng dātān shaq íē.*  
 àng-í ngà-s̀v̀ng Yānggūng dv-v-vtān-shaq í-ē  
 3sg-AGT 1sg-LOC Yangon CAUS-INTR-visible-PERF be-N.PAST  
 ‘Yangon has been shown to me by him.’<sup>8</sup>
- e. *Ngàí Yānggūng vỳngshaq íē.*  
 ngà-í Yānggūng v-ỳng-shaq í-ē  
 1sg-AGT Yangon INTR-look.at/see-PERF be-N.PAST  
 ‘I have already seen Yangon.’

Informants uniformly say the meaning of the construction (or the particle *shaq*) is ‘already’. It seems that rather than being a true passive, it is simply a way of marking something like perfect aspect, a way of emphasizing that a certain situation has already

<sup>7</sup> In (33a) the basic verb is *ríðē* ‘carry’, which becomes ‘send’ by the addition of the causative prefix *shv-*, but then takes the intransitivizing prefix *v-* as part of this construction. The intransitive prefix and the causative prefix combine to form *sha-*. A similar situation holds for (33d), though the form of the causative prefix used for deriving ‘show’ from ‘be visible’ is *dv-*.

<sup>8</sup> Contrast the non-nominalized version of this clause:

- (i) *à:ngí ngàsv̀ng Yānggūng dētān ỳngà.*  
 àng-í ngà-s̀v̀ng Yānggūng dv-è-vtān yàng-à  
 3sg-AGT 1sg-LOC Yangon CAUS-N.1-visible TMyrs(1stperson)-TR.PAST  
 ‘He showed me Yangon’.

come about and is still relevant (cf. the development of English perfect marking from a construction with an adjectival participle and the verb *have* or *be*; see Mitchell 1985, Carey 1990). Where this situation is associated with a particular referent being affected, it has something of the sense of a passive, but we can see from examples such as (34) that it does not always have this sense.

- (34) *Wērvt vyò nō ākvt gō tì vríshaq íē.* (LaPolla & Poa 2001:36)  
 wē-rvt vyò nō ākvt gō tì v-rí-shaq í-ē  
 that-because bumble.bee TOP now also water INTR-carry-PERF be-N.PAST  
 ‘Therefore, the bumble bees have been carrying water until now.’

#### 7.4 Nominalization by *nā*

The nominalizer *nā*, which marks uncertainty, is used in construction with the copula to express ‘probably . . .’ or ‘might have . . .’:

- (35) *àng tuqám nā íē.*  
 [àng tuq-ám nā] í-ē  
 3sg arrive-DIR PROB be-N.PAST  
 ‘He might have arrived (there) (already).’

#### 7.5 Nominalization by *pà*

In this construction, the word *pà* ‘thing’ is used as the head of a relative clause structure, and this is then followed by the copula to express ‘I guess . . .’:

- (36) *àng dì ámì pà íē.*  
 [àng dì ám-ì pà] í-ē  
 3sg go DIR-I.PAST thing be-N.PAST  
 ‘I guess he left.’
- (37) *àng-í d’vng ap-à pà íē.*  
 [àng-í d’vng ap-à pà] í-ē  
 3sg-AGT finish DIR-TR.PAST thing be-N.PAST  
 ‘I guess he finished it.’

### 8. A note on Dulong

In the closely related Dulong dialects there is no copula *íē*, and no non-past particle *ē*, but there is a copula *ē*, which may be the origin of the non-past particle in Rawang

(First Township (Northern Dulongjiang) Dulong, personal fieldwork; cf. LaPolla 2003; a brève over a vowel means it is a reduced syllable, the other diacritics represent level ( $\bar{a}$ ) or falling ( $\grave{a}$ ) tone):

- (38)  $b\grave{a}n\bar{i}b\grave{a}n\bar{a}$  ( $\grave{a}d\bar{u}\eta$ )  $d\check{s}$ , [ $k\bar{a}$   $g\bar{u}^{\eta}$   $s\bar{o}$   $g\bar{u}^{\eta}$ ]<sub>CS</sub>  
livestock middle LOC words say know.how NOM

[ $d\check{s}g\bar{i}$ ]<sub>CC</sub>  $\bar{e}$   $t\grave{e}i\grave{w}\grave{a}$ .  
dog be HEARSAY

‘It is said among the livestock the one that knew how to talk was the dog.’ (From “The story of why dogs have long tongues and can’t talk”; LaPolla 2001:19)

## 9. Conclusions

We have seen that the copula is an intransitive verb, in that it takes intransitive morphology, but is not like other intransitive verbs in not being able to take the causative prefixes and in being able to take two unmarked arguments. It can be used for nominal attribution, identification, possession, and naming, and appears with a variety of nominalized clauses to achieve certain rhetorical effects. It is quite frequent in Rawang discourse (see (4) for example), and this may be because of the large number of functions it has.

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<sup>9</sup> It would be possible to use the topic marker *nū* instead of the nominalizer *gū* here.

## Abbreviations

1/2.I.PAST	1st and 2nd person intransitive past marker	N.1	non-1st person actor (in a clause with a speech act participant)
3.TR.N.PAST	3rd person transitive non-past marker	NFP	noun forming prefix
A	actor of a prototypical transitive clause	N.PAST	non-past marker
AGT	agentive marker	P	patient of a prototypical transitive clause
BEN	benefactive suffix	PERF	perfect nominalizer
CAUS	causative prefix	PFV	perfective marker
CC	copula complement	pl	plural
CL	classifier	PN	proper name
CFP	contrastive prefix	PROB	marker of probability
CS	S of a copula clause	R/M	reflexive/middle marker
DIR	direction marker	S	single direct argument of an intransitive verb
INF	infinitive marker	TMyrs	marker of remote past
INTR	intransitivizing prefix	TOP	topic marker
I.PAST	3rd person intransitive past marker	TR.PAST	transitive past marker
LOC	locative marker (also used for dative, purpose)		

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