The Copula and Existential Verbs in Qiang

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This paper discusses the copula and existential verb constructions in Qiang, a Tibeto-Burman language of northern Sichuan, China. There is only one copula verb in Qiang, which can be used in equational, identificational, attributive, naming, and cleft constructions, as well as one type of possessive construction. There are five existential verbs in Qiang, the use of which depends on the semantics of the referent being predicated as existing and its location. The existential verbs have a number of the characteristics of adjective-like stative verbs, and can be modified by adverbs of degree, but they cannot directly modify nouns. Also, the meaning of reduplication of existential verbs is different from that of adjective-like stative verbs: reduplication of existential verbs results in transitivization, while reduplication of adjective-like stative verbs results in emphasis of degree.

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1. Introduction

The Qiang language is spoken in Aba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture in northwest Sichuan Province, China; it belongs to the Qiangic branch of Tibeto-Burman. There are two major Qiang dialects, Northern Qiang (spoken in Heishui County, and the Chibusu district of Mao County; roughly seventy thousand speakers) and Southern Qiang (spoken in Li County, Wenchuan County, Mao County, and Songpan County; about sixty thousand speakers) (Sun 1981:177-78). The dialect discussed here is the Northern Qiang variety spoken in Ronghong Village, Yadu Township, Chibusu District, Mao County.

The language is verb final, agglutinative (prefixing and suffixing), and has both head-marking and dependent marking morphology.

Nouns can be defined as underived forms which can take (in)definite marking, numeral-classifier phrases and/or number marking, all of which follow the head. Aside from being the head of an NP, nouns can be used to modify other nouns directly (appearing immediately before the modified noun) or in a genitive phrase (also pre-head,

with or without a genitive postposition), and an NP can appear as the complement of a copula clause.

Verbs are defined as those forms which can take the directional prefixes, the negative prefix, person marking, and the causative suffix. They are generally clearly transitive or intransitive, though there are some ambitransitive verbs, and intransitive verbs can be made transitive by use of the causative suffix. Reduplication of transitive verbs can result in an intransitive reciprocal predicate. Verbs can modify nouns in NPs, though they must take a nominalizing suffix to do so, forming a pre-head relative clause. Concepts represented by adjectives in English are represented by verbs in Qiang, so those forms do not require a copula when predicative.

2. Verbless and copula clauses

Generally predicates are verbs, adjectives, or noun + copula, but in some equational sentences, most noticeably statements of the date or of human relationships, the copula is optional, and so the NP alone acts as predicate, as in (1) and (2):

(1) pəs   xsə-çə-tç   ʁo-tçu.
    today   [three-month-GEN   five-beginning]
    'Today (is) March fifth.'

(2) khumtsi   αkuα wutçin-tçə   sətsim.
    Khumtsi   [uncle-Wutçin-GEN   wife]
    'Khumtsi is Uncle Wutçin's wife.'

Clauses (1) and (2) could also take the copula. There is only one copula, /ŋuə/, as in (3) and one of the two possibilities in (4), which is used in equational, identifying (attributive), naming and cleft constructions, in one type of possessive relation, and after nominalized verbs. As it is used only in relational constructions and not in existential constructions, there must be two arguments, that is, there are no clauses of the type *God is*. The verb /zmə/ 'be called' (for naming), as in the other possibility in (4), or the verb /pe/ 'become' (for change of identity), as in (5) and (6), might also be considered relational like the copula.

(3) the: mi   ŋuə.
    3sg   person   COP
    'He is a person (man).'

(4) the:-ŋuəɲi   khumtsi   ŋuə/zmə.
    3sg-TOP   Khumtsi   COP / be.called
    'She is (is called) Khumtsi.'

(5) the: sum-(ke:)   pe.
    3sg   teacher-INDEF:CL   become
    'He became a teacher.'

(6) butṣqhα   xtṣαmphα-(ke:)   pe.
    caterpillar butterfly-INDEF:CL   become
    'The caterpillar became a butterfly.'

The formal treatment of the initial NP of an equational or attributive copula clause in Qiang does not differ from that of the direct argument of an intransitive verb. The NP representing this referent must appear in clause-initial position, and no semantically-based postpositions can be used after the NP. Only the topic marker can be used, as in (4) and (7).

(7) the:-ŋuəɲi   ʂpe   ŋuə.
    3sg-TOP   Tibetan   COP
    'He is a Tibetan.'

If the copula complement (CC) is attributive, it is often followed by the indefinite marker /ke/ plus a classifier (or the classifier is represented as a lengthened vowel on the indefinite marker: /ke:/), as in (5) and (6). If it is identificational, then it can be followed by the definite marker (/le/ or /te/), as in (9). There is no other formal difference between attributive and identifying copula clauses. Compare (8), an attributive clause, with (9), an identificational clause:

(8) qα   sum   ŋuα. (< ŋuə)
    1sg   teacher   COP:1sg
    'I am a teacher.'

(9) qα   sum-le: ŋuα. (< ŋuə)
    1sg   teacher-DEF:CL   COP:1sg
    'I am the teacher.'

If the clause expresses a possessive relation of the type 'This book is mine', then an equational copula clause is used, with the possessor argument taking the genitive postposition, as in (10).

(10) ləɣz   tse-pen   qɑ-tɕ   ŋuə.
     [book   this-CL]   1sg-GEN   COP
     'This book is mine.'

This is generally the only case where a copula complement can take any kind of case marking postposition.

It can be seen from examples (8) and (9) that the copula, like all other verbs, can take person marking. The copula can also take aspect marking, but this is generally only when it is causativized, as in (11). Adding the directional marker does not denote a change of state. Another example of the causative suffix with the copula is given in (12). In (12) we also find direction marking.

(11) tɕile   the: ɦɑ-stɑqə-ɳi   linthɑu   ŋuə-zɑ:. (< zə)
     1pl   3sg   DIR-choose-ADV   leader   COP-CAUS:PRS
     'We chose him to be leader.'

(12) khuə-le: puɳu   hɑ-ŋuə-zʮ
     dog-DEF:CL   cat   DIR-COP-CAUS
     'Make the dog replace the cat.'

In (11), the verb /stɑqə/ 'choose' appears in a manner adverbial phrase modifying the main verb of the sentence, the causativized copula, to express how the causee became the leader. In this example it would also be possible to use a directional prefix on the copula (i.e., [hɑ-ŋǔə̀-zə]), if the person had already assumed the office, as the directional prefix can mark perfective aspect. As it stands, with no directional prefix and prospective aspect marking on the verb, the sentence assumes the person has been chosen, but has not yet assumed office. That is, the prospective aspect is relative only to the becoming, not to the choosing. In (12) a different function of the directional prefix is involved, that of marking an imperative.

The copula complement can be quite complex, as in (13), from the story "An Orphan" (LaPolla with Huang 2003:256), where the copula subject is understood to be the boy under discussion, and so the whole clause except for the copula is the complement NP.

(13) ep   lə   me-zį   ew   lə   me-zį   ke:
     father also   NEG-exist mother also   NEG-exist   INDEF:CL
     ŋuə-kəi-tɕu.
     COP-NAR-PART
     '(He was an orphan), one who didn't have a father or mother.'

Copula clauses can be negated in the same way as other verbs, taking the negative prefix, as in (14), and can also appear in interrogative form using the same interrogative suffixes as other verbs, as in (14) and (15). (The interrogative suffixes differ with person.)

(14) qɑ   zʮne   mɑ-ŋuɑ-jɑ?
     1sg   Qiang   NEG-COP:1sg-Q
     'Am I not Qiang?' ('Aren't I Qiang?')

(15) qupu   ɳiɣi   bələ-m   ŋuə-ŋuɑ?
     3sg   [what   do-NOM]   COP-Q
     'What kind of work does he do?' (Lit.: 'He is a person who does what?')

3. Complement clause constructions

There are two basic complement types in Qiang, one that has no overt nominalization and one that has a clitic nominalizer. The copula can also take a non-nominalized complement. This has an emphatic sense, somewhat similar to a cleft construction, as in (16).

(16) panə-tse: qɑ-wu   zə-p-ji   ŋuə.
     thing-this:CL   1sg-AGT   DIR-buy-CSM   COP
     'This thing was bought by me.'

In some cases, this structure has the sense of an on-going state resulting from a change of state or action, as in (17), similar to one use of middle voice in some languages that have middle voice.

(17) dʑy-le: de-zgə-ji   ŋuə.
     door-DEF:CL   DIR-open-CSM   COP
     'The door is open.'

The non-nominalized clause with the copula is often used for achieving the affect of clefting for highlighting adverbials, as in (18):

(18) the: hama-n̥i   kue-jy   ŋuə.
     3sg   secretly-ADV   transport-ASP   COP
     'S/he was transported *secretly*.'

Another construction with almost the same structure, but with a nominalized complement clause, is used for making strong assertions. This is in fact pragmatically also like a cleft, in that a particular NP is focused, as in (19).

(19) the:-(ŋuən̥i)   tɕile   topu-s   ŋuə.
     3sg-TOP   1pl   like-NOM   COP
     'The ones s/he likes are us.' ('We are the ones s/he likes.')

The position of the focused element is variable, that is, the focused NP can precede or follow the nominalized verb. Compare (20a-b):

(20) a. tɕile-(ŋuən̥i)   pə-s   pies   ŋuə.
         1pl-TOP   buy-NOM   meat   COP
         'What we need (to buy) is meat.'

     b. tɕile-(ŋuən̥i)   pies   pə-s   ŋuə.
         1pl-TOP   meat   buy-NOM   COP
         'What we need (to buy) is meat.'

A variant of this construction has something of an epistemic sense. To make a strong statement of certainty, or of information that was not recently discovered, but known for some time, then a complement clause nominalized by /-s/ is used, as in (21).

(21) pəs   z̩mu   tsu-s   ŋuə.
     today   meeting   hold-NOM   COP
     'There is a meeting today.' (set beforehand)

Another use of this structure is expressing the optative mood. In this structure the complement is nominalized by /-s/ and the copula takes the particle /-n̥i/ in the positive, as in (22a), or /-tɕi/ in the negative, as in (22b) (both particles normally mark ad-

verbial phrases). No aspect or person contrasts are marked in sentences with /ŋuə-n̥i/ or /ma-ŋuə-tɕi/.

(22) a. the: tʂhetsə-le: ɦa-χə-s   ŋuə-n̥i.
         3sg   car-DEF:CL   DIR-bad/broken-NOM   COP-ADV
         'I hope his/her car has broken down.'

     b. təp-n̥i   me:ˀ   ɕe-s   ma-ŋuə-tɕi.
         tomorrow-ADV   rain   fall-NOM   NEG-COP-ADV
         'I hope it won't rain tomorrow.'

A copula construction with a nominalized complement, or in some cases a complement that is a relative clause with [la-han ~ la-hən] (definite marker + 'kind'), [ka-han ~ ka-hən] (indefinite marker + 'kind'), or /tan/ ('appearance') as the head noun, is used to express contingent situations, as in (23) and (24).

(23) the: tha-z̩-m-tan   ŋuə.
     3sg   there-exist-NOM-appearance   COP
     'S/he might be there.'

(24) me:ˀ   ɕi-m-la-hən   ŋuə.
     rain   fall-NOM-DEF-kind   COP
     'It might rain.'

This then brings us to what might be considered a pseudo-cleft construction, where the sort of relative clause plus noun construction discussed above is used as a complement of a copula clause. The topic marker can optionally be used after this complement, as it is the topic of the construction, while the NP in immediate preverbal complement, as it is the topic of the construction, while the NP in immediate preverbal (focus) position identifies the referent represented by the head of the relative clause, as in (25)-(27).

(25) qa   zə-pə-tɕ   panə   tse: ŋuə.
     [1sg   DIR-buy-GEN   thing]   this:CL   COP
     'This is the thing I bought.'

(26) panə tse:-zə   pə-m   qa-(wu)   ŋua.
     [thing this:CL   DIR-buy-NOM]   1sg-AGT   COP:1sg
     'I am the one who bought this thing.'

(27) ke²lə-m   lə   n̥i: ŋuə-kəi,
     ask-NOM   also   himself   COP-NAR

     he-zgue-m   lə   n̥i: ŋuə-kəi.
     DIR-answer-NOM also   himself   COP-NAR
     'The one who asked was himself, the one who answered was himself.'
     (LaPolla with Huang 2003:281)

A structure similar to that used in the optative construction, but with the copula followed optionally by /-ʂa/ in the first person, /-san/ in the second person, or [ŋǔə̂ ~ wə] in the third person, is used to express obligation to perform an action (i.e. debitive).[1] These forms are the non-actor person marking suffixes. (The form / ŋǔə̂/ is an alternate form of the third person non-actor marker /-wə/, which by assimilation to /ŋuə/ becomes /ŋǔə̂/.) Person marking on the verb is optional in this construction, but if it appears it is the non-actor marking that is used. Examples are given in (28)-(29).

(28) the: tɕiu-la   lu-s   ŋuə-ŋǔə̂.
      3sg   home-LOC   come-NOM   COP-3sgU
      'S/he must come home!'

(29) a. qa   ʐme-ʐ̩   na-ji   su-s   ŋuə-(ʂa).
        1sg   Qiang-language well-ADV   learn/teach-NOM COP-1sgU
     b. ʔü   ʐme-ʐ̩   na-ji   su-s   ŋuə-san.
        2sg   Qiang-language well-ADV   learn/teach-NOM COP-2sgU
     c. the: ʐme-ʐ̩   na-ji   su-s   ŋuə-ŋǔə̂.
        3sg   Qiang-language well-ADV   learn/teach-NOM COP-3sgU
        'I (you, s/he) must learn/teach Qiang well.'

An interesting feature of this construction is that if there is only one human referent referred to in the clause, as in the examples just given, then the person marking on the verb reflects the person and number of that referent, but if there are two human referents referred to in the clause, then the person marking reflects the non-actor argument. The initial NP of this construction is the topic of an identificational structure, and it seems the topic is treated as a non-actor, as it is marked the same as the true non-actor in sentences where two human referents are referred to. In (30)-(31) are examples where two human referents are referred to:

(30) a. the: ʔü   ʁua-s   ŋuə-san.
         3sg   2sg   help-NOM   COP-2sgU
         'S/he should help you.'

     b. tɕile   the: ʁua-s   ŋuə-ŋǔə̂.
        1pl   3sg   help-NOM   COP-3sgU
        'We ought to help him/her.'

(31) tɕile   tɕy:mi-le:-χuan̥i   ʐbotɕu-s   ŋuə-(ŋǔə̂).
      1pl   child-DEF:CL-BEN   consider-NOM   COP-3sgU
      'We must consider the interests of the child.'

In two of the traditional stories that were recorded, the nominalization part of this structure appears in a non-final clause without the copula, but the sense of obligation or determination is the same. In (32), from "The Creation of the World" (LaPolla with Huang 2003:251), the structure appears twice, in the first line with the copula, followed by the particle /χuan̥i/ 'because', and in line four, as simply a nominalization, but with the sense '(they) should (become a family)'. In (33), from "The Story of a Lazy Man" (LaPolla with Huang 2003:295-296) three nominalized clauses seem to be subordinated to one copula.

(32) steke-ta   mi   pezə²-s   ŋuə-χuan̥i, ...
     later-LOC   people   raise(child)-NOM COP-because
2   n̥utɕuku   dzuaʁl   e-xʂe   ɦei-bi-n̥i,
     each   stone.mill one-CL   DIR-carry.on.back-ADV
3   ʁu-q-ta-wu   ɦo-ɣlu,   dzuaʁl   jə-xʂe   e-tʂetup-tu,
     mountain-head-LOC-ABL   DIR-roll stone.mill two-CL   DIR-bump-LNK
4   n̥izzi oqpi   pə-s,   dzuaʁl   jə-xʂe   ɦo-ɣlu-s-ta,
     3dl   one:family do-NOM   stone.mill two-CL   DIR-roll-NOM-LOC
5   qhuat   e-tʂetup-wei,   ɦa-tsəi-n̥ike,
     as.it.happens DIR-bump.into-HS   INT-this.manner-after
6   mə   n̥a   ɣlu   lə-zi   oqpi   ɦo-pə-i.
     older.brother COM   younger.sister DEF-CL   one:family   DIR-do-HS
     'Later, in order to propagate descendants, (the brother and sister decided that) each would carry a stone mill on his or her back and roll it down from the mountain peak. If the two stone mills joined together, the two should get married. As it

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[1] Cf. ex. (21), which is a similar structure used for statements of fact.

happened, when the two stone mills rolled down (to the river bank) they joined together, and so the brother and sister married.'

(33) zmətʂi-le:-tɕ   tsi-le:-ŋuəɳi   χuan-tɕhianme²-ta
     emperor-DEF:CL-GEN   daughter-DEF:CL-TOP   Huang-Qianmen-DAT

2   ɣzə-s,   χuan-tɕhianme²-ŋuəɳi   zmətʂi   **dzu-s,**   zmətʂi-le:
    marry-NOM   Huang-Qianmen-TOP   emperor sit-NOM   emperor-DEF:CL

3   tsi-le:-ŋuəɳi   fiatha   **de-lə-s,**   fiakə   **ŋuə-ku-tu.**
    daughter-DEF:CL-TOP   INT-there DIR-give-NOM this.manner   COP-NAR-LNK

   '(Because the emperor had said he would marry his daughter to whoever
   found the parrot,) the emperor had to marry his daughter to Huang Qianmen,
   and Huang Qianmen became the emperor, (he had to) give (him) the daugh-
   ter.'

In (34), from the story "An Orphan" (LaPolla with Huang 2003:262-263), the sense of the nominalization construction is of obligation in terms of the best thing to do in that situation. We can see in the fourth line of this example that even the copula can be nominalized and subordinated to the copula.

(34) the-maha-ŋuəɳi   tɕiu   səsɛ:²-wu   ɳiantɕi
     that-night-TOP   †(then)   exist:REDUP-all   together

2   ganphai tu-pǔ-kəi-stu,   χa-le:-ŋuəɳi   tɕa-lə   **je-s**
    arrange DIR-do-NAR-PART   needle-DEF:CL-TOP   where-LOC   stay-NOM

3   **ŋuə,** tɕa-lə   tɕa-lə   **nə-s**   **ŋuə,** tɕa-lə   tɕa-lə
    COP   where-LOC where-LOC sleep-NOM   COP   where-LOC where-LOC

4   ɳiyi   **ŋuə-s**   **ŋuə,** fia-tsəi   ganphai tu-pǔ-kəi-tɕu.
    What   COP-NOM   COP   INT-this:manner   arrange DIR-do-NAR-PART

   'That night everybody made a plan together, where the needle should stay,
   where (each of them) should sleep and what not and it was all settled.'

Although we find the copula nominalized in this sort of situation, we do not find the copula nominalized in relative clauses, as usually some other verb would be nomi-nalized. For example, in English we could relativize an equational clause such as *He is the teacher*, which would become *The one who is the teacher*, but in Qiang 'teacher' [su-m] is already an agentive nominalization of the word for 'teach', and so there is no need to relativize using the copula.

4. Possession and existence

In a clause in which the predication expresses possession, the form that the ele-ments of the clause take depends on the type of relationship involved, that is, tempo-rary possession or ownership, and on the nature of the possessed referent. The verb involved in all cases is one of the five existential verbs, the use of which depends on the semantics of the referent being located or shown to exist, or on the nature of its location:[2] /ʂə/ and /xu/ for inanimate referents that are not in containers or immovable or inalienably connected to some larger entity, /le/ for a referent located in a contain-ment of some type, including the age of a person or thing and certain internal abstract concepts such as 'strength' or a tendency to do something often; /zi̯/ for animate refer-ents, and /we/ for immovable referents, referents inalienably connected to a larger en-tity, and happenings. The form /we/ is also used to express the possession of qualities seen as less internal, such as being blessed.

If the relationship is inalienable possession and the referent is something that does not normally exist apart from the possessor, such as a body part, then the clause takes the form of a simple existential clause, and the possessor appears as a genitive posses-sor of the body part in a single NP with the body part, and the verb is intransitive (with that one NP as its sole argument), as in (35a). The person marking on the verb reflects the person and number of the possessor, not the possessed.

If instead the relationship is one of temporary physical possession, and not owner-ship, and the referent is able to exist independently of the possessor, then the NP rep-resenting the (temporary) possessor takes the locative/dative marker /-ta/, as in (35b). Here again the verb is intransitive, with the NP representing the possessed referent as the single direct argument in an existential clause, but with the NP representing the possessor appearing as an oblique argument and the person marking reflecting the per-son and number of the possessed referent rather than those of the possessor (inani-mates are unmarked).

(35) a. qa-dʐoqu   ji-tua   wa. (< we)   (connected to main entity)
        [1sg-leg   two-CL]   have/exist:1sg
        'I have two legs.'

     b. ʔũ-dʐoʁu   le: qa-ta   ʂə. (inanimate)
        [2sg-key   DEF:CL]   1sg-LOC   have/exist
        'Your key is at my place.' / 'I have your key.'

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[2] See also Huang (2000), LaPolla (2003), and LaPolla with Huang (2003:133-136).

If the situation involves ownership of an object which is not part of the person (i.e. is not physically inalienable, including other people, such as in kinship relations), then the causative suffix is used with the verb of possession to make it transitive. The NPs representing the possessor and the possessed referent then are both direct arguments of the verb, and so the possessor does not take any semantic case marking, as in (36)-(38).

(36) khumtsi dzəgŭ kən α-hα ʂə-z̩ (inanimate)
Khumtsi money much/many one-pl have/exist-CAUS
'Khumtsi has a lot of money.'

(37) khumtsi tutʂ-ɣzə-zi z̩-z̩ (animate)
Khumtsi younger.brother-four-CL have/exist-CAUS
'Khumtsi has four younger brothers.'

(38) the: səf-α-hα we-z̩ (connected to main entity)
3sg tree-one-pl have/exist-CAUS
'He has some trees.'

There is no difference between present and past possession, and there are no nouns that are obligatorily possessed. There is also no difference in the construction based on whether the possessor is represented by a pronoun, a proper noun or common noun. These verbs have many of the definitional properties of adjectives (see LaPolla and Huang 2004 on adjectives), in that they are intransitive stative verbs that can be nominalized by the (in)definite markers, as in example (13), and can take the intensifying adverbs [gən ~ kən], /wa/, and /qusu/, and in the negative can take the adverb /tsan/ 'too', as in examples (39a-b), but differ from adjectives in that they cannot directly modify a noun and the meaning of reduplication is different. With adjectives, reduplication has the sense of intensification, but with existential verbs, reduplication can transitivize the verb, at least in some cases, as in (40).

(39) a. tsα mi z̩-wa.
here person exist-very
'There are many people here.'

b. tsα mi tsan me-z̩.
here person too NEG-exist
'There are not too many people here.'

(40) a. le 'exist (inside)' > lǝle 'put inside'
b. ʂǝ 'exist (inanimate)' > ʂǝʂǝ 'put (someplace)'

These transitive forms can then take the directional prefixes, with the sense of direction of action, as in (41a), or perfective action, as in (41b).

(41) a. lǝle 'put inside' > de-le / ze-le / i-le 'give / take / insert'
b. ʂǝʂǝ 'put (someplace)' > ǝ-ʂǝ 'put (perfective)'

Aside from the verbs given above, which are inherently intransitive and have both existential and possessive uses, there is one verb, /qǝqe/, which is inherently transitive (and inherently reduplicated--cannot be separated) and used only for possession, and particularly for personal ownership of some important or valuable entity, as in (42a-c). With this verb the NP representing the possessor always is a direct argument, and so does not take any semantic case marking.

(42) a. ʔũ ʂqu qusu qǝqe-n.
2sg gold much have-2sg
'You have a lot of gold.'

b. qupu tɕymi ʁua-tʂ qǝqe.
3sg child five-CL have
'S/he has five children.'

c. qa tshe a-wŭ qǝqa. (< qǝqe)
1sg sheep one-flock have:1sg
'I have a flock of sheep.'

There is no preposition that can be used with the possessive sense of English 'with', as in 'The man with the knife', or 'the man without the knife'; instead a relative clause using a possessive verb must be used, as in (43a-b).

(43) a. xtʂepi ʂǝ-zǝ-m
knife have/exist-CAUS-NOM
'(The) person with (the) knife'

b. xtʂepi   mɑ-ʂ-zə-m
   knife   NEG-have-CAUS-NOM
   '(The) person without (the) knife'

Possession of a quality involves the same structure as possession of an object, as in (44a-b).

(44) a. the: qhu-s   we. (connected to main entity)
        3sg   hate-NOM   have/exist
        'S/he is very mischievous.'

   b. the: qəpatʂ   le. (inside vessel)
      3sg   head   have
      'S/he is very brainy.' (cf. English *She's got a head on her shoulders.*)

The use of a relative clause structure is also possible, as in (45).

(45)   the: çtçimi   nɑ-tç   mi   ŋuə.
       3sg   heart   good-GEN   person   COP
       'S/he is (a) good hearted person.'

5. Summary

In this paper, we have discussed the various uses of the copula and existential verbs in Qiang. The copula is used in attributive, identifying, naming, and cleft constructions, in one type of possessive relation, and after nominalized verbs. The copula can take causative marking, person marking, negation, and be interrogated using the same markers as for other verbs.

In a clause in which the predication expresses possession, the form that the elements of the clause take depends on the type of relationship involved, that is, temporary possession or ownership, and on the nature of the possessed referent. The verb involved in all cases is one of the five existential verbs, the use of which depends on the semantics of the referent being located or shown to exist, or on the nature of its location. Possession of a quality involves the same structure as possession of an object.

Abbreviations

1	first person	HS	hearsay evidential marker
2	second person	INDEF	indefinite marker
3	third person	INT	interjection
ABL	ablative marker	LNK	clause linker
ADV	adverbial marker	LOC	locative marker
AGT	agentive marker	NAR	narrative (hearsay) form made up of the inferential and hearsay particles
ASP	aspect marker	NEG	negative prefix
BEN	benefactive marker	NOM	nominalizer
CAUS	causative marker	PART	clause/sentence final particle
CL	classifier	pl	plural
COM	comitative marker	PRS	prospective aspect suffix
COP	copula	Q	question marker
CSM	change of state marker	REDUP	reduplication
DAT	dative marker	sg	singular
DEF	definite marker	TOP	topic marker
DIR	directional prefix	U	bound non-actor marker
dl	dual	†(…)	Chinese code-mixed stretch of text
GEN	genitive marker		

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