Multiple usages of the verb 'snang' in Gagatang Tibetan (Weixi, Yunnan)

Hiroyuki Suzuki
Aix-Marseille Université / CNRS / JSPS

ABSTRACT
This paper describes the usage of the verb snang in the Zhollam dialect of Gagatang Tibetan, spoken in Weixi County, Diqing Prefecture, Yunnan, China, with comparison to other verbs. The form snang in the Zhollam dialect is pronounced as /n̥ɔŋ/ and it is mainly employed as follows: 1) copulative usage: for equational and/or identificational functions for a non-self-oriented speech without any specific evidentiality; 2) existential usage: for both the existence of the subject and the speaker’s intimate awareness of that existence; 3) evidential usage as a verbal suffix: for representing the visual experience for a speech. Of these usages, the first usage is unique to the Zhollam dialect among the Tibetan dialects.

KEYWORDS
Khams Tibetan, copulative verb, existential verb, evidentiality, visual perception
Multiple usages of the verb ‘snang’ in Gagatang Tibetan (Weixi, Yunnan)

Hiroyuki Suzuki
Aix-Marseille Université / CNRS / JSPS

1 Introduction

The Written Tibetan (WrT) verb *snang* is pervasive throughout many Tibetan dialects, where it usually means ‘to shine’ and is often extended to mean ‘to seem / to appear’. In this paper, I describe the functions of *snang* in Gagatang, a Tibetan dialect spoken in Northwestern Yunnan, and compare it to several other verbs and suffixes. In Gagatang, *snang* is used as an existential (predicative verb), as an evidential suffix and as a copulative (predicative verb). To the best of my knowledge, the description of *snang* as a copulative verb has not been reported for any other Tibetan dialect.

Gagatang Tibetan belongs to the Melung subgroup (Suzuki and Tshering mTshomo 2009) of the Sems-kyi-nyila group of Khams Tibetan and is spoken in Gagatang Sub-village, Pantiange Village, Weixi County, Diqing Prefecture, Yunnan, China. Suzuki (2009b, 2011) reported other unique features of Gagatang, such as pharyngealisation and retroflexion of vowels due to the influence of *ra-btags*. Gagatang speakers, estimated at less than 1,000, mainly live in the three hamlets of Gaga, Shaoluo and Mulu. Most are bilingual in Tibetan and the Weixi dialect of Chinese. The use of Tibetan by the younger generation is growing increasingly infrequent and it is likely that Gagatang Tibetan will be endangered in the next generation.

The data in this paper are based on conversational texts supplemented with elicited data collected in Shaoluo [Zhol-lam], one of the three hamlets where Gagatang is spoken. The main collaborators are two women one in her forties and one in her twenties. There is little variation of the speech among the three dialects, but for the sake of care in the interest of dialectology, it is henceforth called “Zhollam dialect.”

---

1An earlier version of this paper was presented at 43rd International Conference of Sino-Tibetan Languages and Linguistics (Lund, Sweden, 16-18 October 2010).
This work is collaborated with my friend He Qun and her mother He Chunzhi. My field research was funded by a Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research of Japan Society for the Promotion of Science [JSPS] (“Dialectological Study of the Tibetan Minority Languages in the Tibetan Cultural Area in West Sichuan”) and a Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research of the JSPS (“International Field Survey of the rGyalrongic Languages” headed by Yasuhiko Nagano, No. 21251007). I would like to thank Bettina Zeisler and Ellen Bartee for their insightful comments as well as the polishing of English.
2The dialectal classification in this paper follows Suzuki (2009a).
3Chinese name: 遼南省廬慶藏族自治州維西傈僳族自治州普天關鄉阿嘎塘村
2 Overview of snang in WrT and the modern dialects

In Written Tibetan, the verb snang has a range of meanings related to visual perception, including ‘to appear’ and ‘to seem’ (Zhang 1993: 1589). In various modern dialects in Kham Tibetan and Shar Tibetan,\(^4\) snang is used as a predicative verb,\(^5\) which expresses, among other things, ‘existence’ and ‘possession’ often with an evidential component.\(^6\)

The modern reflex of WrT snang occurs in many dialects of Kham Tibetan and Shar Tibetan. Suzuki and dKon-mchog Tshe-ring (2009) describe its usage in the sKyangtshang dialect of Shar Tibetan. Additionally, it occurs in the Cone dialect (spoken in Zhuoni County, Gansu (dialectal affiliation as yet undetermined), and in Thewo Tibetan (spoken in Diebu and Ruoergai Counties, Gansu and Sichuan; dialectal affiliation undetermined) as well as in some dialects of Central Tibetan as an existential verb (Tournadre and Konchok Jiatso 2001). Hua and Klu-bumrgyal (1993: 326) and Ebihara (2011) report that it occurs as an existential verb in the dParis dialect (spoken in Tianzhu County, Gansu; innovative nomadic Amdo) as an existential verb as well. In addition, in some Nubra dialects of Ladakh snang is used an experiential auxiliary (personal communication, Bettina Zeisler 2011).

A brief introduction to the usages of snang in several Tibetan dialects encountered in my fieldwork and previous works is presented below, divided into a predicative verb and a verbal suffix.

2.1 snang as a predicative verb

The predicative verb has two main categories: copulative and existential. At present, a typical copulative usage has not been attested yet in any Tibetan dialects except Gagatang Tibetan or the dialects belonging to the mThachu subgroup.

Some dialects belonging to the Rongbrag group\(^7\) of Kham Tibetan use snang as a copulative verb, but this usage is not typical (see the next subsection).

snang is used as an existential verb in dialects such as the Southern Route group,\(^8\) the Muli-nDappa group,\(^9\) the Chaphreng group,\(^10\) the sDerong-nJol group,\(^11\) and the Sems-kyi-nyila group\(^12\) of Kham Tibetan, and every dialect of Shar Tibetan. The case attested in Cone, Thewo, dParis, some dialects of Central Tibetan and the Nubra dialects of Lhadakh is also included in this usage. Bartee (2007: 361-362) describes the usage of snang in Dongwang Tibetan.\(^13\)

---

\(^4\)Shar Tibetan is mainly spoken in the northeastern area of Aba Prefecture, Sichuan.

\(^5\)“Predicative verb” is a category of the verb, which is used both as an independent verb which means ‘be’ (copulative and existential; statement or judgement for the speech included) and as an auxiliary verb with a main verb (Hoshi 2003: 1).


\(^7\)Spoken in Danba County, Sichuan.

\(^8\)Spoken in Jiyang, Litang, Batang, Mangkang, Zuogong and Chayu Counties, Sichuan and TAR.

\(^9\)Spoken in Muli and Daocheng Counties, Sichuan.

\(^10\)Spoken in Xiangcheng, Deirong and Xianggelila Counties, Sichuan and Yunnan.

\(^11\)Spoken in Deirong and Deqing Counties, Sichuan and Yunnan.

\(^12\)Spoken in Xianggelila and Weixi Counties, Yunnan. The Zhollam dialect is included.

\(^13\)Based on my dialectal classification, Dongwang Tibetan belongs to the Chaphreng group.
Briefly speaking,\textsuperscript{14} the differences of the usage as an existential verb are: most dialects of the Southern Route group use \textit{snang} as an existential verb for a third person subject, including things and persons, whereas those of the sDerong-nJol group use it as an existential verb for non-human animate or inanimate third person subject. Shar Tibetan employs it in an existential third person as well as in possession.

### 2.2 \textit{snang} as a verbal suffix

Almost all dialects which possess the usage of \textit{snang} as an existential verb also often employ it as an evidential marker, however, the type of evidentiality represented by \textit{snang} is different in each dialect or dialectal group. At present, I have no detailed observation on the usage of \textit{snang} as a verbal suffix except for the Rongbrag group.

The dialects belonging to the Rongbrag group employ \textit{snang} as a suffix of the copulative verb \textit{yin}. In this case, \textit{yin} is sometimes omitted and \textit{snang} seems to be a predicative verb. This usage refers to a third person subject.

### 3 Description of \textit{snang} in the Zhollam dialect

In the Zhollam dialect, \textit{snang} is realised as /\textipa{\texttle{n}ø}/ (/[n\textacute{o}\textipa{55}/, n\textacute{o}\textipa{55}, n\textacute{o}:55]) and serves the following functions:

- as a predicative verb
  - copulative usage (non-self-oriented enunciation, no specific evidentiality)
  - existential usage (also reflecting a specific evidentiality)
- as a suffix of a main verb
  - evidential usage (mainly reflecting a visual experience)

In this section, these three usages are described in comparison with other verbs or suffixes for each category.

#### 3.1 Copulative usage

As a copula, \textit{snang} serves equational and/or identificational functions, while including the speaker’s attitude regarding the predication. In the Zhollam dialect, two affirmative copulas \textit{snang} /\textipa{\texttle{n}ø}/ and \textit{yin} /\textipa{jì}/,\textsuperscript{15} and the negative counterpart of the latter \textit{min} /\textipa{må}/\textsuperscript{16} are employed.

In the following, I will give examples of the affirmative usage:\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{14}Detailed descriptions and a careful choice of the terminology for every dialect are still missing. The following remarks are based on preliminary observations. Thus no examples are provided here.

\textsuperscript{15}This form is sometimes pronounced as [z\textipa{24}, z\textipa{2i};24].

\textsuperscript{16}This word might not be a direct descendant of WrT \textit{min}, because a palatalisation of the initial is expected. Instead, a form like *\textipa{m\textacute{n}a} can be hypothesised (personal communication with Bettina Zeisler 2011). But I apply a typical form of Written Tibetan here.

\textsuperscript{17}I shall not provide a detailed gloss for each usage of \textit{snang} in order to avoid a hasty generalisation, but I shall use CPV 1 for \textit{yin} and CPV 2 for \textit{snang}. 
As shown in (1)-(3), /´nøi/ is only used in clauses with a 3rd person subject, as expected of a non-self-orientation,18 cannot occur in clauses with 1st and 2nd person subjects. But there is a certain overlap with /´ji/, which can also used in clauses with a 3rd person subject as in (3). The semantic difference between two verbs is related to the speaker’s attitude regarding the proposition. /´ji/ is especially used for an expression in which the subject is directly related to speakers and hearers:

(4a) is an objective statement of the fact, whereas (4b) expresses a certain relation with the speaker, i.e. it is a self-oriented enunciation. This distinction applies to sentence (3), if the speaker wants to tell more about the pig which is related to possession of the speaker, /´ji/ is also acceptable.

The negative counterpart is min /´mẽ/ for /´ji/, and mi/? snang /´mi-nøi/ for /´nøi/.

---

18Tournadre & Sangda Dorje (2009) calls the concept of self-orientation/non-self-orientation, which I use in this paper, égophorique / non-épophorique (egophoric / non-egophoric).
/ˈmē/ and /ˈmi-ŋy/ again interchange as in (3) and (4) when the subject is a 3rd person:

(8) a `m-φ-de `k^hY-k^h ŋy `mi-ŋy `ηA-k^h ŋy `ji
this-ABS-top 3-gen neg-cpv2 1-gen cpv1
This is not his/hers but mine.

b `m-φ-de `ηA-k^h ŋy `ji `k^hY-k^h ŋy `mē
this-ABS-top 1-gen cpv1 3-gen cpv1.NEG
This is mine and not his/hers.

(8b) reflects the speaker’s attitude towards the enunciation, and selects the self-oriented type of copula /ˈmē/ for the 3rd subject.

Note that the negation prefix /ˈmi/ preceding /ŋy/ is different from the two ordinary prefixes myi /ˈni/ (non-perfect) and ma /ˈma/ (perfect). The native speakers suggest that the form /ˈmi/ might originate from /ˈmē/, a negation copula. If this analysis is correct, the negation of snang is min snang, which means that the construction of the verbal phrase with /ŋy/ differs from that with /ˈji/19. Due to the behaviour of /ŋy/ in interrogative phrases, /ŋy/ in the copulative usage does not seem to be a typical verb. The following yes-no question show a restriction of the interrogative prefix /ˈʔa/, which can precede almost all verbs, but not /ŋy/.

(9) `t^h^u-φ `li su-φ `ʔa-{ji /*ŋy}
2-abs LISU-abs q-cpv1/*cpv2
Are you Lisu?

(10) `m-φ-de `p^h-φ `ʔa-{ʔji /*ŋy}
this-ABS-top pig-abs q-cpv1/*cpv2
Is this a pig?

Adding /ˈʔa/, the speaker always uses /ˈji/. /ˈʔa-ŋy/ cannot be used parallel to the affirmative expression, but completely ungrammatical. In other words, this means that the verbal construction differs with respect to /ˈji/ and /ˈŋy/; the former is quite the same as main verbs, but the latter is not a typical verb but a defective verb because of the specific negative form and the limitation of the interrogative form.20

As shown in (9) and (10), the prefix /ˈʔa/ cannot make an interrogative sentence with /ŋy/, but there is another way to form an interrogative phrase, namely to add a suffix /ˈjē/21 (following /ˈji/) or /ˈmē/22 (following /ˈŋy/):

(11) `t^h^u-φ `sv: lŋy wa-φ `ji `jē
2-abs person from Zhollam-abs cpv1 q
Are you from Zhollam?

19 This analysis could imply an existence of the affirmative counterpart yin snang, however, it is not attested.
20 The construction /ˈʔa-ŋy/ is possible when /ŋy/ is used as an existential verb. See 3.2.
21 This form is pronounced not only as [jē24], but also as [je24 fā55].
22 This form is pronounced not only as [mē24, mjē24], but also as [me24 fā55].
In sentence (11), /ŋ/ can also be used, but the meaning changes a little. It serves to confirm the speaker’s knowledge:

(13)  
\[ 몽-\phi \, мя-\phi \, ɦ-\phi \, memberof\, ㎡ \]  
2-ABS person from Zhollam-ABS CPV2 Q  
You are from Zhollam, aren’t you?

The answer to questions (11) and (12) can be formed only with /ji/ (negative /m/) and /ŋ/ (negative /mi-ŋ/) respectively. So as an answer to (13), /ji/ must be used.

Wh-questions show no restriction of the above-mentioned type, because /ʔa/ is not used:

(14)  
\[ ꜐-\phi \, ꜉-\phi \, ʒ-\phi \]  
3-ABS who-ABS CPV2  
Who is s/he?

There is one example in which only /ŋ/ is used for the 1st person subject:

(15)  
\[ ꜉-\phi \, ꜉-\phi \, ꜉/\ji/ \, ꜉\]  
I-ABS who-ABS *CPV1/CPV2  
Who am I?

(15) is acceptable only when the speaker lost his/her memory, because of which the non-self-oriented copula is selected.

To summarise the usage of /ŋ/ as a copulative verb, we can point out the followings:

- /ŋ/ is mainly used for non-self-oriented enunciation (almost all cases are the 3rd person subjects)
- /ŋ/ is a defective verb, because:
  - it requires a unique negation prefix
  - it cannot co-occur with an interrogative prefix

3.2 Existential usage

In its existential function, snang expresses both the existence of the subject and the speaker’s intimate awareness of that existence. In the Zhollam dialect, two affirmative existential verbs snang /ŋ/ and yod /ju?/,23 and the negative counterpart of the latter med /ne?/ are employed.

In the following one can find examples of /ŋ/ and /ju?/ in affirmative clauses:24

---

23This form is sometimes pronounced as ꜌u? ꜌1, ꜌o ꜌1, ꜌u ꜌1.
24For the reason mentioned in footnote 17, I shall use EXV 1 for yod and EXV 2 for snang as a gloss.
The simple verb '/ju?/' occurs in clauses which contain 1st person possessors. The simple verb '/noun/' occurs in locational clauses with 3rd person subjects, when the information can be visually confirmed by the speaker. Note that the latter verb is not used for a possessive phrase, only for an existential or locational phrase.

Clauses which express 3rd person possession, 1st person existence and all clauses with 2nd person subjects differ from the constructions presented above. Clauses with 3rd person possessors are expressed with '/ju?-noun/', i.e. '/ju?/' followed by the evidential suffix '/noun/',25 as:

(19) \( ^{-}k^{h}v\cdot\phi^{-}p^{h}a\cdot\phi /ju?-noun \)
    1-ABS  pig-ABS  EXV1-CPV
    S/He has a pig. (possessive)

The form '/ju?-noun/' is also used as an existential verb for the 3rd person, as:

(20) /na ka noun do /{sa-\phi /ju?-noun \)
    here  person  one-ABS  EXV1-CPV
    Here is one person. (existential)
    (situation: the speaker saw from a window a person in the room)

The existence of the 1st person is expressed by another verb bzhugs '/sO/', bzhugs sdod '/sO: di:/' or '/sO: du?/' 'stay' can be used instead of an existential verb.

(21) /ja-\phi /te\-noun-\phi /sO:-dA-jI
    1-ABS  home-ABS  stay-PRS-CPV
    I am at home. (locational)
    (situation: answer in the conversation with a telephone)

---

25It is possible that '/noun/' in this usage is an elliptical form of the combination verb plus '/noun/'. The omitted word can be '/ju?/'. In (17) '/noun/' can alternate with '/ju?-noun/', which means that the speaker has just seen a pig there. Contrarily, '/noun/' itself as an existential usage cannot take any suffixes.
The verbs /ˈsoː/, /ˈʃoː; ʃeː/ and /ˈʃoː: ʃuːʔ/ are used for a 3rd person if one hopes to emphasise the existence of an animate being, especially a human being, as:

(22) ːʔa  b-a, ːʔbhuː?-{φ/ŋ3} {ˈsoː: ʃuːʔ/ˈʃoː:-da-jii}
     daddy ABS home ABS/INE stay PRS CPV
     Daddy is home.

/ˈʃoː: ʃuːʔ/ can be followed by /n˚ON/ as an evidential suffix. This will indicate the speaker’s visual experience of the existence, as:

(23) ːʔa  b-a, ːʔbhuː?-{φ/ŋ3} ˈʃoː: ʃuːʔ-ŋəŋ
     daddy ABS home ABS/INE stay EVD
     I have seen daddy in the house.

The treatment of the 2nd person is similar to that of the 1st person.

(24) ːʔbhuʔ?-φ ːʔbhuː?-φ ːʔjii-ŋəŋ
     2 ABS pig ABS EXV1 EVD
     You have a pig. (possessive)
     (situation: the speaker knows this fact well)

(25) ːʔbhuʔ?-φ ːʔbhuː?-{φ/ŋ3} ˈʃoː: ʃuːʔ
     2 ABS home ABS/INE live
     You are at home. (loational)
     (situation: heard from the addressee this fact with a telephone)

To sum up, /ˈʃuːʔ/ is used for the existence of all the animate and inanimate things (where it may be followed by a suffix /ŋəŋ/) as well as for the possession, i.e. things and animate beings under the subject’s control. /ˈŋəŋ/, on the other hand, is used only to convey the existence of non-human beings which can be visually experienced by the speaker.

In the following section, negative phrases are described. The negative counterpart of /ˈʃuːʔ/ is /ˈneʔ/, which also can be followed by /-ŋəŋ/ when conveying an evidential meaning. In fact, /ˈneʔ/ is often followed by /-ŋəŋ/, because the speaker may confirm a non-existence after a kind of visual experience. The use of /-ŋəŋ/ alone is rarely found.26

(26) ˈŋə-φ ːʔbhuː?-φ {ˈneʔ-ŋəŋ/*ˈma-ŋəŋ}
     1 ABS pig ABS EXV1 NEG EVD/*NEG EXV2
     I do not have a pig. (possessive)

(27) ːʔoː ːʔbhuː?-φ {ˈneʔ-ŋəŋ/*ˈma-ŋəŋ}
     there pig ABS EXV1 NEG EVD/NEG EXV2
     There are no pigs. (existential)
     (situation: the speaker looked at the pigsty and confirmed this fact)

26 The negation verb form appears in elicitations, it is thus grammatically acceptable. Its form is /ˈma-ŋəŋ/.
The interrogative phrase can be formed by adding a prefix /¯?a/ or one of the suffixes /`jê/ or /`mê/. Note that /¯?a/ is usually employed in front of /`nê?/ or /`ju?-nê?/, as:

(28)  ¯t:¯pʰa:¯?a-n˚ON
there pig-ABS Q-EXV2
Is there a pig? (existential)
(situation: pointing a pigsty)

(29)  ¯tC0P-φ¯tC0P-φ`ji-φ`,0P-n˚ON
2-ABS house-ABS Q-EXV1-EVD
Do you have a house? (possessive)

(30)  ¯tC0P-φ¯phA-φ`ji-φ`,0P-φ`mê
2-ABS pig-ABS EXV1 Q
Do you have a pig? (possessive)

In order to reply to the question (28), /`nê?/ cannot be used alone, but /`ju?-/ must be added as /`ju?-nê?/ for an ordinary affirmative phrase.

If the interrogative suffix /`mê/ is added to /`ju?-nê?/ and /`ne?-nê?/, the interrogative phrase reflects the speaker’s attitude of having some doubt as to the truth of the statement, as:

(31)  ¯tC0P-φ¯pʰa:¯?a-n˚ON`mê
2-ABS pig-ABS EXV1-EVD Q
Do you really have a pig? (though you live in a city)

/`ju?/ and /`ne?/ can be followed by /jî/, which is identical with the copulative verb,27 but is followed by a particle /fia/ (undetermined future) or /pa/ (determined future), as in:28

(32)  a  `lô `mibje: `so tcê-φ`ju?-fia-jî
tomorrow time-ABS EXV1-FUT1-CPV
(I) have a (free) time tomorrow. (I think so.)
  b  `lô `mibje: `so tcê-φ`ju?-pa-jî
tomorrow time-ABS EXV1-FUT2-CPV
(I) surely have a (free) time tomorrow.

(33)  `hA-φ¯pʰa:φ`ne?-fia-jî
1-ABS pig-ABS EXV1.NEG-FUT1-CPV
I do not have a pig. (And I am not going to keep one.)

The forms /fia-jî/ and /pa-jî/ can also follow most stative verbs, but nor /`nê?-fia-jî/ nor /`nê?-pa-jî/. Neither /fia-mê/ nor /pa-mê/ are attested.

Concerning the polysyllabic verb /`so: ʰde/ or /`so: ʰdu?/, the prefixes will be added to the second syllable29 as:

---

27This /jî/ is one of the sentence final morphemes, which are pronounced without an independent tone.
28I shall not provide a detailed gross for each particle and I shall use FUT1 for /fia/ and FUT2 for /pa/.
29Some verbs consisting of two syllables are marked on their second syllable with a prefix.
(34) a
\[ \text{¯PÀ bÀ -φ tCho-φ} \]
daddy-ABS home-ABS q-live
Is daddy home?
b
\[ \text{¯PÀ bÀ -φ tCho-φ} \]
daddy-ABS home-ABS NEG-live
Daddy is not home.

\`so: ʰ-6du?
Is daddy home?
\`so: ʰ-6du?
Daddy is not home.

\`so: ʰ-6de: also can be followed by /ŋə/ when expressing an evidential component.
The construction of the affirmative existential phrase can be concluded as follows:

(35) a existential usage for 3rd persons: /\-ŋə/
\[ \text{¯tsh@-φ} \]
dog-ABS EXV2
The dog is (here/in the kennel).
b possessive usage for 1st person: /ju?/
\[ \text{¯tsh@-φ} \]
dog-ABS EXV1
(I) have a dog.
c possessive usage for 2nd and 3rd persons, and existential usage, especially based on the speaker’s visual experience: /ju?-ŋə/
\[ \text{¯tsh@-φ} \]
dog-ABS EXV1-EVD
(i) (He) has a dog.
(ii) The dog is here (visual experience, e.g. I have just seen).
d emphasis on the existence of an animate being: /\-ŋə/, /\-ŋə: ʰ-de:
\[ \text{¯tsh@-φ} \]
dog-ABS live
The dog is/lives (here/in the kennel).

To summarise the usage of /\-ŋə/ as an existential verb, we can point out the followings:

- /\-ŋə/ is used only for the existence of non-human 3rd persons
- The behaviour of /\-ŋə/ in affirmative, negative and interrogative sentences is, different from the copulative usage, quite parallel to a main verb, but:
  - the negation form /ma-ŋə/, while grammatically correct, rarely appears in the natural speech
  - it does not take any suffixes
- /\-ŋə/ preceded by /ju?/ is not an existential verb, but a verbal suffix (see the next section)
3.3 Evidential usage

When *snang* is added to a main verb or an adjective in a clause, it serves an evidential function. Unlike in the preceding two usages, it has a neutral tone and cannot co-occur with the negation and interrogative prefixes, indicating that /-ŋŋ/ is a suffix of the verb. In the Zhollam dialect, there are two suffixes which are related to the evidential category: *snang*-ŋŋ and *grag*-ŋŋ.30

/-ŋŋ/ is used for an enunciation, the status of which is visually experienced by the speaker and has already been part of the speaker’s knowledge. Note that all other sensory information is excluded and represented by /-hka/-hka/.31

The following two sentences reflect the speaker’s visual experience:

(36) 
\[ \text{'snang-} \text{hke-ma-ŋŋ} \]
field-ABS dry-PFT-EVD
The field has become dry.
(situation: the speaker has seen the dry field)

(37) 
\[ \text{'ta ma} \text{'pboŋŋ-} \text{'kho tca-} \text{ta-} \text{ŋŋ} \]
recently tree-ABS peach-ABS NEG-bear-EVD
The tree did not bear peaches recently.
(situation: the speaker has seen the tree not bearing peaches)

The following two sentences reflect the speaker’s judgement based on a visible situation:

(38) 
\[ \text{'nio} \text{-} \text{ŋŋ} \]
well-EVD
Alright./That’s good.
(situation: the speaker has seen and confirmed that is good)

(39) 
\[ \text{'?a} \text{h} \text{pjA-} \text{ŋŋ} \]
Q-good-EVD
Are you/Is it good?

The next three sentences reflect the speaker’s knowledge based on visual experience:

(40) 
\[ \text{'hpA} \text{ja-} \text{dzo dzu} \text{'jn? 'nA 'sa} \text{ma-t} \text{ŋŋ} \]
dish-ABS many EXV thus eat NEG-can-EVD
There are so many dishes that (I) cannot completely eat (them).

In this case, the speaker has just seen the quantity of dishes (=visual experience) and given up to eat all of them.

---

30 This form might correspond to *grag* which designates a hearsay (Les Missionnaires Catholiques du Thibet 1899: 164) as well as to *grags* used in Milarepa as a main verb with the meaning ‘known as.’ Another meaning might be included, which is rather similar to *snang*: ‘appear to one’s ears’ or ‘make itself be auditively perceived’ (personal communication with Bettina Zeisler 2011).

31 This form is widely employed in Khams Tibetan dialects.

In the speech of the elder generation, the pronunciations [tA, a] are also attested.
The mouse eats crops stealthily.

In this case, the speaker has ever seen the mouse eating crops before (=visual experience) and does not define an action of a mouse.

Lhamo (lha mo) seems to like me.

In this case, the speaker’s feelings are based in what he observes as Lhamo’s actual attitude.

Example (43) might be misunderstood in that /-n˚/ would be used as an existential.

The school is far from his (house).

Although /-n˚/ refers to the existence of the school, it is not an existential verb because of the different tone. It is thus a suffix functioning as evidential marker.

The use of /-hka/] is based on non-visual experience:

This boiled meat is tough.

This boiled meat is tough.

(45a) is based on a feeling of the speaker after s/he chewed the boiled meat. If one confirms the solidness of the meat through the sense of touch such as with a fork or chopsticks, /-ňqy/ is used instead of /-ka]/ as in (45b).

The Zhollam dialect has an ergative construction, but the ergative marking is not obligatory.
Typically, (46a) appears in the answer to a question “how is your work?” whereas (46b) appears in that to a question “are you busy?” The former should be uttered in front of the desk of the speaker, and it implies a feeling of the speaker “you look, there are so many documents.”

When making a statement about the addressee, one can use neither /n˚/ nor /hka°/ as in:

(47) "tc’hui’o tshib’i
2-ABS tired-PFT-ACH
You are tired.
(an expression corresponding to Chinese ni xinku le)

To summarise the usage /-n˚/ as a verbal suffix, we can point out the followings:

- The information source is only based on the visual experience, not including other sensory informations (compare (44) and (45))
- With respect to a visual experience, the time of having obtained the information has no relation to the use of /-n˚/ (compare (41) and (42))

4 Conclusion and some remarks

The three usages of snang in the Zhollam dialect are summarised and compared to other verbs and suffixes in each function as follows:

1. copulative usage
   - /n˚/: non-self-oriented speech, i.e. the subject is normally a 3rd person
   - /jº/: self-oriented speech, i.e. the subject is attracted in the speech

2. existential usage
   - /n˚/: existence of non-human 3rd person, based on a visual experience
   - /ju?/: possession of all the persons of which 2nd and 3rd persons take a suffix /-n˚/, and also existence of non-human 3rd person with the suffix

3. evidential usage as a verbal suffix
   - /-n˚/: representing visual experience of information
   - /-ka°/: representing direct sensory experience except the visual experience

The usage as a copulative verb stem is unique to the Zhollam dialect, it is not attested in other Tibetan dialects. From the viewpoint of the formation of the verbal phrase, we should...
note that the copulative /\n\n/ and the existential /\n\n/ are different, and that the latter behaves like a main verb, but the former behaves as a main verb only in an affirmative phrase.

As a typological remark, it can be pointed out that the three usages of *snang* in the Zhollam dialect quite correspond to those of *'dug* (pronounced as /duk/) in Ladakh (personal communication with Bettina Zeisler 2011). Bielmeier (2000: 93-108) describes the usage of /duk/ in detail, in which only one example as a copulative verb (in my term) in the Nurla dialect of Lower Ladakh is included (2000: 93, example (60)).

As a brief mention about a historical development of /\n\n/, we can suppose that the original usage of /\n\n/ as a predicative verb is existential, and the usage as a copulative is due to a recent grammaticalisation of this word; in affirmative sentences it behaves like a main verb, but in negative and interrogative constructions it cannot behave like a main verb. In this sense, *snang*, as employed in the Zhollam dialect, originated as an existential verb, similar to other Tibetan dialects, where it is used. But its further development as a copulative verb is particular to the Zhollam dialect, or the mThachu subdialect group.34

ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1st person</th>
<th>2nd person</th>
<th>3rd person</th>
<th>ablative</th>
<th>absolutive</th>
<th>achievement</th>
<th>copulative verb</th>
<th>dative</th>
<th>genitive</th>
<th>locative</th>
<th>negative</th>
<th>topic marker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>DAT</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>ABL</td>
<td>ABS</td>
<td>ACH</td>
<td>CPV</td>
<td>1st person</td>
<td>2nd person</td>
<td>3rd person</td>
<td>ablative</td>
<td>absolutive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REFERENCE


34One should notice: lack of a form corresponding to WrT *red*, which is used as a copulative verb in the other surrounding dialects around the mThachu subgroup. This word, in fact, is used as a stative verb (adjective) ‘be well/alright’ pronounced /´\n\n/ as shown in (38) (cf. Suzuki 2011: 483). In addition, the construction as *yod snang* is not attested in the surrounding dialects, in which *yod red* is used instead. Therefore *snang* seems to substitute the whole field of *red* employed in the other dialects. This fact might be a key for explaining the development of the usage of *snang* in the Zhollam dialect.
Suzuki: Multiple usages of the verb ‘snang’ in Gagatang Tibetan (Weixi, Yunnan)


Hiroyuki Suzuki
minibutasan@gmail.com
Appendix: Phonological system of Gagatang Tibetan

vowels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>normal</th>
<th>i</th>
<th>e</th>
<th>ɛ</th>
<th>a</th>
<th>ə</th>
<th>ɔ</th>
<th>ɒ</th>
<th>u</th>
<th>ʊ</th>
<th>o</th>
<th>ʊ̯</th>
<th>ʌ</th>
<th>ə̯</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pharyngealised</td>
<td>ɛ̆</td>
<td>ɛ̆</td>
<td>ɛ̆</td>
<td>ɑ̆</td>
<td>ɑ̆</td>
<td>ɔ̆</td>
<td>ɔ̆</td>
<td>ʊ̆</td>
<td>ʊ̆</td>
<td>ʊ̆</td>
<td>ʊ̆</td>
<td>ʌ̆</td>
<td>ə̆</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>retroflex</td>
<td>ə̯</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Short/long and non-nasalised/nasalised features are also distinct.

consonants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>pʰ</th>
<th>tʰ</th>
<th>kʰ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>t̂</td>
<td>k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>ď</td>
<td>g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t̄sʰ</td>
<td>t̄sʰ</td>
<td>t̄cʰ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ts</td>
<td>t̄s</td>
<td>t̄c</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dz</td>
<td>dż</td>
<td>dz</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sʰ</td>
<td>cʰ</td>
<td>xʰ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s</td>
<td>ʃ</td>
<td>ɕ</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>z</td>
<td>z̄</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>γ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>ɲ</td>
<td>ŋ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m̄</td>
<td>n̄</td>
<td>ɲ̄</td>
<td>ŋ̄</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l</td>
<td>ł</td>
<td>l</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>w</td>
<td>j</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Consonant clusters including a preaspiration, a prenasalisation, and/or a glide are attested.

tones

− : high-level       ′ : rising       ′′ : falling       ^ : rising-falling/mid-level