

Reading notes of A Grammar of Japhug

Jinyuan Wu

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The theoretical orientation is already well-documented in my notes about English, Latin and Mandarin Chinese.

Chapter 1

Part of speech

1.1 Noun

1.2 Verb

Verbs can be regularly formed by denominal derivations (Jacques 2021, Ch 20). Since an independent adjective class is absent, the only two kinds of denominal derivations are noun-to-adverb derivations and noun-to-verb derivations, the former being relative marginal (Jacques 2021, p. 1011); thus the term *denominal* can be used specifically to refer to noun-to-verb derivations.

1.2.1 Grammatical categories

Decomposition of these TAME categories in the same way English *he [is playing] football* is analyzed as “present (imperfect) progressive” is not necessary: TODO: why

The morphological realization of these categories is remarkable. Their main exponents are the alternation of the orientation prefix. Some TAME categories insert a fixed prefix into the orientation prefix slot (TODO: regardless of the lexically determined orientation prefix or the semantically significant orientation prefix of an orientable prefix?); others choose one of the four prefixes that have the same directional meaning in Jacques (2021, Table 15.1).

1.3 Ideophones

The category of ideophone occupies mainly manner adverbial positions (Jacques 2021, § 10.1.7). Its main difference with the adverb class is its morphology (Jacques 2021, § 10.1.2) and phonology (Jacques 2021, § 10.1.5).

1.4 Analyzed examples

The sentence final stative verb *ɲu* be.FACT is listed as a stative verb in the dictionary and seems to take the constituents before it as a finite complement clause (TODO: or report speech? see the condition on p. 1317), which is without any explicit complementizer. But also see pp. 1081,

Chapter 2

Noun phrase

One interesting feature of the Japhug comitative is it's also considered when deciding the number of an NP (Jacques 2021, p. 332); but it's still not prototypically a conjunction (Jacques 2021, p. 420): the NP following the comitative marker may be omitted, agreeing with the fact that the head noun of an NP can also be dropped (Jacques 2021, p. 425). (In English this is only possible for clauses: in informal writing and speech people may start with a sentence with *and*, i.e. a conjunction construction without the first branch, but they never do so to an NP.) The NP after the comitative marker can also be relativized. Thus the comitative suffix is still recognized as a type of modification.

Chapter 3

The verb

Japhug is a heavily inflected language, and most grammatical categories in the clause have something to do with the verb. The structure of the verb can be divided into the outer prefix chain (Jacques 2021, Table 11.1), the extended stem, and the suffix chain (Jacques 2021, § 11.3); the extended stem contains the stem, which may undergo stem alternation (Jacques 2021, Ch 12), and inner prefixes related to valence alternation (Jacques 2021, § 11.2.2).

Whether this complex is to be regarded as one *morphological* or *phonological* word is discussed in § 11.6 in the reference above. Recognition of wordhood, expectedly, is not self-evident; Prins (2011) provides an analysis of another rGyalrong language, Jiaomuzu, and in this thesis the term *verb phrase* (i.e. verbal complex in this note) is used, skipping the discussion on what is a word. In Jacques (2021, Table 11.3) four domains are defined using various criteria.

Domain A is defined according to both syntactic and morphological reasons. What's shown in Table 11.3 contains all formatives that are relevant to verb inflection, and they have non-adjacent dependencies, so strong dependencies exist between them: these formatives are realized in the same batch in clause building. Now syntactically, the formative *-ci* in slit +4 is selected by some modal prefixes in slot -6, so the two slots belong to the same system; on the other hand, outside the +4 and -6 slots we only have clitics which clearly belong to systems with higher positions (Jacques 2021, § 11.6.2), and thus all – and only – formatives in Table 11.3 constitute a syntactic word, with the same *syntactic* status of a verb-plus-auxiliary verbal complex or a “verb phrase” in Dixon's definition (i.e. without internal complements). Morphologically, no element is able to intervene between two slots in the template, so we say this batch is realized as a single morphological word instead of a verbal complex.

Domain B is about *obligatoriness*: thus the +4 slot is not included. Domain C is defined according to prosodic reasons.

Chapter 4

Argument indexation and argument structure

Japhug shows clear nominative-accusative properties in aspects related to syntactic ergativity. However, in verbal morphology, a direct-inverse system with morphological ergative features is well established. The inverse phenomena, i.e. the alternation of alignment when the , can be divided into two classes: one is about the grammatical function of the arguments, another is about verb conjugation. The first group of phenomena is often known as inverse voice, in which the patient *becomes* the subject;¹ the second group is often known as (“morphological”) inverse alignment (Oxford 2023).

In the verb morphology part of the Japhug inverse system, the subject in the direct configuration and the object in the inverse configuration are indexed on the verb. The personal affixes on the verb are neutral: they are only about person and number, and tell us nothing about the argument position of the argument from which they originate.

The ergative-triggered morphological ergativity of Japhug falls in “inverse voice” said above, since the direct-inverse distinction leads to alternation of the behaviors of the arguments, but since the patient is not rendered the syntactic pivot that is directly involved in e.g. coordination, calling this alternation “voice” seems exaggerated and goes against the common practice in the research of ergativity; thus the term “inverse voice” is not satisfactory here.

¹Although this name is not satisfactory – see below.

Chapter 5

TAME marking

The TAME categories in Japhug are introduced in Jacques (2021, Ch 21). Morphologically speaking, there are three systems (Jacques 2019, p. 516):

- The PRIMARY system, the morphological marking of which happens in the template of the verb and is listed in Table 21.1. This system's main exponents are stem alternation, the orientation preverb, and the modal prefix.
- The SECONDARY system, which also happens in the inflection of the verb but is less involved with the TAME parameters in the PRIMARY system.
- The PERIPHRASTIC system, which appears in the first glance to be similar to complement clause constructions with the copula *ɲu*. The copula in periphrastic constructions never takes any argument indexation markers (Jacques 2021, p. 1090), and if we are to analyze the constructions as complement clause constructions, then the literal reading will be something like “it's the case that an event happens”, with all the contents before the copula being a complement clause of the copula. In the follows however it can be seen that the TAME categories on the copula is complementary with the lexical verb, and hence the periphrastic constructions are to be analyzed as single-clause constructions.

In periphrastic constructions the main verb is often in *finite* forms (Jacques 2021, p. 1081); Japhug periphrastic conjugation thus has a difference with English or Latin periphrastic conjugation, where what are used in periphrastic TAME categories are *non-finite* verb forms. The reason possibly is because the periphrastic TAME categories in Japhug historically comes from finite complement clause constructions.

TODO: is there any constraints on the distribution of participle or infinitive?

The interaction of the three morphological systems makes Japhug TAME system extremely complicated; some periphrastic categories seem to have identical semantics with primary and secondary TAME marking devices (p. 1092); whether there are hidden nuances is still not clear.

Besides the verbal complex, TAME categories are also marked by sentential adverbs and sentence-final particles (Jacques 2019, p. 518; Jacques 2021, § 21.8).

Also, TAME categories interact strongly with the lexical aspect of the main verb, which can be crudely divided into being stative and being dynamic (e.g. § 21.3.1.2), the person of the subject, and TODO: other properties

The following subcategories can be recognized in the primary system:

- Subjective evaluation: some TAME categories can be used to express the feeling of the speaker (§ 21.3.2.4) – but is this a grammatical category?
- Evidentiality. Japhug has a highly complicated evidentiality system (Jacques 2015, Table 31.4). The values of evidentiality attested include the generic, the factual, the sensory, the egophoric, and the inferential.

A three-fold distinction can be observed with the non-past tense (Jacques 2021, § 21.3.4; Jacques 2019, § 517): the factual or common knowledge (§ 21.3.1.2), the sensory (§ 21.3.2.2), and the egophoric.

Actually there is a fourth, bleached “generic” evidentiality value with the non-past tense. The generic non-past TAME configuration with no other non-trivial TAME marking is known as the IMPERFECTIVE (Jacques 2021, § 21.2). This however seems to be very infrequent in main clauses without periphrastic auxiliaries (p. 1087), indicating a strong preference for Japhug to include a non-trivial evidentiality value in non-past sentences.

The inferential evidentiality value appears only with the past tense, possibly because of semantic reasons: an event happening now usually doesn’t need to be “inferred”, and this rarity means even this category existed historically, it has long been eroded. With the past tense, we have a dichotomy between the generic evidentiality and the inferential evidentiality. It’s impossible to morphologically mark the sensory evidentiality with the past tense, possibly again because of the infrequency of this configuration. It should however be noted that the sensory can still be combined with the past tense by periphrastically attaching a sensory copula to the AORIST (i.e. PAST PERFECTIVE – see below) and the PAST IMPERFECTIVE which have default evidentiality (Jacques 2021, § 21.5.1.8, § 21.5.3.5; Jacques 2019, p. 518). On the other hand, the factual evidentiality and the egophoric evidentiality are never seen together with the past tense.

- Primary tense. The distinction between the past and the non-past can be clearly identified (§ 23.3, § 23.5), partly from the interaction with evidentiality. The meaning of future is regularly expressed in the FACTUAL category (p. 1102), and thus is sometimes recognized as the future tense or “factual evidentiality in the future tense” (Jacques 2019, p. 518). This however seems to be the natural extension of the meaning of the present tense (c.f. English *the next high tide is around 4 this afternoon*; Huddleston and Pullum 2002, p. 131, [20]), and in Jacques (2021), the future tense is not recognized as a grammatical tense in Japhug (Jacques 2021, p. 1102, (46)).
- Modality. In Japhug, once the irrealis situation occurs, it seems other TAME categories are not available. There are four types of irrealis modalities falling in this domain: the IRREALIS, the DUBITATIVE, the IMPERATIVE, and the PROHIBITIVE (Jacques 2021, § 21.4).
- It seems the anterior category (the PERFECT category in English) is absent in Japhug.
- Aspect: the imperfective-perfective distinction. The non-past categories are always inherently imperfective: no perfective aspectuality is seen with non-past tense (Jacques 2019, p. 517), again possibly because of semantic reasons, since

the perfective may be semantically identified with the past. The imperative-perfective distinction can only be seen with the past tense (Jacques 2021, Table 21.1, note that the AORIST is also known as the PAST PERFECTIVE; pp. 1135, 1143).

- Aspects TODO: terminative, continuative, etc. TODO: the position of the inchoative aspect The progressive aspect (§ 21.6; note that Table 21.8: compatibility?)

The composition between these categories is not orthogonal, and no independent morphological exponent can be identified for each separate TAME categories mentioned above (but in periphrastic conjugation, distribution of these primitive TAME categories onto the main verb and the auxiliary copula can be observed; Jacques 2021, p. 1089, (7)); these parameters are therefore deeply fused into each other. By combining these categories and noticing the constraints listed above, we find the 11 primary TAME categories listed in Jacques (2021, p. 21.1). The realis part is replicated in Table 5.1. Note that the AORIST is just the PAST PERFECTIVE in Jacques (2015, Table 31.4).

Table 5.1: Analysis of Japhug realis TAME categories; the two sensory past cells may be filled by periphrastic conjugation

tense	aspect	evidentiality				
		generic	factual	sensory	egophoric	inferential
non-past	imperfective	IMPERFECTIVE	FACTUAL	SENSORY	EGOPHORIC PRESENT	
past	imperfective	PAST IMPERFECTIVE				INFERENTIAL
	perfective	AORIST				INFERENTIAL IMPERFECTIVE

Periphrastic conjugations

Chapter 6

Clause structure

6.1 The overall structure

Japhug clauses are verb-final: core arguments and adverbials are before the verb, [Jacques \(2021\)](#) doesn't mention verb phrase coordination, but [Prins \(2011, p. 549\)](#) mentions coordination of two verb phrases sharing the same subject in a relative language Jiaomuzu, and therefore the verb phrase layer should be kept??

References

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