The counterfactual marker cé ~ sé in North-Central !Xuun (Ju, Kx’a)

1. Introduction

(1) Tense-Aspect-Modality (TAM) systems of Ju languages are little known: only brief descriptive sketches available in published sources:

(2) The available descriptions show various degrees of variability across dialects:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ju’hoan (SE) (Dickens 2005)</th>
<th>Ekoka !Xuun (NC) (König &amp; Heine 2001)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tense markers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspect markers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(3) Clause structure (König & Heine 2001, König 2013):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SBJ</th>
<th>(TOP)</th>
<th>ADV</th>
<th>NEG</th>
<th>MOD</th>
<th>ASPECT</th>
<th>TENSE</th>
<th>VERB</th>
<th>OBJECT</th>
<th>X</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

(4) Focus of this talk: the marker cé ~ sé in North-Central !Xuun dialects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dialect</th>
<th>Marker</th>
<th>Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ovamboland West Kavango (OWK) !Xuun</td>
<td>sé</td>
<td>- Heikkinen’s (1987) grammar sketch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Heikkinen’s !Xuun texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Heikkinen/Schmidt 2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ekoka !Xuun</td>
<td>cé</td>
<td>König and Heine (2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lloyd’s !Xuun</td>
<td>se ~ ce</td>
<td>Lloyd’s !Xuun notebooks the Bleek &amp; Lloyd online archive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(5) Roadmap:

- Section 2: Data and previous analyses of the marker cé ~ sé
- Sections 3-6: Reanalysis of cé ~ sé as a counterfactual
- Section 7: Ju comparative perspective
2. Previous analyses of the marker cé ~ sé

(6) OWK !Xuun, Heikkinen (1987:34): modality marker, “unrealization”, “unrealized wish, condition or intention”
   a. sāŋ sé ké ṭàn ǁé|é|é
      they sé PST wait adults
      ‘They waited in vain for the adults.’

   b. tà ǁé ká ná sé g|é ké n|à’ni ‘n|òhàn
      and then and I sé INCH PST hit wild.cat
      ‘And I almost began to hit the wild cat, but its arm was really very big.’

   c. Used in imperatives to give “a flavour of a request” (Heikkinen 1987:92)
      bà sé !hāli dáŋ má kándò’á !áó
      2.SG sé get.out.of.the.way PURP 1.SG consequently move.on
      ‘Do get out of the way that I may move on!’

      hã n|úí yé̈e bá cê ni !hannù1 nà
      PRO1 companion INTER 2.SG cê eat fish give.me
      ‘My friend, you should give me the fish which you are eating.’
      • NB: This expresses a request rather than an “obligation” (like all K&H’s examples of cé)

(8) Both Heikkinen and K&H analyze cé~ sé as a modal:

   | SBJ  | (TOP) | ADV | NEG | MOD | ASPECT | TENSE | VERB | OBJECT | X |

(9) Otherwise two different analyses:
   a. Heikkinen seems to capture the semantics better (unrealization), but the “attenuating” use in imperative is intriguing.
   b. König and Heine’s “obligation” seems further from the mark.

3. The marker cé ~ sé: a counterfactual

(10) Kuteva et al. (2015): 5 “counterfactual semantically elaborate” TAM categories:

   Avertive: Past situation about to happen, but did not
      “I almost fell (but did not fall).”
   Inconsequential: In vain
      “I looked in vain (i.e. looked but couldn’t find).”
   Apprehensive²: Lest-construction, for fear of
      “I am hiding, for fear of being bitten by the dog”
   Frustrated initiation: Past situation about to begin, but did not
      “My younger brother was about to get burnt by the sun
      (but I prevented it).”

¹ K&H’s original orthography (klāñù) has been corrected here towards the orthography they adopt in their latest publication (K&H 2008).
3.1. “Avertive”

(11) OWK !Xuun (H87 = Heikkinen 1987; HS = Heikkinen/Schmidt 2011)

a. tà ǁè  ká  ná  sé  glé  ké  n̥à’n̥n  ‘n̥ôhán
and then? then I  sé  INCH  PST  hit  wild.cat
tà  ká  ǂ’hân  ǁxà  n̥à’q  bōhwá
and  PRO4  arm  again?  big  very
‘And I almost began to hit the wild cat, but its arm was really very big’
(H87:88)

(12) Ekoka !Xuun (KH = König & Heine 2011)

mā  cē  kê  txà  hâ  ǂ’ân  ǃ’höm
1.SG  cē  PST  shoot  PRO1  ANAPH  leopard
‘I was going to shoot that leopard (but didn’t).’ (KH:41)

3.2. “Inconsequential”

(13) OWK !Xuun:

sǎŋ  sé  kê  làn  ǁékêé
PRO2  sé  PST  wait  adults
‘They waited in vain for the adults.’ (H87:34)

(14) NB:
   a. “pastness” or “perfectivity” crucial characteristic of avertive and inconsequential
   b. all the above examples contain the past marker ké

3.3. “Apprehension”, lest-construction (so that not, for fear that)

(15) In purposive clause: o SBJ ce V = negative purpose (“so that not”)

na  ti  !huun  Dam. [ o  Dama  ce  !huun  mi ]
1.SG  IPFV  kill  Dam.  PURP  Damara  ce  kill  1.SG
‘I would kill the Damara so that the Damara would not kill me³.’ (120:9943-l;T)

(16) Cf. positive purpose clause (with irrealis o): o SBJ o V “so that SBJ (may) V”

na  ti  ǁ’a’a  !Xuun  kue  n̥àu  okue  ǁau
1.SG  IPFV  give  !Xuun  MPO  bow  and  arrow
[ o  !Xuun  o  txà  a  ]
PURP  !Xuun  IRR  shoot  2SG
‘I am giving the !Xuun a bow and arrows, so that the !Xuun may shoot you.’

³ Lloyd’s original translation is “... while the Damara was coming forward to kill me,” where o is analyzed as a coordination expressing simultaneity (like ka, which is a possible use of o in NC dialects), and ce as a verb ‘to come forward’. There is No verb ce/se meaning ‘to come (forward)’ in any other NC !Xuun dialects. A verb ce meaning ‘to return, to go back’ is attested in Ju (including elsewhere in Lloyd’s !Xuun), but mostly has the meaning “again” when used as the first verb of a SVC. However “while the Damara was killing me again” does not seem like a satisfactory translation.
4. Other counterfactual meanings and uses

(17) All in interrogative sentences (at least formally: all have the question marker in clause-second position)

(18) Two meanings:
   a. exclamation (often with regret overtone)
   b. request (non 1st pers. subject), hortative (with 1st pers. subject)

4.1. Exclamation (regret)

(19) OWK !Xuun:
   a. bà ré sé nüūn nāāh
      2.SG Q sé just come.down
      ‘If only you had come down!’ (H87:34)
   b. Bà rá sé nüūn nāāh öm-hsá nüūn sú 'á, m̀ loamba ye.
      you Q sé just climb.down 1IN-DU just walk go 1SG friend EXCL
      ‘I wish you had just climbed down, and we would have walked, you friend of mine.’ (HS:139)

4.2. Request / hortative

(20) OWK !Xuun:
   a. bà á sé gù
      2.SG Q sé take.SG
      ‘Do take it!’ (H87:92)
   b. à rá sé 'arakaįyá sà kè gàᅋ
      2.SG Q sé spread.well sà.root MPO sun
      ‘You should spread out the sà-roots well in the sun!’ (H87:92)
   c. ||Awe hà á sé ń̄i hà lú
      ||Awe PRO1 Q sé pronounce PRO1 name
      ‘Won’t ||Awe speak out her name!’ (H27:92)
   d. ń̄hm-tsá sé glàm
      1IN-DU sé settle.down
      ‘Let us make camp.’ (HS:144)

(21) Ekoka !Xuun:
    ń̄hm-tsá kwá cē / dú-á kòē kē gkhündò
    1IN-DU Q cē add-VAL REC MPO strength
    ‘Let us add each other’s strength!’ (König & Heine 2008:17)

(22) Counterfactual in interrogative → pragmatically interpreted as deontic
   Cf. negation in questions as a way to emphasize a request in English:
   "Won’t you take it?" = “Do take it!”

5. Non-counterfactual meaning (?): request in non-interrogative sentence

(23) cē ~ sé used without the question marker, to express a request (polite, softened):
(24) OWK !Xuun:
   a. bà sé !hā ě má kándò’ā !áó
      2.SG sé get.out.of.the.way PURP 1.SG consequently move.on
      ‘Do get out of the way that I may move on!’ (H87:92)
   b. bà sé n/áûn kř ŋ̋
      2.SG sé only IPFV be.perched
      ‘Do keep still up there!’ (id.)

(25) Ekoka !Xuun:
   a. bà cē ŋ̋hîn-ā nà ŋ̋è n/áû
      2.SG cē tell-VAL for.me monkey some
      kē kū-ndõ’ā hř hâ gí-ā mlí
      MPO LOC-DIST PURP PRO1 come-VAL 1SG
      ‘You should tell some monkey that he should come to me.’ (KH:42)
   b. hâ n/áû yèè bà cē mā !hãnnû4 nà
      PRO1 companion INTER 2.SG cē eat fish give.me
      ‘My friend, you should give me the fish which you are eating.’ (KH:41)

(26) Lloyd’s !Xuun:
   ma se ntuun, n/a na guu a, hng ŋ̋ee
   2.SG se stand HORT I take you PURP hold
   ‘Stand, that I may take thee to keep’ (122:10250-l; T)

(27) Not in a question → cé ~ sé conveys the deontic meaning on its own this time.

(28) Hypothesis:
   a. Grammaticalization of the counterfactual marker into a deontic modal
      (precatitive/hortative)
   b. Use in interrogative contexts as a step towards the de-counterfactualization of the
      modal cé ~ sé

6. Summary

(29) Many different meanings/uses, all (except one) having one semantic notion in
     common: counterfactuality

(30) Counterfactual cé ~ sé...
    a. ... in declarative + past/perfective context = avertive, inconsequential
    b. ... in purposive clause = apprehension (lest-construction, negative purpose)
    c. ... in question = figurative use as reinforcement of request/proposition > deontic
       reading

(31) From use in interrogative (30)c. → grammaticalized into a non-counterfactual
     DEONTIC modality:
    a. Precative (request)
    b. Hortative (proposition, let’s)

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4 K&H’s original orthography (kļanû) has been corrected here towards the orthography they adopt in
  their latest publication (K&H 2008).
7. Ju comparative prespective

7.1. Ekoka !Xuun câlā ~ câlē: non-firsthand evidential

(32) In OWK !Xuun, the avertive sé has two other forms sârâ and sârê (sê-rê?):

a. hâ sârâ k-ô txâ n/ô
   PRO1 AV PST-IRR shoot roan.antelope
   ‘He was about to shoot the roan antelope (but he didn’t).’

b. hâ sârê kê ū ’âàn hâ
   PRO1 AV PST go with PRO1
   ‘He was going with him (but changed his mind).’

(33) Hypothesis: OWK !Xuun sé is cognate with sârâ and sârê

(34) In Ekoka !Xuun: câlā~câlē (likely cognate with OWK !Xuun sârâ~sârê)

a. Analyzed as a non-first-hand evidential by König (2013)
   • hearsay (they say that, I heard that)
   • inferential

b. Frequently:
   • used in exclamations
   • used with question marker: “The presence of the question marker does not necessarily turn the clause into a question […] The question marker can be seen as an indicator of the focal status that the statement”

(35) Often associated with doubts about the truth of the inferred/reported statement:

a. ||xâí á câlā gê
   [Xai Q NONFIRSTH.EV come
   ‘[They say that] [Xai is coming [but I’m not sure that he will come].’

b. ṇhṃ câlā kwá ||áûtê !xô
   1PL.IN NONFIRSTH.EV Q hunt elephant
   1PL.IN TOP actually FUT hunt rabbit
   ‘[somebody says, as I heard, that] we are hunting an elephant, [but] we are actually going to hunt a rabbit!’

(36) Negative purpose = avertive?

ṃ má kâ ||ê ṇlûṃ kâ ūg̣
I TOP PROG? hold rock.4 PRO4 PROX
kâ-ê câlā ṇlûṃ 1EX-DU
PRO4-REL NONFIRSTH.EV hit lie.down.PL 1EX-DU

‘I hold this rock so that it cannot fall down and kill us.’

• Negative meaning without any overt negation → câlā expresses “negation” (negative purpose)
• König (2013:82) “câlā is used with future reference as an inferred evidential on reasoning”

(37) Relationship with cé~sé (and sârâ, sârê)?

a. Does counterfactual cé~sé derive from such a non-firsthand evidential?

b. Or the other way around? semantic weakening:
   • counterfactual
   • > dubitative (not certain)
   • > non-firsthand evid. (not certain because I’m not the source of information)
7.2. Tsumkwe Juǀ'hoan (Southeastern Ju)

(38) Marker cà (NB: low tone), “negative interrogative particle” (Dickens 1994), with two meanings:
   a. polite negative request (“won’t you please…?”)
      ǎ ré cà ˈàn ě-tsá kò tcī nūí ká ě-tsá ˈn
      you Q ? give 1EX-DU MPO thing INDF then 1EX-DU eat
      ‘Won’t you please give us something to eat?’
   b. “not” in negative question
      ǎ ré cà x ō á dàˈú
      you Q ? make fire
      ‘Aren’t you making fire?’

→ Very similar to NC !Xuun cé ~ sé in interrogatives!

(39) Found in khòècà ‘perhaps / seem as if’ (khòè ‘look like’ + cà)\(^5\)
   a. hatce re ka khoeca a te tjin
      Why Q PRO4 seem.as.if you IND.SPEECH cry
      ‘Why do you seem to be weeping?’
   b. hatce re ka khoeca a te tjin
      Why Q PRO4 seem.as.if you IND.SPEECH cry
      ‘Why do you seem to be weeping?’

(40) Problems with Dickens’ analysis:
   a. cà is not a question particle (ré is enough to indicate Q)
   b. It is not a simple negation

(41) Is cà cognate with NC !Xuun cé ~ sé, cālā, sārā, sērē?
   a. Negative semantic component similar to that of counterfactual in interrogatives
   b. “dubitative” (not certain) reminiscent of one stage in the hypothesized grammaticalization path leading from counterfactual to Ekoka !Xuun cālā
   c. Problem: Juǀ’hoan cà is L-toned

8. Conclusion

(42) This paper has provided
   a. a detailed description of the (limited) data at hand
   b. a re-analysis of NC !Xuun cé ~ sé as a counterfactual marker
   c. Tentative grammaticalization paths from this counterfactual meaning

(43) Needs to be verified on additional, more precise data.

(44) TAM system of Ju is under-described, and their richness cannot be underestimated:
   a. we’ve only looked at one of these markers
   b. already complex situation (many cross- and intra-dialectal uses and meanings, complex and still mostly unclear grammaticalization paths and chains)

\(^5\) Thanks to Lee Pratchett for bringing the possible relation between cà and khòècà to my attention.
Semantically elaborate” TAM markers involving counterfactuality are not very well known: Kuteva (1998) on the avertive, Kuteva et al (2015) on five such counterfactuals.
a. NC !Xun is one more language with such a category
b. Ju languages offer the possibility to investigate the behavior and role of this category in grammaticalization (whence and whither).

Much work left, need more fieldwork and data collection!

REFERENCES