

A brief description of the Youle Jino copula

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A Brief Description of the Youle Jino Copula*

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1. Introduction

As is widely known, a copula is a kind of linguistic unit that behaves quite peculiarly in every language. Most linguists believe that copulas are meaningless (Hengeveld 1992, Pustet 2003, Stassen 2005), hence that seems to be why some languages have no copulas, like Tagalog (Schachter 1985).

Many Asian languages employ “copulaless” constructions to express the specificational/ predicational/ equative relationship between two noun phrases (hereafter, “NPs”). Even those languages that have “copulaless” constructions sometimes allow the copula(s) to occur in certain conditions, which might be referred to as “copularization”. However, such conditions vary from language to language.

Youle Jino¹ (the Lolo-Burmese branch of the Tibeto-Burman family, Xishuangbanna

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¹ The Jino language has two main dialects: Youle and Buyuan. Gai (1986) estimates that the ninety percent of the speakers speaks the Youle dialect and the remainder Buyuan. The total number of the Jino nationality amounts to 20,899 (2000 census). Dai et. al. (2007) reports the socio-linguistic situation of Youle Jino and concludes that Youle Jino is not currently threatened by linguistic endangerment. However, considering the fact that every new Jino generation has less and less knowledge of this language, the present author thinks that it is difficult to be optimistic about the future of Youle Jino.

Phonological inventory and typological features of Youle Jino are briefly summarized below.

[Phonological Inventory of Youle Jino]:

Consonants: /p, ph, t, th, k, kh, ts, tsh, tʃ, tʃh, tɕ, tɕh; m, m̥, n, n̥, ɲ, ɲ̥; l, l̥; f, v, s, z, ʃ, r, ɕ, j, x, ɣ, (w)/

Vowels: /i, e, ø, ε, œ, a, ə, ɔ, ɤ, o, u, u/

Tonemes: /55, 44, 33, 35, 42/

Syllable Structure: (C1)(C2)V1(V2)(V3)(C3)/T <C2: -r- or -j-, C3: -n or -N>

/m, m̥, n, n̥/ can be syllabic nasals. As for the Youle Jino phonology, see Hayashi (2007, 2009).

[Typological Features of Youle Jino]:

Basic Constituent Order: SOV, Noun-Adjective, Possessive-Head Noun, Relative Clause-Head Noun

Jinghong [Yunnan, China]) has one copula, namely *ɲu˥˥*. As in many other languages, *ɲu˥˥* is also a verb but behaves in a rather different way from other “ordinary” verbs.

This paper aims to provide a brief description of the Youle Jino copula *ɲu˥˥* and analyze what motivates copularization in this language using first-hand data².

2. Previous Works — Gai (1986)

According to a previous study of Youle Jino by Gai (1986), there are four allomorphs relating to the copula: *ɲə42*, *ɲə44*, *ɲə35*, and *ɲə55*. He says that each variant is employed in different semantic contexts, although his explanation is somewhat insufficient. Gai’s examples and analyses are briefly summarized below.

■ [ɲə42→ɲə44]

If the copula occurs with a negative or an interrogative marker, its tone changes to 44 tone, as in (1).

- (1) a. *ɕe33 ɾ33 nə42 pə42 se55 me55 mə44 ɲə44 a.*
 this PART 2SG.NOM hit kill PART NEG COP
 “This is not what you hit to death.” (Gai 1986: 54)
- b. *ɕe33 ɾ33 nə42 pə42 se55 me55 ɲə44 ε la42 ?*
 this PART 2SG.NOM hit kill PART COP Q
 “Is this what you hit to death?” (Gai 1986: 54)

Morphological Features: Agglutinative (Verbal Complex)

² The present author has been carrying out linguistic research on the Jino language in a Jino village since 2000. I would like to thank Ms. Wang Azhen, who kindly taught me this language. She was born and grew up in the Jino village and is a fluent speaker of Jino and the Jinghong-Yunnan dialect of Chinese. Both of her parents are Jino and they are also my consultants. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to them. The study of the present author on the Jino language has been supported by Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research from Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (2003 and 2005), Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research from Japan Society for the Promotion of Science for the project entitled “Linguistic Substratum in Tibet” headed by Yasuhiko Nagano (2004 and 2007, 2008), Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research from Japan Society for the Promotion of Science for the project entitled “Linguistic Description of the Jino language and the study of Language Contact and Linguistic Typology contrasting other neighboring languages” (2009). This paper is mainly based on the data which I collected (2004–2009).

■ [ŋə42→ŋə35]

If the copula occurs in affirmative sentences, its tone changes to 35 tone, as in (2).

- (2) *ce33 x33 nə42 pə42 se55 me55 ŋə35 a.*
 this PART 2SG.NOM hit kill PART COP
 “This is what you hit to death.” (Gai 1986: 54)

■ [ŋə42→ŋa55]

If the copula occurs in exclamative sentences, its form changes to *ŋa55*, as in (3).

- (3) *tʃa42loe55 ce33 x33 nə42 pə42 se55 me55 ŋa55 .*
Oh! this PART 2SG.NOM hit kill PART COP
 “Oh! This is what you hit to death.” (Gai 1986: 54)

■ [ŋə42]

If the copula occurs in declarative sentences, its tone does not change, as in (4).

- (4) *ce33 x33 nə42 pə42 se55 me55 ŋə42 a.*
 this PART 2SG.NOM hit kill PART COP
 “This is what you hit to death.” (Gai 1986: 55)

The above examples seem to highlight the differences in tone, which according to Gai may correspond to modality³.

However, there are some problems in his analysis. According to my field notes, tonal alternation can usually occur irrespective of modality difference. It is difficult to predict, especially in the verbal complex. The present author is not investigating the relationship between the tonal alternation of the Youle Jino copula and modality difference. In addition, Gai describes only the morphophonological features of the Youle Jino copula, but does not explain its occurrence from morphosyntactic and semantic perspectives.

Hereafter this paper aims to describe the syntactic and semantic features of the Youle

³ In my field notes also, there are a certain number that are of examples of *ŋa55*, but at this point the present author considers that it is a kind of amalgamation— that is, *ŋu55 + a*.

Jino copula and analyze what motivates its occurrence.

3. Formal Description

In this section, the characteristics of the Youle Jino copula *ɲu55*⁴ will be syntactically or formally described in two contexts: *ɲu55* following NP and *ɲu55* following non-NP.

3.1 *ɲu55* following NP

The Youle Jino copula *ɲu55* frequently occurs after NPs to denote specificational, predicational, and equative relationships between two NPs, as in (5).

- (5) a. *çi44 ri33pen35 tshə33zə55 ɲu33-nə44.*
 this Japan people COP-SFP
 “This is a Japanese people.”
- b. *li33yun42 tshə33zə55 la55xɿ44 ɲu33-nə44.*
 Liyun (PSN) person big COP-SFP
 “Liyun is a big person.”
- c. *pu55tʃe55=jə44 ki55ŋo55 mə55tʃhə44 tʃe42-jə44 ɲu33-nə44.*
 Tai Lue people=and Jino people friend very-good COP-SFP
 “Tai Lue people and Jino people are very good friends.”

In (5), the copula *ɲu55* with the sentence-final particle *-nə44* gives the sentence a predicate construction. In (5a), NP1 is *çi44* and NP2 is *ri33pen35 tshə33zə55*. In (5b), NP1 is *li33yun42* and NP2 is *tshə33zə55 la55xɿ44*. In addition, in (5c), NP1 is *pu55tʃe55=jə44 ki55ŋo55* and NP2 is *mə55tʃhə44 tʃe42-jə44*. The copula clearly expresses the relationship between the two NPs.

However, in the following example, if the relationship between the NPs can be construed from a semantic and a pragmatic viewpoint, the copula should be considered to occur optionally.

⁴ The tone of Youle Jino copula usually alters, such as *ɲu33~ ɲu35~ ɲu55~ ɲu42*. This paper recognizes that the basic tone is 55 and there is no semantic difference in tonal variations of the copula.

- (6) *çi44 ri33pen35 tshə33zə55*
 this Japan.OBL people
 “This is a Japanese people.”

In (6), the relationship between NP1 and NP2 can be easily construed from the context, hence the copula is not necessary; however, this is not the case in negative sentences, as illustrated in (8) below.

In (7), which is considered to be an example of a pseudo-cleft sentence, the NPs in the focus position (the underlined elements) can be followed by the copula *ŋu55*.

- (7) a. *khə44 tɕɛ33xun35-mx55 lao33ta35 ŋu33-nɛ44*
 that marry-NML the oldest child COP-SFP
 “That person who married is his/her oldest child.”
 b. *a33ŋu55 çi55-lo44 khɛ33-mx44 çi55-lo44 ŋu33-ɛ44*
 IPL.INCL.NOM this-like do-NML this-like COP=POSS
 “It is in this way that we do.”
 c. *m44tʃi44 kɛ33-mx55 mi33tha55 xo33-mx35 ŋu33-nɛ44*
 ground slide-NML rain (n.) rain (v.)-PAST COP-SFP
 “Why the land slid is because it rained.”

On the one hand, the relationship between NP1 and NP2 in affirmative sentences can be expressed by copulaless constructions (that is, with no overt copulas) as in (6), but on the other hand, the relationship in sentences with the tense/ aspect/ modality markers must be expressed by the copula.

The following examples (8)-(11) are copulative sentences with the tense/ aspect/ modality markers.

[negative: mɔ-]

- (8) a. *kan55tshao33phjen35 mɔ33-ŋu55-a44*
 Gancaopian (drug name) NEG-COP-PART
 “(That) is not a Gancaopian [medicine for a cough].”

b. *pa55tɔ44-a44 mɔ33-ŋw55-a44.*

Baduo (PLN)=VA NEG-COP-PART

“(That) is not Baduo [PLN].”

c. *khɿ44 mɔ33-ŋw55-mɿ42, ŋa55vu44 jin33nan33=ɛ55*

that NEG-COP-COND 1PL.EXCL.NOM Yunnan=POSS

ʃao35su35min33tsu33 phu33thoŋ33xua35 mɔ55-pja42.

minority Putonghua (standard Chinese) NEG-speak

“Otherwise, we minorities of Yunnan do not speak Putonghua.”

[past: -mɿ ~ -mɛ]

(9) a. *li33çɔ55 ŋw33-mɛ35.*

four hundred COP-PAST

“(What he gave me) was four hundred yen.”

b. *kɔ33-ki55 li33-jen35 ŋw33-mɛ35.*

each-CL four-yen COP-PAST

“It was four yen per five hundred grams.”

c. *ji55ʃi55 mɔ55-pan33-vu44, ŋa55vu44 thi55ŋa55 ŋw33-mɛ35.*

the former days NEG-move-RES 1PL.EXCL.NOM many COP-PAST

“When I did not move (here), (the members of) our family amount to many.”

[perfect: -xa]

(10) a. *ŋɔ33tshɿ55khjo33-mjɔ55 ŋw33-xɔ42, ŋɔ35=jɔ55 thi33tʃhɔ55*

fifty six-CL COP-COND 1SG.OBL=and same

ŋw33-xa44.

COP-PFT

“If (your father) is fifty-five years old, then he is as old as I!”

b. *ne35 ŋw33-mɛ55 ŋw33-xa55.*

2SG.OBL COP-NML COP-PFT

“(Those things) have become yours.”

[experience: -tə]

- (11) a. *zə55ku55 fɯ55-kə44-mɯ44 mi55ŋa44 ɲu35-tə44-a44.*
 child take-PROG-NML Mina (PSN) COP-EXP-PART
 “The person who is taking a child is Mina (as is expected).”
- b. *a55ke55+kə55tə44-r44 thi33tʃhə35 ɲu35-tə44-a44.*
 clothes+clothes=TOP same COP-EXP-PART
 “Clothes are the same as other minorities (as is expected).”
- c. *pra33-mjə42, tci35-ə44. li33-tsu55 ɲu35-tə44-a44.*
 chop-SEQ slice-PART 4-CL COP-EXP-PART
 “After (we) chop the tree, then we will slice it (with a sword). There are four (trees) left.”

As shown above in (8)-(11), the copula follows NP2 and expresses the relationship between NP1 (or nominalized element) and NP2, though in some cases NP1 is covert in the sentence (for instance, 8a, 9a, 10b, 11c, etc.). Underlined forms in each example, namely *mə-*, *-mɯ~ -mɛ*, *-mɛ*, *-xa*, *-tə*, are all tense/ aspect/ modality markers that cannot be directly attached to nominals. They are all verbal affixes, hence they require verbal roots when attached. Noun phrases can construct sentences by themselves in Youle Jino, but in order to express tense/ aspect/ modality, the copula *ɲu55* is obligatory.

3.2 *ɲu55* following non-NP

The copula is naturally more likely to occur after NPs, but it is important to note that in Youle Jino the copula can occur after non-NPs.

Firstly, it should be pointed out that there are examples where a noun phrase and a citation form of adjective can be linked by the copula, as in (12).

- (12) a. *çi44+pə44 fə33khi55 a33krə55 ɲu33-nɛ44.*
 this+around foot slippery COP-SFP
 “It is slippery here.”

- b. *nə33to55 a55tshɿ55 ŋwɿ33-nə44.*
 nose stuffed up COP-SFP
 “(My) nose is stuffed up.”
- c. *tjao35+ju44-mɿ44 ŋɔ55tɿ55 tə33mo33 a33ni55 ŋwɿ33-nə44.*
 fish (v.)+take-REL fish (n.) all small COP-SFP
 “The fish that (we) fished are all small.”

Youle Jino adjectives consist of a nominalizing prefix (*a-*, *la-*, *ja-*) and a stative verbal root, hence they should be considered to belong to a subclass of verb. In (12), all three sentences allow the occurrence of *ŋwɿ55* after the citation form of adjectives, which makes us view these examples as sentences with the copula following non-NPs. It may be true in a sense, but the citation form of adjectives behaves like a nominal since it is already nominalized; hence its occurrence with the copula should rather be likened to the case of the copula following NPs. In these cases, the copula *ŋwɿ55* functions as predicator of the sentence.

Secondly, we should note that the Youle Jino copula can occur after the verbal complex. When expressing so-called “relative tense”, Youle Jino makes the copula carry the past suffix *-mɿ ~-mɛ*.

- (13) a. *lə55 pa55kha42 ʃu55+le42-me44 ŋwɿ33-mɛ35.*
 that Baka (PLN) take+go-FUT COP-PAST
 “(If you did not go back from here), (we) would have taken you to the Baka village.”
- b. *mi55tso55 ʃu55+tei35+le44-me44 ŋwɿ33-mɛ35.*
 firewood take+slice+go-FUT COP-PAST
 “(If he did not go to Mengyang early in the morning,) we would have taken him to go to slice firewood.”

Both sentences in (13) express the expectation in the past, and in the end denote the counterfactual meaning. The copula *ŋwɿ55* seemingly follows the non-NP ending with the future suffix *-me*, but it should be noted that both the past tense marker *-mɿ ~-mɛ*

and the future tense marker *-me* act as nominalizer⁵ in Youle Jino morphosyntax. If we posit that the phrase ending with a nominalizer is a kind of NP, the phrase preceding the copula *ɲu55* in (13) should be considered as a NP, and therefore (13) should be described in 3.1 from a syntactic perspective.

Thirdly, we should mention that there are several examples where the copula can occur directly after the verbal complex, forming what appears to be a serial verb construction.

- (14) a. *ja33jen55 mao33 ɲu33=ε55-po42.*
 opium swirl (head) COP=POSS-RCF
 “(Their heads) may swirl (by smoking) opium.”
- b. *a33pjo55 lə44-te55-kə44 ɲu33=ε55 tr55-ə44,*
 book all the way-look-PROG COP=POSS probably-PART
mə33-ji55-a44.
 NEG-sleep-PART
 “(I assume that) you probably keep reading books without sleeping.”

As is illustrated in (14), the copula *ɲu55* directly follows the verbal complex. In (14a), *mao33* “swirl (head)” is a verb, hence it might be assumed that the string *mao33 ɲu33* forms a verb serialization. Moreover, in (14b), *lə44-te55-kə44* “all the way-look-PROG” is also a verbal complex, so that *lə44-te55-kə44 ɲu33* could be considered to be a serial verb construction. However, this is not the case. In natural conversation in Youle Jino, as in (14), the copula *ɲu55* often occurs directly after the non-NP in order to express the speaker’s modality or his/ her own ideas.

4. Discussions and Analyses From Synchronic, Typological, and Areal Perspectives

In section 3, the occurrence of the Youle Jino copula has been described formally, whereas in this section, it will be discussed and analyzed from much wider perspectives, namely, synchronic, typological, and areal ones.

⁵ *-mɣ* ~ *-mε* functions as nominalizer, complementizer, relativizer, and past tense marker. As for the polyfunctionality of *-mɣ* ~ *-mε*, see Hayashi (2006).

4.1 Morphosyntactic Motivation

In this subsection, copularization in Youle Jino will be analyzed from the point of view of syntactic motivation.

In Youle Jino, the tense/ aspect/ modality affixes can only be added to the verbal root. Therefore, for instance, if we wish to express the past state of the relationship between two NPs, we must employ a verb that is able to carry the past tense suffix, although this verb should not have a content meaning. Hence, it should be a copula. Examples (8)-(11) illustrate this phenomenon.

What is more, the tense suffixes, namely *-mɔ̃* *-mɛ* and *-mɛ*, occupy the same slot in the verbal complex, hence if we use both suffixes at the same time in a sentence, we must set up a copula to carry either suffix, as was illustrated in (13).

From a typological perspective (Pustet 2003), copulas tend to follow or precede nouns, whereas they do not easily follow or precede verbs. On the one hand, the most frequent case in Youle Jino is the occurrence of *ɲu55* directly after NPs; *ɲu55* can also occur directly after the citation form of adjectives, which syntactically behaves in the same way as nouns.

- (15) a. *zɔ55ku55 a33ni55* { \varnothing / *ɲu33-nɔɛ44*}.
 child small { \varnothing / COP-SFP}
 “The child is small.”
- b. *kɔ55tɔ44 a33ɲɔ55* { \varnothing / *ɲu33-nɔɛ44*}.
 clothes red { \varnothing / COP-SFP}
 “The clothes are red.”

As in (15), the copula can occur after the citation form of adjectives, for example *a33ni55* and *a33ɲɔ55*, although in these examples the copulaless construction sounds more natural.

On the other hand, it is difficult for *ɲu55* to follow the verb phrases, although there are some examples in which it does, as in (14).

According to my field notes, there is a gradience of acceptability in the examples where *ɲu55* follows the verbs.

- (16) a. *mi55ʃɔ55ŋ44 tɕiŋ33xɔŋ44 le33-me35 ŋu33=ɛ44.*
 tomorrow Jinghong go-FUT COP=POSS
- b. *mi55ʃɔ55ŋ44 tɕiŋ33xɔŋ44 le33=ɛ55 ŋu33=ɛ44.*
 tomorrow Jinghong go=POSS COP=POSS
- c. [?!OK] *mi55ʃɔ55ŋ44 tɕiŋ33xɔŋ44 le33 ŋu33=ɛ44.*
 tomorrow Jinghong go COP=POSS
 “He/She will probably go to Jinghong tomorrow.”
- (17) a. *çi44 a55ke55 mre55+mre35-a44.*
 this dish delicious+delicious.RDP-PART
 “This dish is very delicious.”
- b. *çi44 a55ke55 mre33-ŋx35-a44 ŋu33=ɛ44.*
 this dish delicious-AUX-PART COP=POSS
- c. [?!OK] *çi44 a55ke55 mre55+mre35 ŋu33=ɛ44.*
 this dish delicious+delicious.RDP COP=POSS
 “This dish is probably delicious.”

In (16), (16a) is the most acceptable. (16b) sounds more natural than (16c), although the latter is not completely unacceptable. In (16a) and (16b), the elements before the copula end with the future suffix *-me* and the possessive marker *=ɛ44*, which syntactically function as a nominalizer. Hence, the copula can easily follow elements ending with these suffixes. On the other hand, in (16c), the element before the copula is a verb, making this sentence less acceptable than the two previous ones.

This holds true in (17). (17a) and (17b, c) have different readings respectively, although the latter two sentences can be semantically construed as the same. The former has fewer modality readings, whereas the latter two have high modality⁶. In (17b), the element before the copula ends with the particle *-a*, which generally marks the end of the nominal predicate, while in (17c), the element is a reduplicated verb, which syntactically precedes the copula with a lot of difficulty.

In summary, from a morphosyntactic perspective, since the tense/ aspect/ modality markers are verbal affixes, the Youle Jino copula is employed to carry them. And in

⁶ The fact that the Youle Jino copula can function as a high-modality marker will be discussed and analyzed in 4.2.1.

addition, the Youle Jino copula can follow nouns and the citation form of adjectives much more easily than it can follow verbs.

4.2 Semantic and Pragmatic Motivation

In this subsection, we will investigate how the occurrence of the Youle Jino copula should be semantically and pragmatically motivated from three dimensions.

4.2.1 Characterizational/ Identificational or High Modality/ Low Modality

--- with reference to Thai linguistic studies ---

The occurrence of the Youle Jino copula shall be related not only to syntactic conditions, but also to semantic ones. In Southeast Asian languages, copulas are chosen by semantic conditions rather than by syntactic or formal ones.

Previous works (Kuno and Wongkhamthong 1981, Mikami 1985, Komolwanig and Sawada 1993, Takahashi and Shinzato 2003⁷) have been published on the two copulas of Standard Thai, namely *khuuu* and *pen*. In Standard Thai, a copula is inserted between the two NPs, that is, [*NP1--Copula--NP2*]. Kuno and Wongkhamthong and Mikami state that *pen* (coined as *C-Copula*) characterizes the features of NP1 as NP2, whereas *khuuu* (coined as *I-Copula*) identifies NP1 as NP2. Mikami investigates the notion that NP1 in the *khuuu* sentences should be either non-referential or referential, while NP1 in the *pen* sentences should be referential. Moreover, he argues that NP2 in the *pen* sentences should be non-referential. Komolwanig and Sawada point out that Mikami's analysis is somewhat problematic in that he did not define the concepts "referential" and "non-referential" clearly, and that the difference between *khuuu* and *pen* should be analyzed from a contextual viewpoint rather than the semantic one that he adopts. Komolwanig and Sawada claim that *pen* involves <HIGH MODALITY> and *khuuu* involves <LOW MODALITY>, given that *pen* co-occurs with modal elements,

⁷ Takahashi and Shinzato (2003) employs the cognitive psychological concepts (though actually they do not present any experimental data) to reveal their difference and concludes that *pen* relates to thought-like processing, whereas *khuuu* to sensation. Their idea may be plausible in the analysis of Standard Thai copulas, but this paper has not made psychological experiments on the usage of Youle Jino copula, hence this point of view will not be discussed any further here.

while *khuuu* does not.

These previous works on Standard Thai copulas may be useful for the semantic and pragmatic analysis of the Youle Jino copula, but it should be noted that Youle Jino has only one copula, *ŋu55*, we therefore need to investigate to what extent the presence and absence of *ŋu55* correspond to *pen* and *khuuu* in Standard Thai.

Firstly, Kuno and Wongkhomthong and Mikami mention the relationship between the specificity/ referentiality of the NPs and the choice of copula in the Thai language. Also, in other languages, Nishiyama (2003) discusses this relationship in Japanese semantics and pragmatics, and Mikkelsen (2005) investigates it from typological and theoretical perspectives. However, it is safe to say that the occurrence of the Youle Jino copula is not related to the specificity/ referentiality of the NPs, as will be shown in (18)-(20).

- (18) a. *ŋen35tʃhɔŋ44 tɕiŋ33xɔŋ44* {φ/ *ŋu33-nɔɛ44*}.
 center of the prefecture Jinghong (PLN) {φ/ COP-SFP}
 “The center of the prefecture is Jinghong.”
- b. *ŋɔ35 lɔ33si55 tʃə55pə44* {φ/ *ŋu33-nɔɛ44*}.
 1SG.OBL teacher Zhebai (PSN) {φ/ COP-SFP}
 “My teacher is Zhebai.”
- (19) a. *khɔ33pɔ44 xe55-tɔ44-mɔ44 a55san44* {φ/ *ŋu33-nɔɛ44*}.
 over there stand-EXP-REL Asan (PSN) {φ/ COP-SFP}
 “The person standing over there is Asan.”
- b. *khɔ33pɔ44 kha33+lɔ55-kɔ44-mɔ44 tʃə55pə44* {φ/ *ŋu33-nɔɛ44*}.
 over there pass+come-PROG-REL Zhebai (PSN) {φ/ COP-SFP}
 “The person coming from there is Asan.”
- (20) a. *tʃə55pə44 khɔ55phɔ55* {φ/ *ŋu33-nɔɛ44*}.
 Zhebai (PSN) adult man {φ/ COP-SFP}
 “Zhebai is an adult man.”
- b. *ɕi55u44 khɔ42 lɔ33si55* {φ/ *ŋu33-nɔɛ44*}.
 now he/she teacher {φ/ COP-SFP}
 “Now he/she is a teacher.”

In (18)-(20), both the copulative and copulaless constructions are grammatical and acceptable, although the former sound slightly more natural. Using Mikami's terms, in (18), NP1 is "non-referential" and NP2 is "referential". In (19), both NP1 and NP2 are "referential". In (20), NP1 is "referential" and NP2 is "non-referential". According to Mikami's analysis, in Standard Thai (also in Lao and Cambodian), I-Copula (*khuuu* in Standard Thai) should be employed in (18) and (19)⁸, while C-Copula (*pen* in Standard Thai) is preferred in (20)⁹. However, as seen in (18)-(20), the referentiality of the NPs is not related to the occurrence of the Youle Jino copula. Therefore, Mikami's analysis may not be applicable here.

Secondly, we will investigate whether the analysis of Thai copulas by Komolwanig and Sawada is applicable to the analysis of the Youle Jino copula. As mentioned above, Komolwanig and Sawada conclude that *pen* involves <HIGH MODALITY> and *khuuu* <LOW MODALITY>, on the grounds that *pen* co-occurs with modal elements, while *khuuu* does not. If we refer to their analysis, the presence of the Youle Jino copula may involve <HIGH MODALITY>, and its absence <LOW MODALITY>. As modal elements of Youle Jino can only be affixed to the verbal roots, and the Youle Jino copula *ɲuu55* is a member of the verb category, the Youle Jino copula must involve

⁸ In Standard Thai, if NP2 is <referential>, I-Copula (*khuuu*) should be employed (Mikami 1985). Following examples are glossed and transliterated by the present author.

- i) *muaŋ lǎaŋ khɔɔŋ yǐpun khuuu tookiaw* [Standard Thai]
 capital of Japan COP Tokyo
 "The capital of Japan is Tokyo."
- ii) *khon thii yuun yǐu thii nǎn khuuu khun A* [Standard Thai]
 person REL stand stay PART there COP Mr./Ms. A
 "The person standing over there is Mr./ Ms. A"

On the one hand, in (i), NP1 is <non-referential>, while NP2 is <referential>. On the other hand, in (ii), both NP1 and NP2 are <referential>. Hence, *khuuu* is employed in both examples.

⁹ In Standard Thai, if NP1 is <referential> and NP2 is <non-referential>, C-Copula (*pen*) should be employed (Mikami 1985). The following example is glossed and transliterated by the present author.

- i) *khon nǎn pen khruu* [Standard Thai]
 person that COP teacher
 "That person is a teacher."

In (i), NP1 is <referential> and NP2 is <non-referential>, hence *pen* is employed here.

<HIGH MODALITY>¹⁰, not only from semantic and pragmatic perspectives, but also from morphosyntactic ones.

- (21) a. *kan55tshao33phjen35 mo33-ɲu55-a44*. (=8a)
 Gancaopian (drug name) NEG-COP-PART
 “(That) is not a Gancaopian [medicine for a cough].”
 b. **kan55tshao33phjen35 mo33*¹¹.

Since the negative prefix is a verbal affix, (21a), in which it is affixed to the copula, is grammatical; however, (21b), in which it is not, is ungrammatical. Hence, in general, the Youle Jino copula involves <HIGH MODALITY>, and copulaless constructions <LOW MODALITY>. The tense and aspect markers basically behave in the same way as modality markers in this language, therefore cases with tense and aspect markers can be included in <HIGH MODALITY>.

In natural conversation data, there are many examples where the copula co-occurs with the possessive marker =*ε44* to express the speaker’s viewpoint or modality, as is briefly mentioned at the end of 4.1.

- (22) a. *ki55ɲo55=ε55 ɲu55=ε55 tʃhɻ33-a44*.
 Jino people=POSS COP=POSS similar-PART
 “(She) seems to be a Jino people.”
 b. *ɲa55ve55 mo35-a44 jo33ma55=ε55 ɲu33=ε55 tʃhɻ33-a44*.
 IPL.EXCL.OBL NEG.COP-PART 3PL.NOM=POSS COP=POSS simiar-PART
 “It is not at our house (that the telephone is ringing). Maybe it is at their house.”

¹⁰ Zhang (2005) also, using the data of Sino-Tibetan languages spoken in China, claims that the copulative construction involves speaker’s viewpoint or modality, though the way of analysis is rather different from Komolwanig and Sawada (1993).

¹¹ In the natural conversation of Youle Jino, the form *mo35-a44* is frequently employed and the former element *mo35* can be analyzed as a fusion form of negative *mo-* and the copula *ɲu55*, which is deserved to be noticed.

- (23) a. *khø33mjə55 thi33-phu44 ηw33=ε55 tɾ55-ɔ44.*
 then 1-CL COP=POSS surely-PART
 “Then, (they) surely (live in) the same village (as ours).”
- b. *kha55kɾi44 a55khr55=la55 ηa55vu44=a44 thi33pju35*
 Hani people Ake people=in other words 1PL.EXCL.NOM=VA together
ηw33=ε55 tɾ55-ɔ44.
 COP=POSS surely-PART
 “The Hani people and the Ake people maybe enjoy (the new year festival) the same way as we (Jino people).”
- (24) a. *je55me44-mə55 fao33xoŋ33 jo33mə55 thi55mə55*
 Yanmei (PSN)-PL Xiaohong (PSN) 3PL.NOM many
ku33-ηw55=ε44.
 again-COP=POSS
 “There surely go again a lot of Yanmei and Xiaohong’s friends.”
- b. *a55nə55 m33-mu35-mε55 ηw33=ε44.*
 self(3) CAUS-ring-PAST COP=POSS
 “I am sure that he/she rang it by himself/ herself.”
- c. *təao55+tu35 mə35-a44, a33fui55 ηw33=ε44.*
 water (v.)+go out NEG.COP-PART yellow COP=POSS
 “If you do not water (the gray wax gourds), they will grow yellow.”

In (22), the speaker’s guess is expressed by the phrase *ηw55/ηw33=ε55 tʃhr33-a44*, while in (23), his/her strong assumption is expressed by the phrase *ηw33=ε55 tɾ55-ɔ44*. Each example contains the other phrases (*tʃhr33-a44, tɾ55-ɔ44*), which express the strength of the speaker’s assumption; however, even if the phrases following the copula do not occur, the speaker’s assumption or guess can be expressed, as in (24).

Example (25) below illustrates that the phrase *ηw33=ε44* can express the speaker’s question.

- (25) a. *a55la42! khao42=ε44 pa42-me44 ηw33=ε44, kro33?*
 Oh what=POSS hold-PAST COP=POSS gun
 “Oh my god! Why did (he) bring a gun?”

- b. *su55jao33x35=ε55 zo55ku55 ɲu33=ε44?*
 Suxiaoe (PSN)=POSS child COP=POSS
 “Is (he) Suxiaoe’s child?”

Both sentences in (25) can be considered as a kind of interrogative sentence, although the construction is the same as (24). This reinforces the idea that the copula can mark the speaker’s modality, but the context may play a part in determining what kind of modality is expressed by the copula.

In addition, the fact that the Youle Jino copula can be employed to reply to the previous utterance supports the notion of its involvement in <HIGH MODALITY>.

- (26) a. *ɔ42, ɲu33-a44 te42.*
 Oh COP-PART-PART
 “Oh, that’s right!”
- b. *ɲu33-a44 te42. ɲɔ42 fi35+ja55-xɔ42, mo55-kuan33+la55=ε44.*
 COP-PART-PART 1SG.NOM die+go-COND NEG-care+come=POSS
 “That’s right. If I pass away, (I) cannot care about (her anymore).”
- (27) a. *mo33-ɲu55-a44. ci55-lo44 fi35-me55 ɲu55-ɔ44.*
 NEG-COP-PART this-like die-PAST COP-PART
 “That is not true. It is when (you) die like this.”
- b. *mo33-ɲu55-xɔ42, vai35 mo33-khju55-a44.*
 NEG-COP-COND quick NEG-AUX-PART
 “(If you live in the village, you will be able to speak Jino.) If not, (you) will not be able to (master it so) quickly.”

Both (26) and (27) are replies to the previous utterance. In (26), the speaker employs the copula to agree with the previous speaker. In (27), the speaker uses the negative prefixed copula to deny the proposition of the previous utterance. Each case illustrates that the copula expresses the speaker’s viewpoint or modality.

As seen in 3.2, in the natural conversation data, there are numerous examples where the copula follows the verbal elements to express the speaker’s viewpoint or modality, although the modality markers in Youle Jino can be directly affixed to the verbal root.

To summarize, the Youle Jino copula can generally be employed to mark the speaker's modality.

4.2.2 Temporal/ Permanent Dichotomy

In many languages with more than one copula, the function of copulas differs in temporal/ permanent dichotomy. Some argue that such dichotomy can be paraphrased as changeable/ stable. In the literature of some European languages, such dichotomy is applicable, for example, *ser/ estar* in Spanish and *is/ tá* in Irish, both of which date back to two Latin copulas, *esse/ stāre*. The next two examples, (28, 29), will illustrate that temporality may relate to the occurrence of the Youle Jino copula.

- (28) a. *wəŋ35lɔ33si55 khɔ55phɔ55.*
 Mr. Wang (teacher) man
 b. *wəŋ35lɔ33si55 khɔ55phɔ55 ŋu33-nɔɛ44.*
 Mr. Wang (teacher) man COP-SFP
 “Mr. Wang (teacher) is a(n adult) man.”

- (29) a. *wəŋ35lɔ33si55 jo33kha33.*
 Mr. Wang (teacher) old
 b. *wəŋ35lɔ33si55 jo33kha33 ŋu33-nɔɛ44.*
 Mr. Wang (teacher) old COP-SFP
 “Mr. Wang (teacher) is old.”

From a grammatical viewpoint, all of the sentences in (28) and (29) are correct. However, from semantic and pragmatic perspectives, (28a) is preferable to (28b), whereas (29b) is preferable to (29a). This may be because human beings do not change their gender, whereas age is changeable or has a temporal feature.

Naturally, there are some “challenging” examples.

- (30) a. *çi44 tso33 a33ji55.*
 this house new

- b. *çi44 tso33 a33ji55 ηu33-nœ44.*
 this house new COP-SFP
 “This house is new.”

Both sentences in (30) are syntactically correct. Everything gets older as time goes by, hence these sentences can be considered to have a temporal context, so that (30b) would sound more natural. However, in fact, (30a) sounds slightly more natural than (30b). This is because the citation form of adjectives is usually placed at the predicate position without any elements. The reason why (30a) is more natural has nothing to do with temporality.

The next example (31) should relate to temporality, although it is very similar to (30).

- (31) a. *çi44 tso33 çi55u44 a33ji55. sœ33-mjɔ55 ηu33-xɔ42, a33ji55.*
 this house now new three-CL COP-COND old
 b. *çi44 tso33 çi55u44 a33ji55 ηu33-nœ44.*
 this house now new COP-SFP
sœ33-mjɔ55 ηu33-xɔ42, a33ji55.
 three-CL COP-COND old
 “Now, this house is new. (But) in three years, (it will) be old.”

According to my linguistic consultant’s intuition, (31b) sounds more natural than (31a). This example contains a temporal expression, namely *çi55u44* “now”, and the first sentence is contrasted with the second one. It should be pointed out that the clarification of temporality should cause the Youle Jino copula to occur naturally in (31b).

This logic holds true in (32) and (33).

- (32) a. *çi44 a55san35=ε55.*
 this Asan.OBL(PSN)=POSS
 b. *çi44 a55san35=ε55 ηu33-nœ44.*
 this Asan.OBL(PSN)=POSS COP-SFP
 “This is Asan’s (stuff).”

- (33) a. *çi55u44 çi44 a55san35=e55*.
 Now this Asan.OBL(PSN)=POSS
- b. *çi55u44 çi44 a55san35=e55 **ɣw33-næ44***.
 Now this Asan.OBL(PSN)=POSS COP-SFP
 “This is Asan’s (stuff) now.”

All four sentences in (32) and (33) are grammatical, but (32a) is preferable to (32b), while (33b) is preferable to (33a). On the one hand, in general, the affiliation of “stuff” cannot be changed; hence, as in (32a), the copula does not occur. The absence of the copula denotes permanence. On the other hand, in (33), which contains a temporal adverb *çi55u44* “now”, the presence of the copula, which denotes temporality, is preferable to its absence¹².

¹² The presence of the copula is almost always preferable to its absence when expressing temporality, but in a contrastive sentence this is not always so.

- i) *çi55u44 çi44 a55san44=e55 nɛ33ɲjɔ55 khɻ35=e55 zɔ55ku55=e55*.
 now this Asan (PSN)=POSS next year 3SG.OBL=POSS child=POSS
- ii) *çi55u44 çi44 a55san44=e55 **ɣw33-næ44** nɛ33ɲjɔ55 khɻ35=e55*
 now this Asan (PSN)=POSS COP-SFP next year 3SG.OBL=POSS
*zɔ55ku55=e55 **ɣw33-næ44***.
 child=POSS COP-SFP
 “This is Asan’s (stuff) now, but it will be his/her child’s next year.”

According to my consultant’s intuition, (i) may be preferable to (ii), which might contradict the discussion above. It can be arguable that the contrastive sentences expressing the affiliation of a stuff are exceptions to temporality analysis of Youle Jino copula.

On the other hand, we can add one more example of the contrastive sentence here.

- iii) *çi44 stu55kho55, tho55kho55 mɔ33-**ɣw55-a44***.
 this cucumber wax gourd NEG-COP-PART
- iv) *çi44 stu55kho55 **ɣw33-næ44**, tho55kho55 mɔ33-**ɣw55-a44***.
 this cucumber COP-SFP wax gourd NEG-COP-PART
 “This is a cucumber, not a wax gourd.”

Both (iii) and (iv) are contrastive sentences, and the former is preferable to the latter. In this case, NPs have the permanent feature, hence the absence of the copula in (iii) should be plausible in the temporality analysis. However, if we look at (i) and (iii) from the viewpoint of contrastive constructions, the absence of the copula may be affected by the same motivation.

Pustet (2002) argues that Sgaw Karen (Karenic, Tibeto-Burman) copulas, *mewæ:* and *kæ^ɔ*, relate to autonomy vs. dependency dichotomy, and points out that *kæ^ɔ* has contrastive reading when employed. The contrastive reading might involve the absence of Youle Jino copula, although it demands further research.

In summary, use of the Youle Jino copula *ɲu55* is preferred when expressing temporality, but the copula is generally omitted when expressing permanence.

4.2.3 Focus/ Non-Focus Dichotomy

Many Sino-Tibetan languages employ copula(s) to mark focus elements (Li and Thompson 1981, Zhang 2005, etc.). In Mandarin Chinese, the elements between the copula *shì* and the particle *de* can be construed as the focus in the sentence (Li and Thompson 1981, Chu 1987, etc.).

In Youle Jino, the copula generally occurs to clarify the focus elements in the sentence, as in (34, 35).

- (34) a. *ji55ɲ44 pa55kha42 le44 mɣ44 a55san44*.
 yesterday Baka (PLN) go-NML Asan (PSN)
 b. *ji55ɲ44 pa55kha42 le44 mɣ44 a55san44 ɲu33-nɛ44*.
 yesterday Baka (PLN) go-NML Asan (PSN) COP-SFP
 “It was Asan that went to the Baka village yesterday.”
- (35) a. *ji55ɲ44 ɲa55vu44 ko33+la33-mɣ44 lo55po44*.
 yesterday 1SG.EXCL.NOM take+come-NML tea (leaf)
 b. *ji55ɲ44 ɲa55vu44 ko33+la33-mɣ44 lo55po44 ɲu33-nɛ44*.
 yesterday 1SG.EXCL.NOM take+come-NML tea (leaf) COP-SFP
 “It was tea leaf that we brought here yesterday.”

Both (34) and (35) are pseudo-cleft sentences and prefer the occurrence of the copula (34b, 35b) to its absence (34a, 35a). *a55san44* “Asan” in (34) and *lo55po44* “tea leaf” in (35) are construed as the focus, which can be analyzed as new information in the discourse. In Youle Jino, the focus element can be considered to be preferably followed by the copula.

However, it should be noted that in some cases the temporal/ permanent dichotomy defeats the focus/ non-focus one, as in (36) below.

- (36) a. [Question] *çi44 kɔ55tɕur44 a44?*
 this what-Q
 “What is this?”

- b. [Answer 1] *çi44 ɲa33stu55*.
 this banana
 “This is a banana.”
- c. [Answer 2] [?/OK] *çi44 ɲa33stu55 ɲu33-nœ44*.
 this banana COP-SFP
 “This is a banana.”

Example (36) contains a question and two possible replies. The speaker in (36a) asks, “What is this?”, and each speaker in (36b) and (36c) answers, “This is a banana”. Therefore, the underlined NP in (36b, c), namely *ɲa33stu55*, should be construed as the focus. If the focus/ non-focus account could be adopted in this case, (36c) would sound more natural than (36b). However, (36b) actually sounds more natural than (36c). This leads us to conclude that the temporal/ permanent account plays a more important role in determining whether the copula occurs or not.

To summarize, use of the Youle Jino copula is also preferred to clarify the focus element in a sentence, although this is not always the case when the NP that is considered to have the permanent feature precedes it.

5. Conclusions

As discussed above, this paper focuses on briefly describing the Youle Jino copula, and concludes that the occurrence of the copula can be related to the factors exemplified in (37) and (38).

[Morphosyntactic Factor]

- (37) Verbal affixing

[Semantic/ Pragmatic Factors]

- (38) a. High modality (<High modal context>)
 b. Temporality (<Temporal NP>)
 c. Focus (<Focus NP>)

High modality, temporality, and focus belong to different dimensions; hence, in the present paper, unlike in other previous works on East and Southeast Asian languages, it

might be better not to conclude to which semantic/ pragmatic factor the occurrence of the Youle Jino copula is most related. However, it is arguable that the specificity or referentiality of NPs is not a determining factor for the occurrence of the Youle Jino copula, and that greater importance should be attached to temporality (that is, a permanent NP) rather than focus in establishing whether the copula occurs or not.

This paper without doubt has residual issues. From a synchronic viewpoint, we should determine whether there is an internal hierarchy between high modality, temporality, and focus relating to the occurrence of the Youle Jino copula¹³. In addition, from a diachronic perspective, the Youle Jino copula may relate to the Burmese copula *hut*, Hani *ɲu55* (Dai 1995), and Zaozou *ɲe53* (Sun et al. 2002), but it is very difficult to link it genetically to the Tibetan copulas *yin/ red*, Sgaw Karen *mewæ/ kæ*² (Pustet 2002) and so on¹⁴. Thurgood (1982) reconstructed **wəy* for the Proto-Sino-Tibetan copula, which is compatible with the Proto-Loloish form **wəy*³ reconstructed by Bradley (1979); however, his reconstructed form might be related to the Youle Jino possessive marker =*ε44*, which can occur at the sentence-final position as a modality marker¹⁵. It may be speculated that the Proto-Lolo-Burmese form of the copula can be reconstructed as **ɲut*¹⁶, but this obviously requires further investigation.

¹³ There exists another synchronic problem. Clark (1996) argues that Vietnamese *thì* can function as an emphatic copula, along with the unmarked copula *là*. According to her analysis, Vietnamese *thì* can be normally considered a conjunction, translatable like “be then”, but it is often employed for characterizing NPs.

Youle Jino has an enclitic that is very similar to Vietnamese *thì*, namely =*la55*, though its synchronic relationship and interface with the copula *ɲu55* would benefit from future research.

¹⁴ Lowes (2006) illustrates the geographical distribution of Tibeto-Burman copulas to investigate their phonological reconstruction, though her analysis is a still ongoing process.

¹⁵ On the morphosyntactic function and diachronic analysis of Youle Jino “possessive” marker =*ε44*, see Hayashi (in print).

¹⁶ This proto-form can be attested in many Lolo-Burmese languages, such as Burmese *hut*, Achang *ɲe²55*, Bola *ɲot55*, Zaiwa *ɲut55*, Yi (Nuosu) *ɲu33*, Lisu *ɲa33*, Hani *ɲu55*, and Jino *ɲu55*. The data of Achang, Bola, Zaiwa, Yi (Nuosu), Lisu, and Hani are from Huang (1992: 543). Matisoff (2003) reconstructed **s-rut* for the PTB copula, which seems incompatible with the Youle Jino *ɲu55*.

Abbreviations

(*) marks an ungrammatical sentence, (-) an affix or particle boundary, (=) a clitic boundary, and (+) a root boundary.

AUX : auxiliary, CL : classifier, COND : condition, EXCL : exclusive, EXP : experience, FUT : future, INCL : inclusive, NEG : negative, NML : nominalizer, NOM : nominative, NP: noun phrase, OBL : oblique, PART : particle, PAST : past, PFT : perfective, PL : plural, PLN : place name, POSS : possessive, PROG : progressive, PSN : person name, Q : question, RCF : reconfirmative, RDP : reduplication, REL : relative marker, RES : reason, SEQ : sequence, SFP : sentence final particle, SG : singular, TOP : topic, VA : =va55 (accusative, dative, locative)

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