Sangkong 桑孔 of Yunnan: Secondary "verb pronominalization" in Southern Loloish

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The Chinese linguist Li Yongsui has described (1991) a newly discovered language called Sangkong (sa:o 55qho:o 55), that evidently belongs to the "Bisoid" subgroup of Southern Loloish, close to Bisu, Phunoy, and Mpi.1 Aside from the intrinsic value of the new lexical material Li provides, Sangkong has an extremely interesting syntactic property: a rudimentary system of "verb pronominalization", where the verb-phrase may contain either of two morphemes that refer to the person of the subject. In the case of the first person, this agreement morpheme is phonologically identical to the independent personal pronoun, qa 55 'I'. The etymology of the non-first person marker, ze 55, is not so transparent, though we offer a theory about its origin below.

1.0 Sangkong phonology

1.1 Initials

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{cccccccc}
p & pj & t & ts & t\& & k & q & ?
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{cccccccc}
ph & phj & th & tsh & t\&h & kh & qh
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{cccccccc}
mb & mbj & nd & 
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{cccccccc}
m & mj & n & 
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{cccccccc}
s & \& & x & h
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{cccccccc}
w & l & 
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

--Note the absence of a simple voiced series.
--Note the single voiced fricative ?, which represents the merger of several sonorant and fricative proto-phonemes. (See below 5.1.)

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1The Sangkong people number fewer than 2000. They live in Jinghong County of Xishuangbanna, Yunnan, and were formerly grouped with the Hani nationality.
1.2 Rhymes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tone</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open:</td>
<td>-V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasal:</td>
<td>-VN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constricted:</td>
<td>-v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stopped:</td>
<td>-VS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.3 Tones

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tone</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open:</td>
<td>55 high level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasal:</td>
<td>33 mid level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constricted:</td>
<td>31 low falling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stopped:</td>
<td>[35 high rising (sandhi tone)]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.0 Sangkong and Proto-Lolo-Burmese

2.1 Initials

(a) PLB *voiceless obstruents > SK voiceless aspirates

(b) PLB *preglottalized obstruents > SK vless aspirates

(c) PLB *voiced obstruents > SK plain obstruents

(b) PLB *voiceless aspirates > SK voiceless aspirates

(d) PLB *prenasalized obstruents > SK plain obstruents

(e) PLB *simple nasals > SK prenasalized voiced stops

(f) PLB *complex nasals > SK simple nasals

/gsame as Bisu, Lahu, Burmese/
2.11 Some Loloish Manners of Articulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PLB</th>
<th>WB</th>
<th>Luquan</th>
<th>Lisu</th>
<th>Lahu</th>
<th>Akha</th>
<th>Bisu</th>
<th>Sangkong</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*p</td>
<td>ph</td>
<td>ph</td>
<td>ph</td>
<td>ph</td>
<td>ph</td>
<td>p/ph</td>
<td>ph</td>
<td>ph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*?b/?p</td>
<td>ph</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>ph?</td>
<td>ph</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*b</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>p</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*mb/ *mp</td>
<td>p ~ b</td>
<td>mph</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>p</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*m</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>m</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*?m/*hm</td>
<td>hm</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>m</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From top to bottom, these reflexes range from more stop-like down to more nasal-like. This arrangement is satisfying because identical reflexes of different *manners are contiguous in any vertical column (i.e. for any given language).

As these manner-developments show, Sangkong definitely belongs in the "Bisoid" subgroup of Southern Loloish.

2.12 Rhymes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLB</th>
<th>Sangkong</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*-ak</td>
<td>-a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*-wak</td>
<td>-o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*-ok/-uk</td>
<td>-o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*-ik</td>
<td>-l (constricted)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*-at</td>
<td>-e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*-wat</td>
<td>-e / -g [FLOWER]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*-ap</td>
<td>-ap</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


3For a similar arrangement of the Tai consonantal series with respect to tonal developments, see Gedney, 1970/1989. It should also be noticed that the order in which the consonantal mutations (a) through (f) are listed reflects the presumed actual sequence of changes: first I (a/b), then II (c/d), then III (e), then (IV) f.
Sangkong has the Loloish tonal split in stopped syllables (see Matisoff 1972), despite the relative well-preservedness of syllable-final consonants: more proof, if any were needed, that this split was conditioned by the syllable-initial consonant group.

4SK contrasts -oŋ and -uŋ, though this has not been firmly established for PLB; maybe SK data will prove crucial here, e.g.: 'finger' l31 nuŋ55 vs. 'belly' u31 poŋ33.
5Words in this tone are sometimes pronounced with constriction, e.g. 'egg' -u33.
3.0 Bisoid pronouns and ST pronominal allomorphy

3.1 Sangkong personal pronouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Object</th>
<th>Dual</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st pers.</td>
<td>ḡa(^5^5)</td>
<td>ḡa(^3^3)a(^3^3)</td>
<td>a(^5^5)ni(^3^1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ḡa(^3^3)a</td>
<td>a(^5^5)ni(^3^1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd pers.</td>
<td>naŋ(^5^5)</td>
<td>naŋ(^3^3)a</td>
<td>naŋ(^5^5)nį</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd pers.</td>
<td>ḡaŋ(^5^5)</td>
<td>ḡaŋ(^5^5)la(^3^3)ti</td>
<td>ḡaŋ(^5^5)nį</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2 Bisu personal pronouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Dual</th>
<th>Plural</th>
<th>Collective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st pers.</td>
<td>ḡa</td>
<td>ḡaj</td>
<td>gu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd pers.</td>
<td>na ~ naŋ</td>
<td>naŋ</td>
<td>nɔ ~ nɔŋ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd pers.</td>
<td>ja ~ jaŋ</td>
<td>jət</td>
<td>jə ~ jəŋ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3 Open, palatally-suffixed, and nasal-suffixed variants of pronouns in Sino-Tibetan

Evidence from these Bisoid languages, when added to data from other branches of ST, suggests that the pronouns for all three persons have been suffixable by palatal and/or nasal elements at various times and places in the family. Even if the basic allomorph of the 2nd person pronoun was *naŋ, this final nasal seems to have been treated as a separable element by many languages. It is tempting to set up a quasi-paradigm as follows (though it must be admitted that the semantic increment provided by the "suffixal" elements is unclear and inconsistent across languages:

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7The accusative particle la\(^3^3\) is optional with object pronouns.
8Adapted from Beaudouin 1991:1.82.
Exemplifications in selected languages

**Chinese**

1st person:
- Open: 我 *ŋa* [GSR 2a]
- With -N: 吾 *ŋo* [GSR 58f]

3rd person:
- Open: 他 *t`a* [GSR 4c'] 'another'
- With -N:卬 ngâng/ngâng [GSR 699a]

**Mirish**

1st person:
- With -N: Mishmi *ŋa*; Miji *ŋa* [Mand. *ŋ xu wo yu*] 'I'm waiting for my friend.'

**Jingpho**

1st person:
- With -y: *ŋai*

2nd person:
- Open: na
- With -N: naŋ

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9No single root for '3rd person' may be reconstructed for PTB or PST. As in other language families, ST/TB 3rd person pronouns are related to demonstratives and deictic words like 'other'.

10My colleague Ting Pang-Hsin has kindly supplied me with a quote from the Shi Jing:

卬須我父

11This word is now the ordinary 3rd person pronoun in Mandarin.

12Personal communication, Jackson Tianshin Sun.

13I now believe that this same morpheme underlies the unique Jingpho form for the numeral 'one', with secondary falling tone: *ŋai*. See Matisoff, to appear.
4.0 Sangkong "verb pronominalization" and the markers \( \text{ŋa}^{55} \) and \( \text{ŋe}^{55} \)

Li Yongsui's article contains some 23 sentences containing a person-marker in the VP. If the subject of the sentence is first

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\(^{14}\)This latter reconstruction is preferred in Bradley 1993. LaPolla (p.c. Sept. 1993) suggests an allofamic relationship with PLB \( \text{tsəŋ}^{1} \) 'person'.

\(^{15}\)It seems possible that the palatal suffix in the Bisu 1st/2nd dual pronouns is a cliticized reduction of the syllable \( \text{ŋəi} \) (as in the Sangkong duals), which must ultimately derive from the numeral 'two' (\( \text{ŋ}-\text{ni}-\text{s} \)).

\(^{16}\)They are presented here in a different order than in the article.
person, the marker ʐa₅⁵ appears in the predicate (1); otherwise, the marker ʐe₅⁵ is used (2):

(1) ʐa₅⁵ naŋ³³la₃³ pon⁵⁵tʰaŋ₅⁵ ti₃¹ thap₃³ pi₃¹ la(ŋ)₃⁵ ʐa₅⁵
    I you OBJ sugar one packet give come 1P
    I'll give you a packet of sugar.

(2) a³¹saŋ³⁵ naŋ³³ la₃³ soŋ³¹ ʐe₅⁵
    NAME you OBJ seek non-1P
    Asang will look for you.

If the verb is negated, the agreement markers are ʐe₅⁵ for first person (3) and ʐi₅⁵ otherwise (4):

(3) ʐa₅⁵ haŋ³¹ a³¹ tsa³¹ swŋ³¹ ʐe₅⁵
    I rice NEG eat YET 1P/NEG
    I haven't eaten yet.

(4) thi₅⁵kun³³ a³¹ tsa³¹ swŋ³¹ ʐi₅⁵
    they NEG eat YET non-1P/NEG
    They haven't eaten yet.

As (1) and (2) illustrate, in the absence of an overt aspect/mood morpheme in the VP, the sentence tends to be interpreted as expressing a future intention, as also in (5) and (6):

(5) ʐa₅⁵ naŋ³³ la₃³ soŋ³¹ la₅⁵le(ŋ)₃³ ʐa₅⁵
    I you OBJ seek come 1P
    I'll come to look for you.

(6) a⁵⁵naŋ³¹ haŋ³¹ tsa³¹ ʐa₅⁵
    we rice eat 1P
    We're going to eat./Wómen yāo chǐ fàn.

These person markers themselves have nothing to do with aspect, since they are equally compatible with various aspectual morphemes, including pi₅⁵ 'perfective' (as in Exs. 7-10), naŋ³¹ 'progressive' (11), and la₅⁵ or le₅⁵ 'come; inchoative; change-of-state' (12-14):

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¹⁷Somehow the ş- of the 1st person form seems to have infected its paradigm-partner.
¹⁸Li Yongsui (p.17) refers to this as jiānxíngtī.
Current Issues in Sino-Tibetan Linguistics, 1994

(7) ɲa³⁵ naŋ³³ la³³ mjaŋ⁵⁵ pi⁵⁵ ɲa³⁵
I  you OBJ see PERF 1P
I have seen you.

(8) wa³¹ than⁵⁵ tsha³¹ la³³ mjaŋ⁵⁵ pi⁵⁵ ze⁵⁵
pig that tiger OBJ see PERF non-1P
That pig saw a tiger.

(9) ɲa⁵⁵/ho³³ naŋ³¹ py³¹ tso³³ pi⁵⁵ ɲa⁵⁵
I/we hit middle PERF 1P
I/we hit the mark. / Wǒ(men) dâ zhòng le.

(10) than⁵⁵/thi⁵⁵ kun³³ py³³ tso³³ pi⁵⁵ ze⁵⁵
s/he/they hit middle PERF non-1P
S/he/they hit the mark. / Tā(men) dâ zhòng le.

(11) than⁵⁵ po³¹ lo³¹ ky³³ ɲan³¹ ŋy⁵⁵ ze⁵⁵²⁰
he book read PROG COP non-1P
He's reading a book.

(12) ho³³ naŋ³¹ mbu³¹ la⁵⁵ ɲa⁵⁵
we good COME 1P
We're going to get better.

(13) qo³³ sl⁵⁵ le⁵⁵ ze⁵⁵
millet yellow COME non-1P
The millet is getting yellow.

(14) naŋ⁵⁵/than⁵⁵ maŋ³¹ la⁵⁵ ze⁵⁵
you/he old COME non-1P
You/he are/is getting old.

Combinations of more than one aspectual morpheme seem freely to co-occur in the VP before a person-marker, e.g. EXPERIENTIAL + PERFECTIVE (15, 16), or INCHOATIVE + PERFECTIVE (17, 18):

19Due to a font problem, this paper cannot distinguish between the voiced velar fricative ɬ and the back unrounded vowel with a similar symbol. Position in the syllable always makes it clear which is meant, however.
20Notice that a newer copula, ŋy⁵⁵, may now co-occur with the older one (ze⁵⁵), now bleached of copular meaning.
So far all these examples have contained an explicit personal pronoun in a NP which shares with the person-marker in the VP the function of pointing to the subject of the sentence. However, the presence of a person-marker in the VP often makes subject pronouns redundant, so they are omissible without loss of clarity, as in (9a) and (10a), which are pronounless (indeed NP-less) variants of (9) and (10) above:

(9a) pỳ⁴³ tso⁴³ pi⁵⁵ ɲa⁵⁵
hit middle PERF 1P
I/we hit the mark. / ㄨ钨(ㄨ']è) ㄔㄥ ㄓㄥ ㄌ．

(10a)pỳ⁴³ tso⁴³ pi⁵⁵ зе⁵⁵
hit middle PERF non-1P
S/he/they hit the mark. / ㄨ钨(ㄨ']è) ㄔㄥ ㄓㄥ ㄌ．

Even when an object-noun is present in sentence initial position, it often cannot be misinterpreted as the subject if a person-marker occurs in the VP, as in (19):

(19) wà³¹ lǔ³³ la⁵⁵ pi³¹ ɲa⁵⁵
pig fat COME CAUS 1P
I let/made the pig get fat.

The most interesting cases demonstrate that these person-markers are not simple "agreement" morphemes, but rather have
evidential significance. The two markers can each occur in a sentence having a third person subject, but with a concomitant difference in evidential value. If the "normal" non-1P morpheme _phrase_ is used, the sentence has an impersonal, general declarative sense:\[21\]

\[(20) \text{laŋ}^{55}\text{sa}^{55} \text{me}^{33} \text{laŋ}^{55}\text{t} \text{c⟩h}^{31} \text{q}^{33} \text{ze}^{55} \]

paddyfield LOC water have non-1P

There's water in the paddyfield.

If, however, the 1P morpheme _phrase_ is used, the sentence is still grammatical, but there is an evidential increment of meaning: there is a claim that the statement is based on firsthand, personal knowledge:\[22\]

\[(21) \text{laŋ}^{55}\text{sa}^{55} \text{me}^{33} \text{laŋ}^{55}\text{t} \text{c⟩h}^{31} \text{q}^{33} \text{ja}^{55} \]

paddyfield LOC water have 1P

There's water in the paddyfield.[and I see it with my own eyes].

Similarly:

\[(22) \text{ja}^{31}\text{loŋ}^{33} \text{je}^{33} \text{ten}^{55}\text{ne}^{55} \text{t} \text{jaŋ}^{55} \text{ja}^{55} \]

fishpond inside fish exist 1P

There are fish in the fishpond.

/personal knowledge: qín zhī/

\[(23) \text{th}^{55} \text{t}^{31} \text{tha}^{55} \text{zi}^{33} \text{te}^{55} \text{pi}^{55} \text{ja}^{55} \]

s/he one time come EXPER exist PERF 1P

S/he has already come once.

/personal knowledge: qín zhī/

5.0 Etymology of Sangkong \_phrase_

5.1 Sources of SK initial \_phrase_

Sangkong \_phrase_- reflects several different PLB resonant and sonorant initials:\[23\]

\[\text{called } \text{ji}-\text{ban chenshù by Li Yongsui (p. 32).} \]

\[\text{called } qín zhī, qín jiàn, or qùe zhī by Li Yongsui (ibid.).} \]

\[\text{Cf. the discussion of Loloish resonantal reflexes in Matisoff 1969:171-9. The Lahu reflexes of PLB } *γ, *r, *w, C-\text{ṣ}, \text{and } *z/\text{ṣ} \text{are } /γ, Գ, v, ṣ, \text{and } y/, \text{respectively.} \]
(a) SK $\sim$ PLB $^*y$-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOUSE</th>
<th>$zim^5$</th>
<th>$^*yim^1$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TAKE</td>
<td>$zu^5$</td>
<td>$^*yu^1$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLEEP</td>
<td>$zù^3$</td>
<td>$^*yup$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEED</td>
<td>$an^33zg^3$</td>
<td>$^*yaw^2$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

/cf. Lahu yā/

POTATO $zəŋ^3zi^3$  
/cf. Lahu yàʔ-yi-ʒI (DL 1269) and Bantawa yək 'taro' /

(b) SK $\sim$ PLB $^*r$-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BONE</th>
<th>$an^33zg^3$</th>
<th>$^*raw^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

/cf. Lahu yā/

STAND  $zəp^3$  
$/*$rap$^L$ [TSR #175]

(c) SK $\sim$ PLB $^*v$-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BLOOM/FLOWER</th>
<th>$zə^3$</th>
<th>$^*s$-wat$^H$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ELDERSIBLING</td>
<td>$a^31zə^31a^3ni^5$</td>
<td>'relatives'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

/lit. "older and younger siblings"; cf. Lahu a-vi-a-ni, b-vi-b-ni/

(d) SK $\sim$ PLB $^*c$-š

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EASY/ CHEAP</th>
<th>$za^5$</th>
<th>$^*c$-š$^a$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

/cf. Lahu ša/

(e) SK $\sim$ PLB $^*z$ or $^*ž$

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXCREMENT/RUST/BLIGHT</th>
<th>$zəŋ^3$</th>
<th>'excrement' $\sim$ $^*z$/$zəŋ^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

/cf. Lahu yə 'rust; rot; blight'; cognate to WT ḡəŋ, bəŋ 'shit' $\sim$ PTB $^*g$-/b-šəŋ
5.2 Sources of the Sangkong rhyme -e

Sangkong -e (similarly to Lahu -e)\textsuperscript{24} has several sources, including \*-i, \*-ay, and \*-at (with constriction of the vowel), and perhaps \*-an\textsuperscript{25}:

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{lll}
HUNGRY & \*mvat & \rightarrow SK mbe\textsubscript{31} \\
BITE & \*tsat & \rightarrow SK tshe\textsubscript{31} \\
SPIRIT & \*nat & \rightarrow SK nde\textsubscript{31} \\
KILL & \*sat & \rightarrow SK se\textsubscript{31} \\
ALIVE & \*dat & \rightarrow SK te\textsubscript{31} \\
FLOWER & \*s-wat & \rightarrow SK \_e\textsubscript{33} \\
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

PLB \*-at \rightarrow SK \_e (\rightarrow \_e after a SK palatal)

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{ll}
STIR/MIX & \*pan & \rightarrow SK phe\textsubscript{31} \\
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

PLB \*-i \rightarrow SK \_e

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{ll}
RED & \*ni & \rightarrow SK ne\textsubscript{55} \\
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

PLB \*-ay \rightarrow SK \_e

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{ll}
TEN\textsuperscript{26} & \*tsay & \rightarrow SK tshe\textsubscript{55} \\
GO & \*ay & \rightarrow SK e\textsubscript{55} \\
RELATIVIZER & \*way & \rightarrow SK e\textsubscript{55} \\
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

5.3 The copular etymon \*way \& \*ray as the source of Sangkong e\textsubscript{55} and \_e\textsubscript{55}

\textsuperscript{24}See Matisoff 1985, passim.

\textsuperscript{25}SK does have the rhyme \_-an, but the two best examples, LOUSE and DHOLE (see Appendix) descend from etyma in \*-ar and \*-al, respectively. If ordinary \*-an really became SK \_-e, perhaps we will have to claim that the rhymes \*-ar and \*-al survived into Proto-Loloish after all. The interesting etymon \*san \& \*sat 'pour, spill, scatter (as seed)' also appears with SK \_-an [see Appendix].

\textsuperscript{26}For a discussion of this "still puzzling etymon", which shows vowel gradation, see Matisoff 1985 #73.
Among its other functions, the Lahu particle \textit{ve} is a nominalizer and a relativizer. I have shown (1985) how \textit{ve} descends from a copular morpheme, PTB *\textit{way}, that has an equally well-attested allofamic variant *\textit{ray}.

The Sangkong relativizer \textit{e} is appears directly cognate to Lahu \textit{ve}, and the two particles show identical syntactic behavior:

\begin{center}
\text{Sangkong: } \text{qha} \text{ tsa} \text{ mbu} \text{ e} \text{ ap} \text{ si} \text{ i-31}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\text{Lahu: } \text{a-ci ca mÈ ve i-3I/}
\end{center}

This finally gives us the clue to the etymology of the SK non-3rd person marker \textit{ze}. We have seen that SK \textit{z-} can come from *\textit{r-}, and that one of the sources of SK \textit{e} is *\textit{a-y}. I wish to claim that \textit{ze} is from the abstract copular morpheme *\textit{ray}, which seems semantically quite appropriate for sentences where the 1st person is out of the picture. This use of an abstract copula-like element ensures that the verbal event is stated in its most evidentially neutral, declarative aspect -- in sharp contrast to those utterances where the 1st person is elevated to the center of attention by the copying of a personal pronoun onto the verb-phrase.

It is interesting to note that both allofams of the copula have distinct reflexes in both Sangkong and Lahu:

\begin{center}
\text{Sangkong: } \text{*way} \quad \text{Lahu: } \text{ve}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\text{Lahu: } \text{ve} \quad \text{\textit{yÈ 28 'bunch; group (Cf)'}}
\end{center}

\textsuperscript{27}Cf. the use of Lahu \textit{ve} in non-embedded sentential nominalizations.

\textsuperscript{28}As explained in Matisoff 1985:59, synchronic Lahu does not tolerate the syllable *\textit{ye}, so the regular reflex of *\textit{a-y} after *\textit{r-} is *\textit{a}. See also *\textit{s-ray} > Lh. \textit{ha} 'pluralizer'.

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6.0 The Akha evidential system

In an illuminating series of articles in the early 1970's, Søren Egerod analyzed a system of Akha sentence particles that encode such dimensions of meaning as "1st person prime mover" vs. "non-1st person prime mover" and "visual knowledge" vs. "non-visual knowledge". The 1st person particle indicating visual knowledge is ꞌya (with some tonal variants), obviously related to the independent pronoun ꞌya ~ ꞌya 'I', which contrasts with the non-visual particle ꞌya, as in:

ꞌga ꞌya 'he loves her (I have seen signs)'
ꞌga ꞌya 'he loves her (I have heard/felt signs)'29

A more detailed treatment of Sangkong sentence particles than is to be found in Li Yonggui's article would undoubtedly reveal many more points of similarity with the Akha evidential apparatus.

7.0 The Lahu benefactive system30

Lahu has a systematic dichotomy between 3rd and non-3rd person beneficiaries of verbal actions (as opposed to the Akha/Sangkong 1st vs. non-1st person marking). The basic distinction here is outer-directed vs. inner-directed action, as is obvious from the full verbal meanings of the grammaticalized markers of the distinction:

3rd person marker: ꞌpi (Vv) /'give' as full verb/
non-3rd person marker: ꞌla (Pv) / ꞌla (V) 'come'/

See Figure I.

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29The Akha verb ꞌga 'love' is cognate to SK ꞌka and the Lahu desiderative particle ꞌga (see Appendix).
30See Matisoff 1973:325.
8.0 Conclusions

A controversy has been simmering in Tibeto-Burman circles as to whether the pronominal agreement systems that have achieved great complexity in, e.g. the languages of E. Nepal reflect an original TB/ST feature, or whether (as I believe) they have developed secondarily and independently in various branches of the family. The fact that the germs of pronominalization have been found in a Loloish language (a branch of TB that had hitherto been thought to be free of the phenomenon) does not, in my view, constitute evidence for the existence of a reconstructible system of pronominal concord at the PTB level -- in fact quite the contrary! It shows that the marking of agreement in the verb is something which can evolve naturally and independently through the operation of certain information-packaging strategies in verb-final languages.
In fact the Sangkong "agreement markers" do not necessarily refer narrowly to the agent of the sentence, but may have a more general evidential value. If, e.g., the speaker is making a statement that reflects his own personal knowledge, he may use the 1st-person marker even though the sentence may contain a 3rd-person subject. This makes Sangkong "verb pronominalization" look much more like the person-based evidential system of particles described for Akha (Egerod 1973, 1974; Hansson 1976), or the person-based benefactive morphemes found in Lahu (see above, 6.0, 7.0).

The origins of this rudimentary system of verb pronominalization are perhaps to be sought in "evidential afterthoughts", sentence-tags like "..., I know or "..., I guess " for first person involvement, vs. "..., [and that's the way he/it/you] is/are" for neutral, objective statements.

9.0 Appendix: Some interesting Sangkong cognates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PTB</th>
<th>PLB</th>
<th>WBurmese</th>
<th>Lahu</th>
<th>Sangkong</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'be in a place/be there/existential copula'</td>
<td>*dɔaṇ¹</td>
<td>ɔ</td>
<td>tɔaŋ⁵⁵</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'wolf/dhole/wild dog'</td>
<td>*kywał</td>
<td>ve</td>
<td>han⁵⁵</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/see Matisoff 1985, #17; the -n in the SK form might be due to rhinoglottophilia after the initial h-; cf. 'four' ṭn⁵⁵ ~ xun⁵⁵ (Lahu ᵅ ~ ᶅn)/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'louse'</td>
<td>*sar</td>
<td>sán (Tone *2)</td>
<td>ᵇ (*1)</td>
<td>san⁵⁵ (*1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'snow/ice/frost'</td>
<td>*hẹ--</td>
<td>ẹ</td>
<td>ẹ⁵⁵</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/firm cognate, but proto-vocalism uncertain/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PTB  PLB  WBs  Lahu  Sangkong

'weave'
*ŋ-rakʰ  rak  ṣaʔ (*-rak)  ṣa3¹ (*-ŋak)
//this complicated root had an unstable initial; even the four
allofams set up in TSR #192 do not tell the whole story; Bisu has
ɡā, also *ŋak//

'teach'
*?ma1/2  hma (*1) mā (*2)  ma2¹ (*2)

'field'
*hya1  ya  he  laŋ55 ṣa55
//the 1st syll. of the SK form means 'water'; the Bs. and Lh. forms
refer to non-irrigated swiddens/

'temporal'
*ta1/2  thā (*2)  thā55 (*1)
//the Lahu form is a temporal unrestricted particle; the SK is a
time-classifier/

'love/desiderative'
*Nga²  gā (Pv)  ka3¹ 'love; want'

'send (things)'
*sa2/3  ṣā (*2)  sa3³ (*3)
//Akha [ILH] sjha (*3); contra Matisoff 1988:1173, this is NOT a Tai
loanword, and has nothing to do with Tai ṣəŋ 'send' (miscited as saŋ
[ibid.])/

'dry in the sun'
*?-rapʰ  hū  hup3¹
//both Lahu and SK reflect a preglottalized prototype; contrast
STAND/

'stand'
*?-rapʰ  rap  hū  ṣa3¹
//see TSR #175; WB and SK both reflect an allofam with plain
liquid, *rap)/

'easy'
َا  ṣa55
//Akha sa*; why voicing in SK?/
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PTB    PLB    WBs    Lahu    Sangkong

'shit'
*ɡ/b-ŋां *zaŋ²/*zaŋ²  yan  zāŋ₃₁
/the Lahu form means 'rust; rot; blight'; cognate to WT ṣāṇ, b'sāṇ 'shit'/

'scatter seed'
*swan¹/² swan/swān  ṣē  san₃₁
/Lahu ṣēʔ 'spill, pour' reflects the allomorph *sat. Chinese has cognates of both the nasal- and stop-finalled allomorphs: OC 散 *sān and 撒 *sāt (see Matisoff 1985:#40); the proto-variation in the final may account for SK -an rather than -e/

'go'
*aʔy¹  e (PY)  e⁵⁵
/see Matisoff 1990/

REFERENCES


----------. (to appear) "Watch out for number one: Jingpho ɲāi 'I' and ɭəɲəi 'one'". To appear in Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area 16.2.

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