THE DECLINE OF VERB-FINAL SYNTAX

IN THE YI (LOLO) LANGUAGES OF SOUTHWESTERN CHINA[1]

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Paul Benedict, in the book that has become a cynosure of Sino-Tibetan [ST] studies, Sino-Tibetan: A Conspectus, established the genetic bond between Tibeto-Burman [TB] and Chinese by showing resemblances in fundamental vocabulary too numerous to be attributed to borrowing. The vast family thereby revealed tolerates a broad range of grammatical disparity, notably between the "verb-final" [OV] TB languages and the "verb-medial" [VO] Chinese and Karen; but given the lexical resemblances, and the presence of neighboring languages from which the verb-medial type could have been cast, the question of how such divergencies came about was not critical to the genetic hypothesis and, until recently, did not attract a great deal of attention. It is, nevertheless, a question that has to be answered eventually and this paper is intended as a first step towards that end. It deals with syntactic change on a scale comparable to that presupposed by the ST articulation -- and in much the same direction -- that has taken place in a group of languages known in China as the "Yi" and in the West as the "Lolo", that form one of the major groupings in the Loloish (or "Yiish") subbranch of TB. Although the Yi developments are not identical to those inferred for Chinese and Karen, they do suggest a way in which the verb-final word order of the TB proto-language could have been breached.

1. THE YI

"Yi", replacing earlier "Lolo," is the name given by the Chinese to the largest and most diverse of the four or five major languages, or groups of dialects, that form the Loloish branch of the TB language family.[2] The other

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[1] Some of the comparative data presented in this article formed the basis of papers delivered at the XVth [Peking, 1982] and XVIth [Seattle, 1983] Conferences on Sino-Tibetan Languages and Linguistics and at the Xth meeting of the Berkeley Linguistic Society [1984]. The Berkeley paper entitled "The role of verb serialization in word-order change," will appear in the published proceedings (cf. Wheatley 1984). I would like to thank participants for their comments. My analysis of the comparative data has also profited greatly from discussions with Graham Thurgood and James Matisoff.

[2] According to Chen (1963), the majority of the Yi call themselves "Nosu" (or dialectal variants thereof, such as "Nasu"), while a few call themselves "Ni" (cf. "Sani"), or "Lo-lo-pho" (= "La-lo-pha"). For my misgivings about the last designation, cf. note 15 below. The name "Lolo," one of a number of names

important members of this branch, referred to collectively as the "non-Yi" languages, are Lisu, Lahu, and Hani (the last known as "Akha" outside China). These are spoken by peoples relatively south and west of the Yi. Yi speakers number over three million (cf. Chen 1963:334) and are concentrated in highland regions of Yunnan, Sichuan and Guizhou provinces of southwestern China. "Classical" Yi society was divided into two castes, a small elite (known as the "Black Yi"), who owned the land and were involved in animal husbandry, and a large serf population ("the White Yi") who engaged in dry farming.[3]

The Yi seem to have occupied the same regions for several thousand years.[4] From at least early Ming times, when large scale Han settlement of the south-west began, Yi have been drifting onto the margins of Han social and political structure. By the nineteenth century large numbers of Yi coexisted with Han, as well as with Tai [i.e. Pu-yi = Zhongjia] and Miao. But in their stronghold in the Liangshan region ["the Cool Mountains"] of present-day southern Sichuan, the Yi have persisted with no more than nominal political integration in Chinese society until recent times.

2. DATA AND SOURCES

Chen, in his brief survey of Yi (Ibid.), distinguishes nine 'varieties', which he groups into six dialects.[5]   Published descriptions represent only three of these dialects: Ma's grammar of "Sani" (1951) and Yuan's "Axi" (1953),[6]   though not explicitly identified as such in Chen's article, probably represent the "Southeastern" dialect; Gao's Yi grammar (1958) and Ma's "Luquan" texts (1949a, b) - the latter based on manuscripts dating from the 17th century -- represent Chen's "Eastern" dialect; and the Liangshan dialect cited in Chen et al's article on simplex-causative verb pairs (1962) gives us a glimpse of the important "Northern" dialect.[7]   Gao's dialect [abbreviated "YI", with no

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formerly used by the Chinese, has always been considered derogatory; its replacement, "Yi," though written differently (彝 rather than 夷) is homophonous with an earlier term for the "Western tribes." I follow Chinese practice in using "Yi" for the subgrouping within Loloish, hence "the Yi dialects" or "the Yi languages," but I retain the name "Loloish" rather than the awkward "Yiish" as the superordinate term - hence "the Loloish languages," or "the Loloish subbranch."

[3] Cf. Alan Winnington, The Slaves of the Cool Mountains (London 1959), especially chapter three. For ethnological works on Yi, cf. Alain Y. Dessaint's annotated bibliography entitled Minorities of Southwest China (HRAF, 1980).

[4] Cf. Feng Han-yi and J.K. Shryock, "The historical origins of the Lolo," Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies 3.2 (1938):103-27.

[5] Tǔhuà (土話) 'varieties' and fāngyán (方言) 'dialects'. Chen gives the dialects geographical labels: a "Northern" dialect, with two varieties; an "Eastern," with three; a "Western," a "Central," and a "Southeastern," each with a single variety. No two dialects are mutually intelligible, though varieties may be.

[6] These two dialects form the basis of several very fine earlier studies: Paul Vial's Dictionnaire français-lolo, dialecte gni (Hong Kong, 1909); and Alfred Liétard's "Essai de dictionnaire lolo-français: dialecte A-Hi," T'oung Pao 12 (1911) 1-37, 123-56, 316-46, 544-58, and his "Notions de grammaire lo-lo: dialecte A-Hi," T'oung Pao 12 (1911) 627-62.

[7] The "Northern" dialect of Liangshan is considered the standard. Chen et al (1962) contains only a few dozen sentences from this dialect. Boyd Michailovsky has kindly sent me two recently published books on the Liangshan

subscript][8]   is our main source of Yi examples. Some examples are also drawn
from Ma's Sani [abbreviated YI$_M$] and from Chen et al's Liangshan [YI$_C$]. Non-Yi
languages are represented mainly as follows: Lisu, by Xu and Ou (1959) [= LI][9]
and by Hope (1974) [=LI$_H$]; Lahu by Matisoff (1973 = G[rammar of] L[ahu], and
p.c.) [all LH]; and Hani, by Li (1979) [=HA].

3. GRAMMATICAL CORRESPONDENCES BETWEEN YI AND NON-YI

Consistent sound correspondences among initials, rhymes and tones (cf.
Matisoff 1972, 1979; Bradley 1979; Thurgood 1982)[10] leave no doubt that the Yi
languages share a common origin with Lisu, Lahu, and Hani -- the non-Yi group.
Structurally the Yi have much in common with the other Loloish languages and,
indeed, with many of the languages -- TB or otherwise -- found on the mainland
of Southeast Asia. They are tonal and highly segmentable; they exhibit a simple
syllable structure; they require the use of classifiers with quantified noun
phrases; they are characterized by an extreme "economy of expression,"
employing a minimum of obligatory nominal and verbal categories, and allowing
"given" (i.e. "recoverable") material to be omitted ("zero-anaphora"); and they
make use of grammaticalized verbs to indicate aspect and modality notions.
    With important exceptions to be examined at length below, the Yi dialects
also display many of the verb-final features characteristic of the TB family:
modality morphemes, directional complements and other "auxiliaries" generally
follow the verb,[11] while genitive noun phrases -- and, in many cases, other
nominal modifiers as well -- precede their head nouns; where case and spatial
relationships are indicated they are signaled post-positionally; subordinate
conjunctions appear at the foot of non-final clauses;[12] clauses of comparison

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dialect: Li Min Ma Ming's Liangshan Yiyu Yufa (The Grammar of Liangshan Yi),
1981, and his Liangshan Yiyu Huihua Liubaiju (600 Sentences in Liangshan Yi),
1982, both published by the Sichuan People's Press. Rather than try to
incorporate the new Liangshan material in this article, I am making a separate
study.

[8] Translated, the title of Gao's book is A Study on Yi Grammar, but it includes
an appendix entitled "A study of Chinese loanwords in Nasu," and it has become
customary to refer to this Yi dialect as "Nasu". Not all Yi who call
themselves "Nasu" necessarily speak this dialect, it should be noted (cf. fn.
2).

[9] Because the authors' names were not listed on the title page, this work has,
in the past, often been labeled "Anonymous," or else attributed to the
"Institute of National Minorities of the Chinese Academy of Sciences."

[10] Despite the large number of their speakers, Yi dialects have played a
relatively minor role in comparative Loloish studies. Matisoff (1972) makes
use of the best materials that were then available, but information on the
important Northern dialects of "Liangshan," and "Xide" has been lacking until
recently.

[11] Lahu is something of an exception among Loloish languages in that it places
some auxiliaries before the head verb (cf. GL §4.32 and Matisoff 1969). The
majority of verbal modifiers still follow, however. The Lahu phonological
system and lexicon have been heavily influenced by Tai languages and perhaps
the unusual "fore-and-aft concatenations" (GL § 4.36) of Lahu owe their origin
to Tai influences as well.

[12] Though (Gao's) Yi shows some variation here. The conditional conjunction
-p'a^{33} is regularly placed before the main verb; cf. YI (44) ŋa^{213} vɣ^{33} p'a^{33}
gɯ^{33} ji^{213} 'my-father-if-return-go = if my father returns.' Other subordinate
conjunctions in Nasu are placed in final position in subordinate clauses, like

have the order "standard-marker-adjective," and so on. These features will not be specially illustrated; most of them will be apparent from the examples that follow.

We are interested in differences, two in particular: first, in places where the non-Yi languages are hypotactic -- providing overt signals of clause boundaries --, the Yi languages tend to be paratactic, that is, they forgo the use of conjunctions in consecutive constructions and complementizers or nominalizers in embeddings. Secondly -- and more interestingly -- where the non-Yi languages employ a consistent verb-final pattern that divides the clause into a nominal "hemistiche" and a verbal (Matisoff's terms), the Yi languages employ a verb-final "serializing" pattern, with noun phrases intervening in the verbal string.

3.1 HYPOTAXIS IN NON-YI VERSUS PARATAXIS IN YI

A. CONSECUTIVE CONSTRUCTIONS[13]

Hypotaxis in non-Yi:

1a. LI (146)

... za⁵tʃhɯ⁵za⁵ niε³ tshe⁶ʃɯ¹ ma³ mε⁴ ha² si¹ ha⁴mi³ o¹gu⁵ kua³
 orphan TOP grain PT lift raise and ground on at

$za^5t\int h\textturnw^5za^5$ $ni\varepsilon^3$ $tshe^6\int\textturnw^1$ ma^3 $m\varepsilon^4$ ha^2 si^1 ha^4mi^3 o^1gu^5 kua^3

ni⁵ tu² ʃɯ¹ ha², ...
two handfulls scatter down

ni^5 tu^2 $\int\textturnw^1$ ha^2,

... the orphan picked up the grain and threw a couple of handfulls on the ground, ...

b. LH (417)

á-qhɔ qò? e lε- ˉɔ câ pə̀ á lε yɬ? e ve
home return PT and food finish PT and sleep PT PT
After returning home, he ate his meal and went to sleep.

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their counterparts in the non-Yi languages. The position of -p'a³³ may be a result of Chinese influence. In Chinese subordinate conjunctions may precede or follow the subject; if they follow they will often appear immediately before the verb. Nasu speakers may have generalized the pre-verbal rather than the post-subject position of the Chinese conjunction.

[13] All citations are given in their original transcription with the exception that, for Yi dialects, I have substituted numbers for the tone letters of the Chinese sources (33 for ⊣, etc.) In such cases, glottalized or checked tones, indicated in the original by underlining the vowel, are symbolized by under-lining the numbers (bi³¹). Hope, for Lisu, and Matisoff, for Lahu, use diacritics to indicate tones, and these are left unchanged. Xu and Ou number the tones of their Lisu dialect arbitrarily, 1 to 6. In word-for-word glosses, grammatical functions and classes are capitalized and abbreviated as follows: PT 'particle of unspecified function,' TOP 'topic marker,' ASP 'aspectual morpheme,' OBJ 'object marker,' DECL 'declarative marker,' POSS 'possessive marker,' NZR 'nominalizing particle.' When citing Chinese sources I have translated the glosses into English. Original page numbers are placed in parentheses.

c. HA (144)

da⁵⁵dʐa³³ xɔ⁵⁵gɔ³¹ da³³ li³³ a⁵⁵ne³³ mi³¹kho³¹ xe³¹ kha⁵⁵
everyone mountain climb go and firewood cut PT
Everyone climbed up the mountain to cut firewood.

Parataxis in Yi:

2. YI (43)

t'i³¹ lɤ⁴⁴ du³² lɛ²⁴ ŋu³³ dʐ'i³¹ vɛ³² to³² t'ia³¹
he sneak exit come fish skin hold lift him-by

t'a³¹ tɔ³² sɘ³² mu³³tu⁴⁴ kɯ⁴⁴ tɕ'u³³
one piece tear fire inside burn

He sneaked out, picked up the fish skin, tore off a piece,
and burned it in the fire.

COMMENTS: Lisu -si¹ (cf. Xu and Ou, p. 80), Lahu -lɛ (cf. GL §5.42),
and Hani -a⁵⁵ne³³ indicate that the previous clause is temporally
prior and not the final clause of the sentence.[14] Comparable
conjunctions appear in many TB languages; Burmese, for example, uses a
morpheme, -pi, derived from the verb pi 'finish, complete.' But in Yi,
consecutive "clauses" are usually juxtaposed without any explicit
indication of clause boundaries.

B. EMBEDDED CLAUSES

Hypotaxis in non-Yi:

3a. LH (440) nɔ̀ là ve ŋà ha-lɛ̀ jâ
you come NZR I glad very
I'm very glad you came.

b. LH (446) nɔ̀-hɨ thà? hɛ ɔ̀-šɨ thu cɨ ve thà?
you-PL OBJ fields new clear let NZR OBJ

ŋà mâ yō pɨ
I not believe be-able

I can't believe [they]'re letting you clear new fields.

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[14] None of the three conjunctions is etymologically related to any of the others.
This is typical of particles in TB languages. It may be that grammatical
words, because of their frequency, tend to gain a high content of social
meaning. If so, the formal diversity of these words in the various Loloish
languages may be a linguistic reflection of local loyalties.

c. LI_H(133)   alě nya ása nya ami   khwa-a̱ tsɿ̀   mə̱ -a̱
              Ale TOP Asa TOP fields hoe-NZR remember get-DECL
              Ale remembers that Asa is hoeing fields.

Parataxis in Yi:

4a. YI(42)   t'i³¹ ŋu³¹ ȵo³³mɔ²¹³ ŋɯ³³ ŋɔ²¹³ uo²⁴
              he   my   sister   cry   see   ASP
              He saw my younger sister crying.

 b. YI(45)   t'ɛ⁴⁴ bɤ³¹ a⁵⁵nu³²dʑ'ɔ³² dzu³³ ma³¹ tɕ'ɚ⁴⁴
              they POSS bean-curd   eat   not aware
              [They] forgot to eat their beancurd.

 c. YI(44)   ... ŋu³¹ tsɿ²¹³ to³² p'a³³ dʑu³²
                   I   run   go-up if   fear
              if [you]'re worried about me running off

COMMENTS: Examples #3a-c and #4a-c contain clauses that are notionally
embedded as objects (with or without Equi-NP deletion) to verbs of
perception or cognition. Lahu and Lisu (as well as Burmese and other TB
languages) require clauses to be nominalized (by -ve in Lahu, -a in
Lisu) before being embedded. In Yi languages, on the other hand,
embedding is not overtly signaled. There are cases in Lahu (and no
doubt in Lisu as well) in which no complementizer is required -- after
negated verbs for example (cf. GL §6.117(2)). But in the texts the
predominant pattern is hypotaxis in non-Yi, parataxis in Yi.

    One other observation: in the Lisu example (#3c), it will be noted, the
nominalizing morpheme that marks off the embedded clause is homophonous with
the sentence-final particle glossed as 'declarative'. They are etymologically
the same. Most Loloish languages and, indeed, most TB languages abhor a naked
verb. Only in the unrestrained imperative does the verb stand alone. Other-
wise, if there is no auxiliary verb to provide cover, the verb is clothed in
one of a set of particles. The most neutral of these often has the form of a
nominalizer, as in Lisu. The same phenomenon is found in Lahu: -ve, the
nominalizing particle that appears in #3a above, also occurs after the matrix
verb in declarative sentences. Matisoff has discussed the relationship between
these apparently different functions at length (1972c) and we need not delve
into it again here. The point is that just as the Yi languages forgo the use
of explicit boundaries in subordinate clauses, they also have less compunction
about ending a declarative sentence with a free standing verb (cf. #2, 4b).

3.2 SINGLE-CLAUSE SYNTAX IN NON-YI VERSUS MULTIPLE-CLAUSE SYNTAX IN YI

    The configuration illustrated in the previous Yi examples, involving a

succession of verbs and associated noun phrases strung together without overt grammatical linkage, is a favorite type of construction in Yi, employed not only where the non-Yi languages require conjoined clauses of the type illustrated in the previous section, but even where they utilize constructions that have the form of a single clause. An illustration of the latter correspondence can be found in one of the earliest Western records of Loloish languages, the texts collected by the French missionary and linguist, Alfred Liétard (cf. fn. 6). Liétard adopted the sensible practice of having a single text -- the "Parable of the Prodigal Son" in this case -- translated into the various languages he wished to illustrate, providing a more or less consistent semantic structure ideal for our comparative purposes. Liétard (1909) records the Parable in two languages; one is "A-H'i" [the "Axi" of Yuan (1953)], a Southeastern Yi dialect; the other is identified as "Lo-lo-p'o", a language that Liétard regarded as Yi but which has none of the features characteristic of that group, and is probably a dialect of Lisu.[15] The third sentence of the Parable, "And he divided unto them his living," appears in the two languages as follows:[16]

5a. Lo-lo-p'o   Ya³ a-bo⁴ ya³ lo³   bơ   go⁴
                his father them to [it] divide give

  b. A-H'i [Yi] Kơ¹ ba⁴ kyé³ kơ¹dyi⁴ hō-pu³   vi¹   kơ¹ gơ³ ho³
                his father then his   inheritance divide them give PT

A comparable pair of examples can be cited from more recent materials:

6a. HA(144) kɔ²⁴tsha³³ta³³ nɔ³¹mi³¹ a³³ ɕa⁵⁵de³³ bi⁵⁵ bi³¹
            Communist Party peasants to fields divide give
            The Communist Party distributed the land to the peasants.

  b. YI(112) tɕ'i³³ u³³ dzɤ³¹ fi³³ t'i³¹ ŋɔ³³zu³³ dʑɛ⁴⁴
            dog that pair divide his   brother   give
            [He] gave the pair of dogs to his younger brother as his share.

The Lo-lo-p'o and Hani sentences, representing the non-Yi languages, exhibit the polarized clause structure typical of TB languages: noun phrases freely — i.e., pragmatically -- ordered to the left of an uninterrupted string of verbs. A-H'i and Gao's Yi, by contrast, though still verb-final, in the sense that a verb or verb-like morpheme appears at the foot of the clause, allow noun phrases to intervene in the verbal string; in #5b and #6b, the

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[15] As mentioned in fn. 2, Chen (1963) also gave Lo-lo-p'o as a designation used by a minority of Yi people for themselves. We have no reason to doubt Chen. But if Liétard's Lo-lo-p'o is Yi, it is a very deviant dialect: not only is it non-serializing, as we see from example #5a, but it hasn't participated in sound changes characteristic of known Yi dialects (cf. Thurgood 1982). It does not, for example, show the centralization of labial clusters that are found in Gao, Ma, and Yuan's Yi dialects, as we can see from the following two sets of cognates: 'bee', Proto-LB *bya², Written Burmese pyâ, LH pê, LI bi⁵, Lo-lo-p'o byo³, but YI du³³, YI (Yuan) do²¹, YI_M da¹¹; and 'white', Proto-LB *plu¹, WB phru, LH phu, LI phu³, Lo-lo-p'o ya-p'i³, but YI thu²⁴, YI (Yuan) tho²², YI_M hlz³³.

[16] In Liétard's transcription ơ probably represents an unrounded o, i.e. [ɤ], as in the de Rhodes transcription of Vietnamese.

dative phrase is separated from the agent and patient phrases by the verb "divide". Since these Yi sentences show the same configuration of constituents as those encoding clearly articulated sequences of events (cf. #2), it is tempting to translate them, accordingly, with a complex sentence, e.g., for #5b, "divide [it] in order to give [it] to them." Yet the fact that the Yi sentences correspond to single clauses in non-Yi languages, plus the lack of an alternative way of expressing the dative, makes such a pragmatically marked translation inappropriate. Clearly, in the Yi sentences, we are dealing with an extension of "multiple-clause syntax" into "single-clause semantics," i.e., with the construction that is generally known as "verb serialization." The following three pairs of sentences provide further support for this view:

7a. LH(p.c.)   ŋà ɔ̀-e   vè?-qâ thà? ta-qō ɔ̀-qhɔ kə tā ve yò
               my mother clothes OBJ box   inside put PT PT PT

  b. YI(29)   ŋa²¹³ jɛ³³b'ɛ³³   t'ɤ⁴⁴ sɪ̄ɑ³³tsl³¹ kɯ⁴⁴ tsɤ⁴⁴
               my mother clothes put   trunk   inside be-at

     Both: My mother put the clothes in the trunk.

8a. LH(p.c.)   yɔ̂ ve   phɨ hɛ   ú-qhɔ g̈ɨ lò?   e ve
               he POSS dog field top   run enter PT PT

  b. YI(112)   t'i³¹ tɕ'i³³ ... tsl²¹³ mi³³ ŋɛ⁴⁴ tɕ'ɛ²¹³
               his   dog   run   field mouth reach

     Both: His dog ran to the top of the field.

9a. LI(61)   e¹li⁴   ma³   ŋua³nu⁵ tɛ¹ la⁵ʃɯ³   tʃua³ ma¹ go³
               principles PT us   to completely tell teach give
               Explain the principles to us thoroughly.

  b. YI(49)   na³¹ dɔ⁵⁵ a⁵⁵ tɕɛ⁴⁴ a³¹si⁵⁵-a³¹ dɛ⁴⁴ na³¹ mu³³
               you speech this phrase who-AGENT tell you teach
               Who explained this phrase of yours to you?

In each case, a single verb (#7a) or a pair of consecutive verbs in Lahu or Lisu corresponds to a pair of verbs separated by a noun phrase in Yi. In #7b, the intervening constituent is an "inner locative," in #8b, a "goal," and in #9b, a "dative." As before, there is no way to recast the Yi sentences so that these constituents appear on the same side of the verb as agents and patients.

3.2.1 "Verb concatenation" versus "verb serialization": a note on terminology. In applying the term "verb serialization" to the interrupted -- or interruptable -- strings cf verbs seen in our Yi examples but not to the consecutive strings seen in corresponding Lahu and Lisu sentences, I am narrowing the scope of the term as it is often used. Hyman's definition of verb serialization as "verbs which occur in sequence, but which are not overtly marked for coordination or subordination with respect to each other (Hyman 1975:136)," ignores the position of nominals and so applies to the pairs of verbs in the non-Yi sentences as much as to those in the Yi. Now it is true

that regardless of the position of nominals, there is a family resemblance
between the Yi and the non-Yi constructions. Both can be related to notionally
complex sentences, involving temporal or logical succession; it is for this
reason that the order of verbs tends to be the same (though cf. #24-25 below).
Yet their relationship to such sentences is not identical. In the Yi case, the
serial construction is structurally indistinguishable from a complex sentence,
as we have seen. Yi does not make the distinction between "consecutivization"
-- verbs mediated by weakly subordinate conjuncts — and "serialization" --
 verbs without explicit connectives -- that is found in the serializing
languages of Africa (cf. Hyman 1971:30). Since the non-Yi languages do
distinguish between consecutive constructions (cf. #1a-c) and unmediated verbal
strings, the latter will involve, at very least, deletion of a conjunction. In
Lahu, for example, Matisoff derives sentences like #10 from ones containing the
conjunction -lɛ, as indicated:

10. LH(203) a-kɬ tú   (lɛ) qò?   e `ve tí yò ɛ̀?
             torch kindle and return away NZR PT PT PT
             [We]'ll just light pine-torches and go home.

Matisoff terms unmediated verb strings, such as tú qò? in the previous example,
"fortuitous concatenations" (GL §4.312). But not all such verb strings in Lahu
and the non-Yi languages can be derived from consecutive constructions by just
the deletion of a conjunction or complementizer. In some cases the collapse of
a multi-clausal construction into a single clause requires the displacement of
a nominal as well. In #5a and #6a, for example, the dative phrase is a logical
argument of the second verb in the string, "give," not the first, so if an
explicit clause boundary were to be placed between the verbs, making them
consecutive clauses, the dative phrase would appear to the left of the verb
"give" -- the position it occupies in the corresponding Yi sentences. This is
the essential difference between the Yi construction and the non-Yi. The Yi
involves the "compression" of multiple-clause syntax onto what I have been
loosely calling "single-clause semantics"; but the non-Yi involves the
recasting of multiple-clause syntax as single-clause syntax, a process that
always involves the deletion of conjunctions or other grammatical morphemes,
but may also involve the movement of certain nominals -- goals, as it turns out
-- to a position to the left of the verb string. The term "verb serialization"
will be applied only to the first type; the second, we will call "verb
concatenation," adapting Matisoff's term.
     We can now label the Yi languages "OV serializing," meaning that nominals
precede the verbs that govern them and the predominant clause pattern involves
verb serialization. By the same token, Lahu, Lisu and Hani -- the non-Yi
languages -- can be labeled "OV concatenating."
     There are still constructions in Yi in which verbs appear without
intervening nominals. Such strings frequently result from the anaphoric
deletion of goals, as we see from the following examples:

11. YI(107) t'a²¹³ p'i³³   t'i³¹ la⁵⁵p'a³¹ tʂ'ɛ³² a³¹g'u³³ bi⁴⁴ gɯ³³ lɛ²⁴
             his g-mother her   hand   extend door   crack enter come
             His grandmother put her hand in through the door.

12. YI(44)   na³¹ la⁵⁵p'a³¹ t'a³¹ pa³² tʂ'ɛ³² [ ] gɯ³³ lɛ²⁴
             your hand   one CLF extend   enter come
             Put your hand through.

In #13, it is the inner locative that is anaphorically deleted (cf. #7b):

13. YI(101) ji^{31}tɕ'i^{55} t'a^{31} tʂ'ɔ^{33} dɤ^{32} [ ] tsɤ^{44}
water   one   pan   load   be-at
[He] filled [it] with a pan of water.

We continue to regard such verb strings as verb serialization, since they retain the potential to be separated by nominals. But not all verbal strings in Yi can be interrupted by a nominal; combinations of verb and resultative, such as YI(28) tɕa^{55} ma^{32} 'boil + cook = cook (by boiling),' or verb and modal, such as YI(69) ji^{213} da^{24} 'go + able to = able to go,' have syntactic properties very similar to equivalent expressions in the non-Yi languages. In such cases, the distinction between "serialization" and "concatenation" does not apply.

3.3 THE RANGE OF VERB SERIALIZATION IN YI

Without the comparative data, it would not be possible to distinguish, in a principled way, between sentences in Yi involving 'distinct events' and those involving closely articulated or 'unitary events' — between "ordinary" and "compressed" clauses in other words. But using the non-Yi data as a guide, we can give sharp definition to this hazy notion and proceed to examine the extent of the phenomenon. In the following examples, Yi sentences are matched with comparable sentences from non-Yi languages where possible; fortunately the available texts are of the same genre, folk tales, so the match up is quite good. I do cite some unmatched Yi examples, though, assuming that in non-Yi languages, the same meaning would be expressed with a single verb or a verb concatenation.

Restricting our examination to those cases in which the serial pattern expresses semantic structures that would be encoded as single clauses in non-Yi languages has an additional advantage: it allows us to label the nominals with the semantic roles that they would have if they appeared in single clauses. So in #5b and #6b, we can describe the intervening nominal as a "dative" or "benefactive", just as in the a-versions.

3.3.1 Core constituents: agents, patients and "goals". Of core constituents, it is those which can be subsumed under the heading of "goal" that interrupt the verb string in Yi; these include datives or benefactives, inner locatives, destinations -- goals proper --, purposes, "transforms" -- the results of change --, and "causated entities" — the results of processes of causation. The first three of these roles are illustrated by the b-sentences of #5-9. The other roles, and additional examples of the first three, are illustrated here.[17]

i. dative/benefactive:

14. YI$_M$(94) ŋa^{33} lɿ^{33} ka^{33}ma^{33} ʐa^{33} na^{11} na^{44}
I   AGENT reason   tell you hear
I'll tell you about [it].

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[17] Where possible the Chinese linguists use the conventional, IPA symbols in their transcription. But Ma's Yi [=Sani] contains four "apical" vowels, for which special symbols had to be devised. The vowel usually written ı (as in Gao's Yi) appears as ʐ in Ma's transcription; its retroflex version, usually ʅ, is written ʐ̣. The two others are: z̩, with lips spread, and z̩̈, with lips rounded. For the historical origins of all four, cf. Wheatley 1976.

15. YI(25)   a^{33}mu^{33} b'ε^{33} vε$^{\underline{32}}$ ŋu^{31} dʐε^{44}
brother clothes take   me   give
[My] older brother gave me the clothes.

ii. inner locative:

16. YI(31)   na^{33} a^{31}dʐi^{31}ɕε^{44} p'a^{213} a^{31} kɯ^{44}vɤ^{55} n̥i^{33}
you tomorrow   evade house in   hide   watch
Tomorrow, you hide in the house and watch.

17. YI$_M$(62)   de^{44} m̥^{55} n̥^{33}
ascend horse sit   = to ride a horse

iii. destination:

18a. YI$_M$(66)   tcæ^{33} bʏ̥^{44}hæ^{33} t'ɩ^{11} mɑ^{44} gɯ^{33} z̩^{33}
run   temple   one   CLF   enter go
[He] ran inside a temple.

  b.LI$_H$(147)   ása nya hipywɛ̣ khwù wa tɤ̌ dwɬ   ye-a̱
Asa TOP shack in   to run enter go-DECL
Asa went running into the shack.

19a. YI(101)   bu$^{\underline{32}}$ʂɔ^{33} u^{33} tɕɚ^{33} sɤ^{31} lɤ^{44} t'i^{31} b'ε^{33}mɔ^{33} kɯ^{44} ji^{213}
snake   that CLF then sneak her   blouse   in   go
The snake made [its] way under her blouse.

  b. LI(137)   ŋua^{1}tʃhɯ^{5}ŋua^{1}thy^3 nε^{3}ʒi^4 kua^3 pha^3 ly^6 ge^4 ka^{1}nε^1
abalone   river at   just sneak go after
after the abalone made [its] way into the river, ...

20. YI(98)   ji^{31} gɯ^{24} t'u^{33}p'a^{55} dzɤ^{31}
water immerse thigh   be-level-with
The water rose to [his] thighs.

21. YI(103)   mu^{33}p'a^{31} vε$^{\underline{32}}$ kɚ^{55} di^{33}do^{33} u^{33} bɤ$^{\underline{32}}$ t'a^{55} sa^{55}
gourd   take pour monks   that group on   descend
[He] took a gourd and poured the hot oil onto the monks.

iv. purpose:

22a. YI(96)   tsε^{44} ji^{213} ji^{31}tɕ'i^{55} va^{55}
again   go   water   carry
[and] go fetch water again

  b. LI$_H$(148)   ása nya ámù la   dzɬ -a̱
Asa TOP horse come   ride-DECL
Asa came to ride a horse.

v. "transform":

23a. YI(107)   a⁴⁴p'i³³ mɔ⁴⁴kɤ³² t'a³¹dɤ⁴⁴ piɛ⁴⁴ ji³¹mɔ²⁴ t'ɚ⁵⁵
g'mother feeble   one CLF change orangutan become
The feeble old grandmother turned into an orangutan.

b. LI(133)   za⁶mɯ⁶lɛ¹za⁶ niɛ³ ŋua¹tʃhɯ⁶ŋua¹thy³ thi⁵thy³
young-girl TOP   abalone   one CLF

pɯ¹   li⁴   gu⁴   ua³
change become completely ASP

The young girl changed completely into an abalone.

vi. "causated entity":

24a. YI(22)   t'i³³ va³³ts'ɔ³³ tsi³³ va⁵⁵ɬo³² tɚ³³
her   husband   make pig pen   build
[She] made her husband build a pigpen.

b. LH(245)   yɔ̂ ŋà thàʔ nā-mâ šêʔ cɨ̀ lâ ve
he me OBJ oil   spill make PT PT
He made me spill the oil.

25a. YIₘ(72)   m̩¹¹ty⁵⁵ qe⁵⁵ hæ³³ t'ɑ¹¹ t'ɤ²² m̩⁴⁴
fire   make house not   burn   hope
[to] hope the fire doesn't burn the house [down]

b. LIₕ(144)   ása nya zànwɛ̰ læ̌ thùɣɛ̀ su tyɛ̰ -a̰
Asa TOP child to book study cause-DECL
Asa made the children study (i.e. go to school).

26. YIc(418)   la³¹bu³³ bl̩⁴⁴ ʐl̩³³ dzɯ³³ ʂu⁴⁴
cow   make grass eat   PT
Make the cow eat (grass).

The correspondence between Yi and non-Yi causative constructions (#24 and #25) is interesting. Both languages employ a periphrasis involving a causative verb that can be glossed as 'make,'[18] but the relative ordering of the verbs differs. The Yi dialects place the causative verb first, iconic with the

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[18] The three causative verbs in the a-sentences of #24-6 are etymologically distinct (cf. fn. 14): tsi³³ in (Gao's) Yi is cognate to Lahu cɨ in #24b and Lisu tyɛ in #25b; cf. also Burmese sei (spelled ce), an auxiliary used in similar causative constructions, and an obsolescent verb meaning 'send, dispatch.' Yic bl̩⁴⁴ is, etymologically at least, the verb 'give,' cognate to Lahu pî, Yiₘ bʐ̩⁷¹ Burmese pei (spelled pè). The etymology of Yiₘ qe⁵⁵ is unknown.

logical priority of cause over effect. But the non-Yi languages place the causative morpheme second, which reflects its origin as a higher verb governing an embedded structure, i.e., using English glosses, HE (I OIL SPILL)$_{OBJ}$ MAKE.

If no adjuncts come between them, agents and (transitive) patients in Yi usually appear together to the left of the same verb, as they do in non-Yi languages:

   27. YI(17)   ŋa⁴⁴ mu³³   tɕ'i⁵⁵ si⁵⁵   ŋɔ⁴⁴
                 my brother goat   kill want
                 My brother wants to kill the goat.

The order patient before agent is rare in the texts and usually requires post-positional marking on the agent:

   28. YI(17)   di³³do³³ u³³   ɕi²¹³ dɤ⁴⁴ t'ɛ⁴⁴-a³¹ t'ɯ³¹ ɕi⁴⁴
                 monk those seven CLF them-by scald die
                 The seven monks were scalded to death by them.

3.3.2 Adjuncts. Whether they are introduced by their own verbs or not, adjuncts in Yi, like core constituents, tend to follow a fixed relative order. The following sentence, with order agent, locative, range, and patient, is typical:

   29. YI(31)   a³¹vi⁵⁵ a³¹ kɯ⁴⁴ ts'ʐ³² ta³¹ ʂɚ³² t'i³¹ tɛ⁵⁵
                 sister house in be-at one blow him hit
                 [His] sister struck him at the house.

Outer locatives are introduced by the verb <u>ts'ʐ</u> <u>32</u> 'be at,' as we see from this last example.

3.3.2.1 Instrumentals. One semantic role that has not been mentioned yet is instrumental. In Yi, this role is introduced by a verb meaning 'to carry, take.' In Hani, its counterpart is signalled by the 'comitative' particle <u>-ne</u>. But with instrumentals, Lahu and Lisu are more like Yi than Hani, requiring a multiple clause, consecutive construction. Examples #30-33 illustrate:

   30. YI(93)   ŋa³¹ vi⁵⁵ tʂ'ʐ³² vɛ³² va⁵⁵ xu³³ tʂ'ʐ³²
                 my sister scales take pig flesh weigh
                 My sister weighed the pork with the scales.

   31. LI(154)   nu³ niɛ³ si¹do⁴ʒi⁴ lo⁴ʃɯ⁵ thi⁵ phɛ⁶ ze⁵ si¹ do⁴
                 you TOP bowl leak NZR   one CLF use and drink
                 You use the leaky bowl to drink [it].

   32. LH(160)   á-thɔ yù lɛ tɔ̂ʔ chê? phɛ̀ʔ ɔ lâ
                 knife take-ing cut sever able PT ?
                 Can [you] cut [it] through with a knife?

33. HA(142) da^{55}tshl^{55} ne^{33} tɕhi^{31} la^{31} di^{31}
                 stick   with   one   blow hit
                 Give [it] a blow with a stick.

     Although functionally, the Lahu and Lisu constructions are like the Yi,
they retain the overt conjunctions, -lɛ in Lahu, -si in Lisu (cf. p. 405 above)
and are, therefore, structurally like the sentences #1a-c above.

3.4 VERBS OR COVERBS?

     It is well attested, by languages in different parts of the world, that
verbs which occur frequently in serial constructions tend to become
conventionalized as case-marking morphemes, giving up some of their lexical
content and syntactic flexibility in the process. This "categorial shift" of
verb to "co-verb" or ad-position has been inferred for Chinese (cf. Chao
1970:335 and §8.2, Li and Thompson 1974a,b,c) and for various Niger-Congo
languages (Givon 1975 §4.2), and it is likely that the same process is underway
in Yi. In fact, the loss of lexical content of one -- or possibly both --
verbs is implied by our perception that, in sentences such as those illustrated
in §3.3, we are dealing with "single-clause semantics." In (Gao's) Yi, the most
likely candidates for co-verb status are the three verbs -- I will continue to
call them verbs for now -- that occur frequently as first members of
serializations, ts'1^{32} 'be at,' vɛ^{32} 'take,' and tsi^{33} 'make(?),' and the three
that occur as second, ts'1^{32} 'be at,' dʑɛ^{44} 'give,' and tɕ'ɛ^{213} 'arrive.' The
first three are associated with the semantic roles of locative (#29),
instrumental (#21, #30), and causee (#24a), the second three, with inner
locative (#7b, 13), dative or benefactive (#6b), and destination (#8b). There
is no particular verb associated with transitive patients (cf. #27), though in
sentences such as #15, vɛ^{32}, normally the signal of instrumental, could easily
be interpreted as a patient marker, as could its cognate in the following
sentence from Ma's dialect:

     34. YI$_M$(80) ŋ^{33} lɩ^{33} la^{33} ʐ vɩ^{33} ŋa^{33} to^{33}
                       you AGENT tea   take me   make-drink
                       You offerred me tea to drink.

In Chen et al's Yi (=Liangshan dialect), the verb 'take' may be deleted in
contexts where it seems to function most like a patient marker:

     35. YI$_C$(421) ve^{55}ga^{33} (ʐu^{33}) ko^{33} bl^{44}
                       clothes   take   him   give
                       Give the clothes to him.

And this appears to be true of Gao's dialect as well; cf. #15 with:

     36. YI(48) a^{31}vi^{55} tʂ'ɛ^{31} t'ɛ^{24} t'a^{31} ʂɭ^{33} ŋu^{31} dʑɛ^{44}
                  sister   rice   one scoop me   give
                  [My] sister gave me a scoop of rice.

     Of the six verbs mentioned above, only three are actually attested as head

verbs: $\underline{ts'\text{1}}^{32}$, $\underline{ve}^{32}$, and $\underline{dze}^{44}$.

37. YI(16) ɬi^{33}bʏ^{32} a^{31} kɯ^{44} ts'1^{32}
            g'daughter home in   be-at
            Granddaughter is at home.

38. YI(42) t'i^{31} a^{31}pʏ^{32} ma^{31} ve^{32}
            he lunchbox not take ...
            [if] he doesn't take a lunchbox ...

39. YI(25) ŋu^{31} na^{31} dʑe^{44}
            I   you give
            I gave [it] to you.

But even the existence of a fully lexical prototype does not mean these morphemes function as full verbs wherever they appear. Givón (ibid.) has noted several ways in which the grammaticalization of verbs is made manifest. One is intolerance for aspectual marking. In Yi, as in most TB languages, aspectual notions are conveyed by grammaticalized verbs or by verb suffixes. As it turns out, aspectual or modal modification of any kind is rare in our texts, and where it does appear, as in sentence #40, the aspectual morpheme can be interpreted as being in constituency with the rest of the sentence rather than with just the preceding morpheme:[19]

40. YI(105) t'i^{31} la^{55}p'a^{31} tʂ'ɛ^{32} tɕ'i^{55} ȵɛ^{44}pu^{31} tsʏ^{44} xɚ^{32}
             he hand extend sheep mouth be-at ASP
             He put his hand into the mouth of the sheep.

Givón's semantic criterion is more revealing. Grammaticalized verbs, he notes, often cannot be given their literal meanings. Of the following examples, only the first allows $\underline{dze}^{44}$ its literal meaning of 'give':

41. YI(100) tʂ'ɛ^{31}t'u^{24} t'a^{31} ʂ1^{33} dʐɔ^{213} t'i^{31} dʑe^{44}
             rice   one catty measure her give
             [She] measured out a catty of grain for her.

42. YI(41) t'ia^{31} t'a^{31} tʂ'u^{55} tɛ^{55} va^{55}ȵʏ^{31} dʑe^{44}
            he-by one shot(n.) shoot boar give
            The boar was shot by him.

43. YI(104) ni^{44} sa^{33} xã^{24} uo^{213} ti^{31} dʑe^{44}
             two three nights stay-up him give
             [He] kept him awake for several nights.

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[19] The morpheme $x\underline{ɚ}^{32}$ is glossed with Chinese -zhe, often termed a "progressive" marker, but $x\underline{ɚ}^{32}$ also occurs after nouns (cf. Gao p. 57) and it may turn out to be a genitive/nominalizing particle like Lahu ve.

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So for dze^{44}, in these contexts, the evidence is good that we are dealing with a co-verb rather than a verb. The term co-verb is appropriate; unlike post-positions, these morphemes permit the anaphoric deletion of their objects (cf. #12,13), but cannot themselves be deleted in the way that post-positions generally can be in TB languages. For the other verbs, our information is not conclusive, but their high textual frequency and their consistent association with a particular semantic role makes it likely they too have become institutionalized as case-marking morphemes.

There may also be cases in which the process of conventionalization has affected both members of a verbal series equally so that they should now be regarded as a disjunct verbal compound.[20] One of the characteristics of the "isolating" languages of mainland Southeast Asia is that they lack the formal distinctions between morphology and syntax that, in other languages, often suggest a clear boundary between these two extremes. "'Morphological compounds' and 'syntactic constructions' are situated along an axis of productivity-of-combination, which is more like a continuum than a series of discrete compartments," as Matisoff writes (GL: 53). In Lahu, for example, the expression $\tilde{g}\grave{a}?mi$ 'chase + catch' is phrase-like in that the negative morpheme $m\hat{a}-$ appears after the first morpheme, rather than before the two, but is word-like in that the subordinating conjunction $-l\varepsilon$ could not comfortably be inserted into the expression (GL §4.315(b)). In Yi, some degree of lexicalization is likely to have taken place in "equipollent" verbal series such as de^{44} ... mu^{33} 'tell + teach = explain,' pie^{44} ... t'_{ϑ}^{55} 'change ... become = change into,' and YI_M $z\alpha^{33}$ ... na^{44} 'tell + hear = tell' and de^{44} ... $\underline{n}^{33}$ 'ascend + sit = ride on.'

4. THE COLLAPSE OF SERIALIZATION IN YI

If, indeed, the "verbs" discussed in the previous section have undergone a categorial shift to become co-verbs, or post-positions, then verb serialization in such sentences is, of course, no more. Instead, we have "ordinary" clause patterns containing a single verb and an obligatory case marker. Where it is the first member of a verbal series that has lost its verbal status, a verb-final order has been restored. But where it is the second member of a series, a novel word order has been introduced: the erstwhile object of the second verb has become an adjunct of the first verb. Since these grammaticalized second verbs introduce goals, the order of constituents in such sentences will be SOV-GOAL.

The process of introducing verb-medial patterns into an otherwise verb-final language is the reverse of the Chinese case discussed by Li and Thompson (1974a,b). Chinese developments involve the collapse of VO serialization rather than OV; the grammaticalization of _first_ members of a verbal series introduces verb-_final_ patterns into the language. For example, the change of the verb ba 'grasp, hold' into a preposition associated with definite "patients" introduced pre-verbal objects in the prototypes of sentences such as the following (cf. #15):[21]

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[20] For similar cases of "compounds" that permit intervening material, cf. Chao 1968 §6.5.8, "Ionization of pseudo-V[erb]-O[bject] compounds." Chao cites the phrase hái yōu-le tā yí-mò, shuō "and hu-ed him a mor, saying = and made a joke with him, saying," in which the compound yōu-mò (from the English word humor) has been split into two parts.

[21] Wǒ gěi tā shū, without bǎ and with both "objects" after the verb, is

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44. Chinese   tā bǎ   shū gěi wǒ
              he (grasp) book give me
              He gave me the book.

Comparable developments are attested, in a different part of the world, by languages of the Niger-Congo family (Givón op. cit.). The process can be represented formulaically as: $S \ V \ O_{pat} \ V \ O_{goal} > S \ CoV\text{-}O_{pat} \ V \ O_{goal}$. Developments like those observed in Yi, involving the introduction of verb-medial patterns into OV serializing syntax, are not as well documented, but Hyman (op cit: 124) does forsee the possibility of this development in Ijo, the one Niger-Congo language that is both serializing and verb-final.

4.1 THE SPREAD OF VERB-MEDIAL PATTERNS IN YI.

The appearance of post-verbal constituents in Yi does not necessarily mean that the verb will eventually assume a medial position in all clauses. The rarity of languages with an SOV-GOAL order of core constituents suggests that such languages tend to move towards a more consistent positioning of nominal complements, but this could be achieved in more than one way (Hyman:ibid). Goals might be restored to a position to the left of the verb on the pattern of patients and other pre-verbal constituents; such a shift might be encouraged by the anaphoric deletion of goals, which places verbs in "fortuitous" concatenations at the foot of the sentence (cf. pp. 409-10 above). Alternatively, patients and other constituents might be drawn to the right of the verb by analogy with goals. The fact that goals — the constituents that created the initial breach in the barrier of the final verb -- are relatively frequent in texts increases the likelihood that the new order will be prominent enough to stimulate the process of analogy.

The factor that ultimately determines which direction the Yi dialects take -- if any -- is likely to be contact with Chinese, which despite the exceptions recounted by Li and Thompson (1974a,b) continues to place the verb medially in many, if not most, clause patterns.[22] Chinese influence on Yi is reflected by the large number of Chinese loanwords.[23] Further incursion of verb-medial clause patterns into Yi need not be the result of direct structural borrowing from Chinese. Some anomalous sentences that appear in the Yi texts suggest another, less obtrusive avenue. In Yi, "causative" verbs, such as 'cause' itself, 'tell,' 'persuade,' and 'lead,' generally treat the causee as an object, placing it directly to the left, as in sentences #24a, 25a, 26 above, or in the following sentence:

45. YI(22) $a^{31}vi^{55} \ n\tilde{o}^{31}g'u^{31}p'u^{44} \ k'u^{33} \ n\tilde{o}^{31} \ g'u^{31}$
              sister   doctor   call illness treat
              [My] sister asked the doctor to treat the illness.

But there are also a few examples of the causee following the causative verb.

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also possible, but the meaning is 'I gave him a book."

[22] For refutation of Li and Thompson's position that the "basic" word order of Mandarin Chinese is OV, cf. Light 1979.

[23] The appendix to Gao (1958) lists about 240 Chinese loanwords, but most of these are additions to the native Yi vocabulary. I know of no core vocabulary that has been replaced in Gao's dialect.

One of these involves the verb $dz\varepsilon^{44}$ 'give,' which we have already seen in final position associated with dative or benefactive phrases. The same morpheme also occurs in first position as a causative verb:

46. YI(107) $t'i^{31}$ $dz\varepsilon^{44}$ $t'a^{213}$ $p'i^{33}$ gw^{33} $l\varepsilon^{24}$
             he (give) his g'mother enter come
             He let his grandmother in.

A parallel example contains the verb $x\mathfrak{z}^{44}$ 'lead':

47. YI(31) $x\mathfrak{z}^{44}$ $t\varphi'i^{33}$ $dz\mathfrak{z}^{44}$ $t'a^{55}$ $go^{\underline{32}}$ $l\varepsilon^{24}$
             lead dog   place   on   play come
             Take the dog outside to play.

Both #46 and #47 have the word order of the so called "pivotal construction" of Chinese (Chao op. cit.:§2.13) and could be considered direct calques the on Chinese construction; cf.:

48. Chinese tā gěi / ràng tā zǔmǔ   jìnlai
             he (give)/ let his g'mother enter come
             He let his grandmother in.

But why should causative constructions be the first to adopt the Chinese pattern? The answer may lie in the ambiguous role of the causee as both the object of the higher verb and the subject of the lower -- it is this role as "pivot" that gives the name to the Chinese construction. As object of the higher verb, the causee would precede; but as subject of the lower, it would follow. The post-verbal position of the causee in Chinese can be accommodated to Yi syntax if it is regarded as a lower subject. However, once established in this position, the lack of either case marking or an explicit clause boundary would allow it to be reinterpreted as a post-verbal object. In such a way, objects might begin to leak to the right of the verb, where their presence would add to the analogical pressures in favor of the verb-medial pattern.

5. THE DEVELOPMENT OF VERB SERIALIZATION IN YI.

The grammaticalization of one member of a verbal series may play an important role in the development of verb-medial sentence structure, but no more so than the development of verb serialization in the first place. It is, after all, the iconic arrangement inherent in the serializing process that ensures that goals will be separated from other core constituents, setting the stage for their eventual appearance to the right of the verb should the second verb in a series come to function as a co-verb or post-position. How, then, could this radical re-shaping of Yi sentence structure have come about?
The question just posed really has two parts: what is the source of the serial pattern, and what caused the language to take that course -- how and why, in other words. The first is easier to answer than the second. Given the geographical position of Yi at the eastern reaches of the TB family, we might expect the source of such dramatic structural innovation to be one of the contiguous languages, many of which are or have been serializing. But whatever the role played by contact, it could not have been a direct one. All of the languages in the region that could be considered serializing -- those in the Chinese, Tai, Mon-Khmer, and Miao-Yao families -- are verb-medial rather than verb-final; nominal complements follow the governing verb rather than precede

(cf. #44 and 48). So the source of verb serialization in Yi lies within the language, and it must be, as we have suggested already, complex sentences involving temporal or logical succession. It is this source that ensures the iconic arrangement of core constituents that is so salient a feature of Yi sentence structure. Such complex sentences would be available for explicit paraphrase at all stages of the language, but for reasons to be considered below, the complex structure gained favor over the single-clause option and eventually, the latter ceased to be used. The development of paratactic configurations -- the one feature that can be attributed to contact -- would have made it easier to accommodate the serial construction to "single-clause semantics" by eliminating explicit clause boundaries, and once established in this function, the pattern could have spread by internal borrowing, without the necessity of going through a complex-sentence stage.

Why the complex sentence took over the function of the single clause patterns rather than continuing as a functionally distinct option is more difficult to understand, but the extent of the restructuring that has taken place in Yi suggests that the answer may lie in the perceptual simplicity of the serial configuration. Not only is it often more explicit, requiring two verbs where the non-Yi languages have only one, but it allows the listener to infer the semantic relationships between nominals and verbs one at a time. By contrast, verb concatenation, with nouns and verbs piled up at opposite ends of the clause, has the perceptual properties of center-embedded structures -- it is, in fact, an extension of the center-embedding pattern inherent in consistent OV syntax. The complexity of semantic patterns that underlie the uniform syntax of verb concatenation can be gauged from Matisoff's exhaustive study of the Lahu verb phrase (1969). Now obviously, speakers of Lahu, Lisu and the other non-Yi languages do not find the concatenating pattern troublesome; presumably it represents a balance of the conflicting needs of clarity and conciseness. But if concatenation is, as we conjecture, relatively closer to the limits of our processing abilities, then "strain" on the system may cause those limits to be exceeded and lead to the replacement of concatenation by the semantically more transparent configuration. What might that strain have been?

One possibility is that perceptual difficulties were caused by developments within the language. Givón's explanation for the rise of verb serialization in Niger-Congo languages takes this position. Adapting an argument used by Vennemann (1973) and others, he suggests that verb serialization -- VO, or in the case of Ijo, OV -- arose as a functional response to the phonetic attrition of nominal case-marking morphology. There has, indeed, been plenty of phonetic attrition in Loloish languages, as can be seen by comparing the following Loloish forms with the conservative forms of Written Burmese (WB):

	WB	Yi	Yi$_M$	LH
mushroom	mhui	--	m^{44}	mù
to blow	mhut	mu^{32}	m^{44}	mə̂ʔ
high	mraŋˋ	mɣ^{213}	m^{44}	mu

Ma's Yi [= Sani], with nothing more than a sonorous hum in all three morphemes, represents an extreme, but in general, Yi dialects are not much different from non-Yi in this respect; none of them has much meat even on its lexical morphemes. In any case, phonetic attrition of case-marking post-positions is unlikely to have provided the impetus for Yi developments; in Loloish languages, phonetic material is, generally, restored by the doubling up

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of grammatical morphemes. Lahu <u>ve</u>, can be enlarged, with negligible semantic consequences, by the addition of the "topicalizing" particles, $\bar{\mathfrak{I}}$ (as in example #1b) or $\grave{\mathcal{E}}$ (cf. GL §5.421). "Pleonasm" is a widely used process for adding to the phonetic bulk of lexical as well as grammatical words in the "monosyllabic" languages of mainland Southeast Asia.

An alternate possibility is that the replacement of the concatenating pattern by the semantically more transparent serializing pattern was a response not to developments within the language (nor to contact with other languages) but to a change in the social context of the language. What makes this likely is the distinctive social history of the Yi compared to that of Loloish peoples farther to the south and west. For at least five hundred years, Han and other peoples were captured by the Yi and used as slave labor, with their descendents becoming Yi. Winnington (<u>op. cit.</u>: 32) claims that about 47% of the "Norsu" (i.e. Nasu) living in the Liangshan region were slaves at the time slavery was abolished in 1957, and that most of these were originally other nationalities. We can only speculate on what the linguistic consequences of such social patterns might have been. If the Yi slaves were of mixed origins, with no one language predominating, conditions would be right for the rise of pidgins and, eventually, creoles. At the very least, there would have been widespread bilingualism. Such conditions might well put a premium on semantically transparent structures employing serial verbs. Without more detailed understanding of the sociolinguistics of traditional Yi society, this explanation is only conjecture. But, if correct, it would resolve the otherwise paradoxical fact that the Loloish languages that have undergone the most extensive structural changes are found on the boundary between the verb-final and the verb-medial linguistic areas, yet they do not seem to have borrowed the new patterns from surrounding languages. Apparently, contact did not result in the Yi languages being overwhelmed, but did have sufficient social consequences to set in motion the change from concatenating to serializing syntax.