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Expressing inner sensations in Denjongke: A contrast with the general Tibetic pattern

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ABSTRACT

Denjongke is atypical within Tibetic languages in how speaker's inner sensations such as hunger, cold, feeling of illness and emotions are expressed. Whereas most other Tibetic languages use a sensorial evidential form in default expressions of speaker's inner sensations (Tournadre 2021, 2023), Denjongke uses a variety of other forms. The sensorial forms may also be used when the speaker takes an outsider's perspective on their inner sensations in contexts such as surprise and sudden discovery. The reason why Denjongke, unlike Common Tibetan and some other Tibetic languages, can use personal forms for expressing the speaker's inner sensations is that Denjongke personal forms do not require the described action to be intentional, whereas the cognate egophoric forms of Common Tibetan and some other Tibetic languages are strongly associated with intentionality.

KEYWORDS

Tibeto-Burman, Trans-Himalayan, Tibetan, evidentiality, egophoricity, volitionality, intentionality, endopathic

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Expressing inner sensations in Denjongke: A contrast with the general Tibetic pattern

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1 Introduction

This article shows that the southern Tibetic language Denjongke¹ (sip) spoken in Sikkim, India, is atypical within Tibetic languages in how speaker's inner sensations such as hunger, cold and drunkenness are expressed (e.g. *I'm hungry*). I first lay out the general Tibetic pattern with examples from Common Tibetan and Dege (*sde.dge*) Tibetan, showing that the default forms for expressing speaker's inner sensations are sensorial (§2). Then I show how Denjongke differs from that pattern in using non-sensorial forms as default markers (§3). Lastly, I suggest that the reason, or at least a major motivating factor, for the difference is the differing role that intentionality plays in the verbal system of Denjongke and many other Tibetic languages such as Common Tibetan, Shigatse Tibetan and Donwang Tibetan (§4).

2 General Tibetic pattern

According to Tournadre (2021, 2023), in Tibetic languages the morphological forms that are used for expressing speaker's sensory experiences about the outside world are also used for marking speaker's own inner sensations such as hunger, cold and illness. Exceptions to the general Tibetic pattern are Balti and Western Purik (Tournadre 2021). The forms expressing inner sensations are called "endopathic" by Tournadre (2017: 108, 114). In Common Tibetan, sensory imperfective (marked by རྟོག་པར་གྱི་འདུག་ *-kitu'*) and sensory perfect constructions (marked by རྟོག་པར་གྱི་འདུག་ *-sha'*) are used for expressing both sensory experiences about the outer world (1) and for speaker's inner sensations (2).² As indicated by the glossing and translation in (1b), "[t]he perfect *-sha'* must be analyzed as sensorial, but usually indicates an inference" (Oisel 2017: 95).

¹ Also known as Drenjongke, Lhoke, Sikkimese and (Sikkimese) Bhutia.

² The Roman transcription of Common Tibetan follows the conventions of Tournadre & Dorje (2003) and Oisel (2017). Glossing of Common Tibetan represents an edited versions of conventions in Oisel (2017) and Tournadre (2023). Glossing of Denjongke follows Yliniemi (2021). Other Tibetic languages are glossed as presented in the sources.

Common Tibetan

- (1) a. ཁོ་སྐྱུ་སྐྱུ་བཏང་གི་ཉེ་འདུག།
khō pakpa' tāng-ki(tu')
 he scooter drive-SEN.IPFV.
 'He's driving his scooter.' (Tournadre 2021)
- b. ལྷེ་བས་བཞག་
lēp-sha'
 arrive-SEN.PRF
 '(She) has arrived (I see the light in her house, the car parked, etc).' (Tournadre 2021)

Common Tibetan

- (2) a. ང་གྲོང་ཁོག་རྩོགས་ཀྱི་འདུག།
ngā thrōko' tō'-kitu'
 1SG stomach be.hungry-SEN.IPFV
 'I am hungry now.' (Tournadre 2021)
- b. ང་འབྲུག་བཞག་
ngā khyā'-sha'
 1SG freeze-SEN.PRF
 'Oh, I am freezing (realizing right now)'. (Tournadre 2021)

Examples (1) and (2) show that out of the three different evidential values in Common Tibetan shown in Figure 1 (personal/egophoric, factual, sensorial) the typical forms expressing inner sensations are sensorial.³ Note that the sensorial *-kidu'* in Table 1 corresponds to *-kitu'* used in (1) and (2).

	future	present	past	perfect
personal (egophoric)	<i>V-kiyin</i>	<i>V-kiyö'</i>	<i>V-payin</i>	<i>V-yö'</i>
factual	<i>V-kire'</i>	<i>V-kiyöpare'</i>	<i>V-pare'</i>	<i>V-yöpare'</i>
sensorial	-----	<i>V-kidu'</i>	<i>V-song</i>	<i>V-sha'</i>

Table 1. Common Tibetan verbal auxiliaries (Oisel's (2017: 92) adaptation of Hill (2012: 392))

Other forms than sensorial may also be used in exceptional cases. The personal form *-kiyö'* can be used to express habituality (3).⁴

³ The definition of evidentiality adopted here is from LaPolla and Tournadre (2014: 240), who define it as “the representation of source and access to information according to the speaker’s perspective and strategy.” This definition is useful for describing Tibetic languages because it subsumes within evidentiality the category egophoric/personal, which is not considered part of the evidential system by some authors, such as DeLancey (2018).

⁴ As pointed out by an anonymous reviewer, the forms in (3) are not necessarily expressing the speaker’s current inner sensations. Rather, they describe the speaker’s personal experience of repeated inner sensations. Similarly, (4) doesn’t describe the speaker’s present inner sensation but predicted future inner sensation.

- (3) a. ང་ན་གི་ཡོད།
ngā nā-kiyö'
 1SG be.ill-EGO.IPFV
 'I'm chronically sick.' (Denwood 1999: 138)
- b. ང་གྲོང་ཁོག་སྤྲོགས་ཀྱི་ཡོད།
ngā thröko' tō'-kiyö'
 1SG stomach be.hungry-EGO.IPFV
 'I am always/often hungry.' (Tournadre p.c. 2022)

As seen in Table 1, in future auxiliaries sensorial form is not available, and factual form *-kire'* is used instead (4a). The personal form *-kiyin* is not available, because it is associated with intentionality (4b).

- (4) a. ང་གྲོང་ཁོག་སྤྲོགས་ཀྱི་རེད།
ngā thröko' tō'-kire'
 1SG stomach be.hungry-FAC.IPFV
 'I will be hungry.' (Tournadre p.c. 2022)
- b. *ང་གྲོང་ཁོག་སྤྲོགས་ཀྱི་ཡིན།
**ngā thröko' tō'-kiyin'*
 1SG stomach be.hungry-EGO.FUT
 Intended meaning: 'I will be hungry.' (Tournadre p.c. 2022)

Table 2 presents a summary of the forms used for expressing inner sensations (given in bold). The sensorial present *-kidu'* (also *-kitu'*) is the default form, while sensorial perfect *-sha'* is used for emphasizing discovery. Personal present *kiyö'* expresses habituality, and the factual form *kire'* is the only choice available for future because *-kiyin* is intentional.

	future	present	past	perfect
personal (egophoric)	<i>V-kiyin</i>	<i>V-kiyö'</i> (habitual)	<i>V-payin</i>	<i>V-yö'</i>
factual	<i>V-kire'</i> (future)	<i>V-kiyöpare'</i>	<i>V-pare'</i>	<i>V-yöpare'</i>
sensorial	-----	<i>V-kidu'</i> (default)	<i>V-song</i>	<i>V-sha'</i> (discovery)

Table 2. Common Tibetan auxiliaries expressing inner sensation

The same pattern where speaker's inner sensations are expressed by sensorial forms can be observed in other Tibetan languages than Common Tibetan. Tournadre (2023) has noted that if a Tibetan language has a non-visual sensory form, it is used for expressing inner sensations. An example is provided from Dege (*sde.dge*) Tibetan in (5), where the expression of inner sensation uses the same form *tsa?* as external perception based on non-visual (here auditory) experience.

- (5) a. *kʰõ:* *xĩ:* *ʈʂʰā:* *ʈʂɑ?* *ŋɑ* *kɑ* *ẽũ:*
 he.ERG wood split AUX I.ABS hear AUX
 ཁོས་ རིང་ བྲལ་? གྲག་ ང་ ལྟོ་ ལྟོང་
 ‘He is splitting wood, I hear it.’ (Häsler 1999:176)
- b. *ŋɑ* *ʈʂʰēpa* *nɑ* (*du:*) *ʈʂɑ?*
 I.ABS fever be.sick V2:DUR AUX
 ང་ ཚད་པ་ ན་ འདུག་ གྲག་
 ‘I have a fever.’ (Häsler 1999:177)

To conclude this section on Tibetic languages in general, personal (or egophoric) forms⁵ associated with Written Tibetan *yin* and *yod* are in Tibetic languages typically not used with non-controlled verbs of experience which apply to the first person. Sensorial forms are used instead.

3 Denjongke

This section describes how Denjongke expressions of inner sensation differ from the general Tibetic pattern. As an introduction, consider Table 3, which illustrates the division of Denjongke verbal forms, in line with Common Tibetan, into three basic evidential categories: personal, neutral⁶ and sensorial.

⁵ These forms are also known by other names such as “old knowledge” (Huber 2000), “assimilated knowledge”, “strong empathy” (Häsler 1999: 151), “ego” (Garrett 2001, Gawne 2013), “self” (Bartee 2007: 137).

⁶ While the terms “personal” and “sensorial” are in use in descriptions of Tibetic languages, the term “neutral”, which occurs in place of Common Tibetan “factual”, calls for some justification. The term “neutral” underlines the interdependence of the evidential forms. Neutral *bε?* is best described apophatically as not expressing the categories personal (like *ĩ:* or *jò?*) or sensorial (like *du?*). Thus, *bε?* is neutral with respect to taking evidential stance, and its contextual meaning arises from its systemic opposition to the evidentially loaded personal and sensorial forms. In Lhasa Tibetan, the apophatic nature of “factual” is described by Oisel (2017: 96, emphasis original) according to whom “[t]he factual signals that the speaker states a specific or common fact *without indicating the source and the access to information.*” In the same vein, DeLancey (2018) states that in Tibetic languages “[t]he Factual verb endings are the only forms in the system which neither assert nor imply anything about the source of information...Emphasizing the use of this form to express “generally known facts” is thus misleading...Factual category...simply disregards the question of evidence.” In the context of Denjongke, saying anything more than “neutral” (or some equivalent) seems too particular. For instance, calling the category “factual” (instead of “neutral”) seems to mistakenly imply that the speaker wants to emphasize the factuality of the statement. The label “factual” may also mistakenly suggest that the other forms (personal and sensorial) present propositions that the speaker considers less factual than propositions marked by personal and sensorial categories. Moreover, the neutral forms in Denjongke are the ones used for imaginary events (e.g. ‘Let’s imagine I am a...’), which would seem the very opposite of the characterization “factual”. For further information on the category “neutral,”, see Yliniemi (2021: 259).

	Nonpast/Future		Present			Past		"Perfect"		
	Periph.	Simp.	IPFV	Progressive	Continuous	Periph.	Simp.	Resultative	Perfect/Pl. perfect(?)	CMPL
Personal	-ce í:	V ð:	-to í:	<i>V-tcen jò?</i>	<i>V do: jò?</i>	-po í:	V-tce	<i>jò?</i>	<i>V(RDP)-po jò?</i>	<i>V-ts^ha(:)</i>
Neutral	-ce be?		-to be?	<i>V-tcen jò-po be?</i>	<i>V do: jò-po be?</i>	-po be?		<i>jò-po be?</i>	<i>V(RDP)-po jò-po be?</i>	<i>(V-ts^hake)</i>
Sensorial (Alterphoric) ⁷				<i>V-tcen du(ke)</i> <i>(V-tcunje)</i>	<i>V do: du?</i>			<i>du?</i>	<i>V(RDP)-po du?</i>	

Table 3. Denjongke verbal forms (Yliniemi 2021: 315-360)

The Denjongke data come from Yliniemi (2021) and interviews with two Denjongke speakers in December 2021 and January 2022. The consultants were asked to translate English, Nepali and Tibetan clauses, such as *I have headache*, into Denjongke. Some of the responses were further discussed with the speakers to find out specific circumstances of possible use. Furthermore, potentially possible constructions were presented to the consultants in order to obtain felicity judgments and information on contexts of use. It would, of course, be ideal to obtain naturally occurring data, but currently adequate data is unavailable. However, when correctly handled, translated clauses may provide interesting comparative insights on languages.

The main point of this article is to contrast Denjongke data with the general Tibetic pattern of using sensorial forms as opposed to personal and factual forms. Therefore, in order to aid comparison, the labels of the Denjongke verbal forms are given in brackets after the examples, with the evidential part of the label in bold (e.g. **personal** imperfective). Note that the label in brackets names the verbal form but does not necessarily represent its full semantico-pragmatic function in a given context. Examples (6-11) present the various translations that the consultants provided of the clauses ‘I have headache’, ‘I’m hungry’, ‘Oh, I’m freezing’, ‘Now I feel ill’, ‘I am ill’ and ‘I love you from the bottom of my heart’, respectively. These were clauses for which I already had comparative data in Common Tibetan (Tournadre 2021). I also re-translated the clauses into English to provide some insight into the semantic differences between the various constructions.

Note that the purpose of this article is not to delve into the fine semantico-pragmatic distinctions between the different Denjongke translations of the same clause, however interesting such an endeavour would be. Teasing out such distinctions reliably would require an extensive corpus study which is currently unavailable. Denjongke verbal forms are discussed in more depth in Yliniemi (2021: 315-384), while this article, in addition to English translations of the clauses, provides some remarks on semantic distinctions when I am aware of them. One fact about the verb forms worth pointing out at the outset is that, although the periphrastic past form *V-po be?/í:*

⁷ The forms preliminarily labelled “alterphoric” in Table 3 occur in brackets in the same column as sensorial *du?*, because these forms, although they are strictly neither evidential in general nor sensorial in particular, have likely arisen as contractions of complex sensory constructions which have dropped the marker *du?* (*-ts^ha: duke* > *-ts^hake*, *-teen duke* > *-tcunje*). For a description of what is preliminarily labelled intensifier *-ke*, refer to Yliniemi (2021: 286-287, 392). With the elision of *du?*, the construction no longer expresses sensoriality but retains the constraint that it is not typically used with first person actors (**jò on-ts^hake* [I come-CMPL.APH], intended meaning ‘I have come’), hence the term alterphoric, which is also used and defended by Post (2013: 111). The alterphoric forms seem outliers in the verbal system in that they do not align well with the three-part distinction between personal, sensorial and neutral. Denjongke authors are reluctant to use the alterphoric forms in writing. For more information and examples of alterphoric forms, see Yliniemi (2021: 399-403).

obtains an explicitly past meaning with eventive verbs and is hence labelled as a past form, with stative verbs, or more complex stative verbal expressions such as *sùk kjap* ‘feel pain’, it can refer to presently holding states (Yliniemi 2021: 315-320, 338-339). The main point shown by the examples is the absence or rarity of sensorial forms as default translation equivalent, a characteristic that diverges from the general Tibetic pattern.

Translating ‘I have headache’:

- (6) a. ང་མགོ་བྱུག་རྒྱབས་ཏོ་(མིན།)⁸
*ŋà go sùk kjap-to (i:)*⁹ (personal imperfective)
 1SG head pain strike-IPFV EQU.PER
 ‘My head is hurting.’
- b. ང་མགོ་ན་དོ་(མིན།)
ŋà go nà-do (i:) (personal imperfective)
 1SG head be.ill-IPFV EQU.PER
 ‘My head is (being) ill.’
- c. ང་(ལོ་)མགོ་ན་བཞིན་ཡོད།
ŋà(=lo) go nà-zê: jò? (personal progressive)
 1SG(=DAT) head be.ill-PROG EX.PER
 ‘My head is (being) ill.’
- d. ང་མགོ་བྱུག་རྒྱབས་པོ་སྤད།
ŋà go sùk kjap-o be? (neutral periphrastic past)
 1SG head pain strike-2INF EQU.NE
 ‘My head hurts.’ (in past context also: ‘My head hurt.’)

⁸ Denjongke writing uses word-breaks, a habit rare in Tibetic languages. Dzongkha is another Tibetic language that may use word-breaks. Although word-breaks are not used in the example clauses of Tshering and van Driem (2019), they do occur in a text in the appendix (p. 486ff).

⁹ While the imperfective construction may refer to past habitual, past ongoing, present habitual, present ongoing and immediate future actions/states, the elision of the final copula occurs especially with present ongoing and immediate future uses (Yliniemi 2021: 330-331).

Translating ‘I’m hungry’:

- (7) a. ང་/ང་ལོ་ གྱུད་བ་ ལྷོགས་ཚར།
ŋà/ŋà=lo k’jəp to:-ts^ha: (completive [**non-committed**])¹⁰
 1SG/1SG=DAT stomach be.hungry-CMPL
 ‘I have become hungry.’
- b. ང་ གྱུད་བ་ ལྷོགས་པོ་ ཟད།
ŋà k’jəp to:-po be? (**neutral** periphrastic past)
 1SG stomach be.hungry-2INF EQU.NE
 ‘I am/was hungry.’
- c. ང་ (གྱུད་བ་) ལྷོགས་པོ་ ཞིན།
*ŋà (k’jəp) to:-po ĩ:*¹¹ (**personal** periphrastic past)
 1SG stomach be.hungry-2INF EQU.PER
 ‘I am hungry.’ (in past context also: ‘I was hungry.’)
- d. ང་ (ལོ་) གྱུད་བ་ ལྷོགས་ཏྱོ་ ཞིན།
ŋà(=lo) k’jəp to:-to ĩ: (**personal** imperfective)
 1SG(=DAT) stomach be.hungry-IPFV EQU.PER
 ‘I am (being) hungry.’
- e. ང་ གྱུད་བ་ ལྷོགས་ ཡོད།
ŋà k’jəp to: jə? (**personal** resultative)
 1SG stomach be.hungry EX.PER
 ‘I have become (and still am) hungry.’

Translating ‘Oh, I’m freezing’:

- (8) a. ཨོ་ལྷོ་, ང་ འགྲུག་ཚར།
ói, ŋà k^hja:-ts^ha: (completive [**non-committed**])
 oh 1SG freeze-CMPL
 ‘Oh, I have become cold.’

¹⁰ “Non-committed”, or more fully “evidentially non-committed”, does not belong to the label of the verbal form (hence square brackets). It is rather added here to describe the evidential status of the construction in opposition to the three evidential forms which contrast with each other paradigmatically (personal, sensorial, neutral). The completive marker *-ts^ha(:)* is evidentially non-committed in that it does not take part in the three-part evidentiality system. However, evidential markers may be added to *-ts^ha(:)*, e.g. *-ts^ha(:) du?* is sensorial and *ts^ha(:) be?* is neutral. Thus “neutral” is a term for an evidential value which backgrounds the other possible evidential values with which it paradigmatically contrasts (personal and sensorial), whereas “evidentially non-committed” refers to a form that is outside the three-fold evidential division. The description “non-committed” is also used for the imperfective form *-do* when it is not followed by an evidentially committed auxiliary (personal *ĩ:* or neutral *be?*), see (9c).

¹¹ The noun *k’jəp* ‘stomach’ could most probably be presented in brackets in all the clauses in (7). However, in order not to presume too much, I have placed brackets only in cases where I actually heard (and recorded) the nounless construction used. The same observation applies to all bracketed parts in the examples. The example sentence was uttered both with the bracketed item and without it.

- b. མོ་མེ་) ད་ ང་ འབྲུག་ཚར་ ཉ།
 (óí,) t'a ηà k^hja:-ts^ha: ja¹² (completive [**non-committed**]
 oh now 1SG freeze-CMPL TAG.ASR + assertive tag)
 '(Oh,) now I've become cold, I tell you.'
- c. ད་ ང་ འབྲུག་པོ་ ཟླད།
 t'a ηà k^hja:-po be? (neutral periphrastic past)
 now 1SG freeze-2INF EQU.NE
 'Now I am cold.'
- d. མོ་མེ་, ང་ ལེབ་ འབྲུག་པོ་ མིན།
 óí ηà lèp k^hja:-po í: (personal periphrastic past)
 oh 1SG very.much freeze-2INF EQU.PER
 'Oh, I am very cold.' (in past context also: 'Oh, I was very cold.')
- e. མོ་མེ་, ང་ ལེབ་ འབྲུག་ཏོ་ མིན།
 óí ηà lèp k^hja:-to í: (personal imperfective)
 oh 1SG very.much freeze-IPFV EQU.PER
 'Oh, I am (being) very cold.'
- f. མོ་མེ་, ང་ ལེབ་ འབྲུག་བཞིན་ འདུག།
 óí ηà lèp k^hja:-tæn du? (sensorial progressive)
 now 1SG very.much freeze-PROG EX.SEN
 'Oh, I see I'm very cold.'

Upon later presenting all the forms in (8) to consultant KN (one of the two consultants from whom I obtained the original translations) and asking for possible semantic differences between the forms, KN replied that (a), (b), (c) and (e) could be used when being outside with one's friends and suddenly realizing that one is freezing. This is not to say that there are no subtle differences in meaning in (8a-c, e) that may occur in slightly different contexts. KN also suggested that the personal form (8d) offered by the other consultant suggests a past context ('I was freezing'), whereas the equivalent neutral form (8c) would be more likely used in the present context ('I am freezing'). This was a surprising observation, because typically personal forms are associated with spatiotemporal foregrounding (here and now) and neutral forms with spatiotemporal backgrounding (there and then), see Yliniemi (2021: 274-275). However, KN's comment was probably influenced by the presence of *t'a* 'now' in (8c) and the lack of it in (8d). More relevantly, KN considered sensorial (8f) different from the other forms and suggested two possible contexts: telling about one's dream or reporting about the sudden discovery of one's miserable state when having woken up without a blanket the previous night. Thus, according to KN (8f) is not one of

¹² The use of the assertive tag is not directly relevant to the evidentiality discussion, but (8b) is presented here because it was volunteered as an option in translating 'Oh, I'm freezing'.

the default ways of translating ‘Oh, I’m freezing’, but rather suggests a special context which justifies the use of a sensorial.

The clause in (9), ‘Now I feel ill’, was adopted for comparative reasons from Tournadre (2021). However, because the consultants used specific strategies to try to convey the meaning of the English verb *feel*, I also asked them to translate the simpler clause ‘I am ill’, see (10). Examples (9a–e) were offered by consultant KN and examples (9f–h) by consultant KT. A noteworthy feature is that both consultants were inclined to use a simulative expression with *dem* ‘like (this)’ in translating the English clause where the verb *feel* was explicitly present. Moreover, consultant KT offered all his translation options with the Denjongke verb meaning ‘feel’. Clauses with *dem* ‘like (it)’ have been translated with English *seem* and *like*. The final verbs in (9) are either personal or evidentially non-committed forms, the same forms that were also used in translating the simpler clause ‘I am ill’ in (10).

Translating ‘Now I feel ill’:

- (9) a. ད་ ང་ ན་ཉེ་ འདེམ་ ཡོད།
t'a *ŋà* *nà-ŋi*¹³ *dem* *jò?* (personal)¹⁴
 now 1SG be.ill-3INF like(.it) EX.PER
 ‘Now I seem to be ill.’
- b. ད་ ང་ ན་གད་ འདེམ་ ཡོད།
t'a *ŋà* *nà-εε* *dem* *tʰon-do* (imperfective [non-committed])
 now 1SG be.ill-INF like(.it) become-IPFV
 ‘I seem to be (becoming) ill.’
- c. ད་ ང་ ན་སབ་ ཐོན་ཐོ།
t'a *ŋà* *nà-rap* *tʰon-do* (imperfective [non-committed])
 now 1SG be.ill-IMF become-IPFV
 ‘Now I’m (becoming) about to get ill.’
- d. ད་ ང་ ན་ཉེ་ འདེམ་ ཐོན་ཚས།
t'a *ŋà* *nà-ŋi* *dem* *tʰon-tʰa:* (completive [non-committed])
 now 1SG be.ill-3INF like(.it) become-CMPL
 ‘Now I seem to have become ill.’
- e. ད་ ང་ ན་སབ་ ཐོན་ཚས།
t'a *ŋà* *nà-rap* *tʰon-tʰa:* (completive [non-committed])
 now 1SG be.ill-IMF become-CMPL
 ‘Now I’ve become (such that I am) about to get ill.’

¹³ For details on the use of the infinitive forms *-εε?*, *-po* and *-ŋi*, see Yliniemi (2021: 91–93) and references there.

¹⁴ All the clauses having *dem* ‘like (it)’ could be called simulative, but I leave that label out here for simplicity.

f. ད་ལྟོ ང་ ར་བོ་ འདེམ་ ཚོར་བོ་ ཞིན།
t'ato ŋà nà-u dem ts'ho:-bo í: (personal periphrastic past)
 now 1SG be.ill-2INF like(.it) feel-2INF EQU.PER
 'Now I feel like I'm ill.'

g. ད་ལྟོ ང་ ར་ ཡོད་པོ་ འདེམ་ ཚོར་བོ་ ཞིན།
t'ato ŋà nà jò-po dem ts'ho:-bo í: (personal periphrastic past)
 now 1SG be.ill EX-2INF like(.it) feel-2INF EQU.PER
 'Now I feel like I've become ill.'

h. ད་ལྟོ ང་ ར་ ཡོད་པོ་ ཚོར་བོ་ ཞིན།
t'ato ŋà nà jò-po ts'ho:-bo í: (personal periphrastic past)
 now 1SG be.ill EX-2INF feel-2INF EQU.PER
 'Now I feel I've become ill.'

Translating 'I am ill':

- (10) a. ང་ ར་ ཡོད།
ŋà nà jò? (personal resultative)
 1SG be.ill EX.PER
 'I've become ill.'
- b. ང་ ར་དོ་ ཞིན།
ŋà nà-do í: (personal imperfective)
 1SG be-IPFV EQU.PER
 'I'm being ill.'
- c. ང་ ར་བོ་ ཞིན།
ŋà nà-u í: (personal periphrastic past)
 1SG be.ill-2INF EQU.PER
 'I'm ill.' (in past context also 'I became ill.')
- d. ང་ ར་ཚད།
ŋà nà-ts'ha: (completive [non-committed])
 1SG be.ill-CMPL
 'I've become ill.'

Translating 'I love you from the bottom of my heart':

- (11) a. ངས་ རང་ལོ་ ངའི་ རྗེང་ལས་ར་ དགའ་བོ་ ཞིན།
ŋá: rá:=lo nè: ɲiŋ=lɛ=ra ga-u í: (personal periphr. past)
 1SG 2SG=DAT my heart=ABL=AEMPH love-2INF EQU.PER
 'I love you from my innermost being.'

b. ངས་ རང་ལོ་ ངའི་ རྗེས་ལས་ར་ འགའ་བོ་ མིན།

ŋá: *rã:=lo* *ɲè:* *ɲiŋ=le=ra* *ga-do* *í:* (personal imperfective)
 1SG 2SG=DAT my heart=ABL=AEMPH love-IPFV EQU.PER
 ‘I love you from my innermost being.’

As shown by examples (6-11), the forms offered as translations of clauses expressing speaker’s inner sensations include personal, neutral and evidentially non-committed verb forms. Sensorial form was offered as an option only once in (8f), about the sensation of freezing. Freezing could be considered to have such externally perceivable characteristics as shivering and goose pimples that might trigger the use of sensorial. Overall, examples (6-11) break the general Tibetic pattern where sensorial is the default form.

While personal, neutral and evidentially non-committed forms are used as the default expressions of the speaker’s inner sensations, sensorial and what I call alterphoric forms can also be used (for explanation of “alterphoric”, see footnote 8). The sensorial forms were described as felicitous in clauses listed in (12). However, none of the forms in (12) were volunteered as “default” translations of the English clauses in (6-11).

(12) a. ཡ་ ང་ མགོ་ ཟུག་ རྒྱབས་ཅེན་ འདུག།

jà? *ŋà* *go* *sùk* *kjap-tɛɛn* *du?* (sensorial progressive)
 oh 1SG head pain do-PROG EX.SEN
 ‘Oh, I have headache.’

b. ང་ ལེབ་ གྲངས་ཚར་ འདུག།

ŋà *lep* *k’jã:-tsʰa:* *du?* (sensorial completive)
 1SG very.much freeze-CPML EX.SEN
 ‘I’m very cold.’

c. ཡ་ ང་ རྩོད་ རྗེས་ལས་ཚར་ འདུག།

jà? *ŋà* *k’jɔp* *to:-tsʰa:* *du?* (sensorial completive)
 Oh 1SG stomach be.hungry-CMPL EX.SEN
 ‘Oh, I’m hungry.’ (Consultant KN accepted this but KT considered it awkward)

d. ཡ་ ང་ རྩོད་ རྗེས་ལས་ཚར་ འདུག་ཤོ།

jà? *ŋà* *k’jɔp* *to:-tsʰa:* *du=ɛo* (sensorial completive + AT)
 Oh 1SG stomach hunger-CMPL EX.SEN-AT
 ‘Oh, I seem to be hungry (upon hearing my stomach rumble).’ (Both consultants accepted this)

The clauses in (12) seem to emphasize sudden realization, and therefore sensorial forms are allowed. It is noteworthy that there was variance between the two consultants in the acceptance of (12c) and (12d), which differ only by the presence of the attention marker =*ɛo*. One of the consultants deemed the mere sensorial completive without the attention marker in (12c) awkward. This suggests that the use of sensorials for expressing the speaker’s inner sensations may require some

contextual justification to be felicitous. In (12d), the use of the attention marker provides the justification for the use of outsider’s perspective, because it reveals the speaker’s surprise. For details on the Denjongke attention marker, which has mirative-like uses, refer to Yliniemi (2016).

Examples (13-15) illustrate that the same alterphoric forms that can be used for expressing the speaker’s external sensory experiences can also be used with speaker’s inner sensations.¹⁵ Example (14) provides a Denjongke translation of Common Tibetan clause (13), to illustrate that Denjongke alterphoric forms may be used in translating Tibetan sensory inferential *bzhag*. Example (15) then shows that the same alterphoric form that was used for (external) sensory experience can also be used in expressions of inner sensation to underline sudden discovery. Note that attention marker =*ɕo* is given in brackets in (14) and (15) as a frequent option in this type of contexts. Example (15), when spoken without the final attention marker =*ɕo*, is very close in meaning to (12c).

(13) Common Tibetan

འོ་ཇོ་ རྩོམ་འབྱེད་མཁམ་ཚོ་བྱོས་ཚར་བཞག

otsi thopo khyērkhēn-tso thrō-tsha-sha’

oh load carrier-PL escape-CMPL-SENS.PRF

‘Oh, the porters have escaped (I see their baggage left in snow)!’ (From *Tintin in Tibet*, Tibetan edition, Melac 2021)

Translating (13) from Tibetan

(14) ཡ་ཇོ་ རྩོམ་ འབྱེད་མཁམ་ འདི་ བྱོས་ཚར་གེ་(ཤོ།)

ádzi, t’o: bak-kʰɛ:=di p’jo:-tsʰake(=ɕo) (alterphoric completive)

oh load carry-NMLZ=DEMPH flee-CMPL.APH(=AT)

‘Oh, the porters have escaped (I see their baggage left in snow).’

(15) ཡ་, ང་ བྱོད་བ་ ལྷོགས་ཚར་གེ་(ཤོ།)

já?, ŋà k’jɔp to:-tsʰake(=ɕo)

oh 1SG stomach hunger-CMPL.APH(=AT) (alterphoric completive)

‘Oh, I’m hungry (I discover).’

(One of the two consultants considered this awkward without the attention marker =*ɕo*)

In an attempt to obtain sensorial forms, the consultants were asked how one could express being hungry when hearing one’s own stomach rumbling. The different strategies offered are listed in (16).

¹⁵ Note that although alterphoric forms can be used in contexts where the speaker bases their statement on a sensory experience, alterphoric markers have lost their explicitly sensory meaning (see footnote 7). That is, alterphoric forms cover the sensorial context but are not limited to it. For instance, the sensorial clause *kʰu òn-tsʰa du-kɛ* [3SGM come-CMPL EX.SEN-IN] ‘He’s come’ suggests that the speaker saw the person in question, whereas when using the alterphoric construction *kʰu òn-tsʰake* [3SGM come-CMPL.APH] the speaker may or may not have seen the person in question. Another context with which alterphoric constructions are compatible with are sensory inferentials, such as (14). However, use of the alterphorics also goes beyond sensory inferential contexts. For instance, the alterphoric construction *pʰou ʃep-tsʰake* [over.there arrive-CMPL.APH] ‘He’s arrived over there’ was spoken by a person who learned the information from another person during a phone call.

Expressing hunger when hearing one's stomach rumbling

- (16) a. ཡ་, ད་ ང་ རྩོད་ ལྷོགས་ཚར་ ཉ།
jà?, *t'a* *ŋà* *k'jəp* *to:-ts^ha:* *ɲá* (completive [**non-committed**]
 Oh now 1SG stomach be.hungry-CMPL TAG.ASR + assertive tag)
 'Oh, now I am hungry, I tell you.'
- b. ཡ་, ད་ ང་ རྩོད་ ལྷོགས་ཚར་ འདུག་(གེ)ཤོ།
jà?, *t'a* *ŋà* *k'jəp* *to:-ts^ha* *du(-kɛ)=ɛo* (**sensorial** completive + AT)
 Oh now 1SG stomach be.hungry-CMPL EX.SEN(-IN)=AT
 'Oh, now I am hungry (I discover to my surprise).'
- c. ཡ་, ད་ ང་ རྩོད་ ལྷོགས་ཚར་གེཤོ།
jà?, *t'a* *ŋà* *k'jəp* *to:-ts^hakɛ=ɛo* (**alterph.** completive + AT)
 Oh now 1SG stomach be.hungry-CMPL.APH=AT
 'Oh, now I am hungry (I discover to my surprise).'
- d. ཡ་, ད་ ང་ རྩོད་ ལྷོགས་སོ་ འདྲ་ ཟླ།
jà?, *t'a* *ŋà* *k'jəp* *to:-po* *ɟa* *bɛ?* (**neutral** apparentive)
 Oh now 1SG stomach be.hungry-2INF be.like EQU.NE
 'Oh, I seem to be hungry.'

It is noteworthy that all the four options in (16) are introduced by an interjection underlining discovery. Three of the four constructions (16a-c) are formed around the completive verb form, while the last option is an apparentive construction which implies both inference and decreased certainty. Evidentially the clauses vary from evidentially non-committed and neutral (16a, d) to sensorial and alterphoric (16b, c). With the sensorial and alterphoric forms, attention marker =*ɛo* is preferred, presumably to justify the use of these verb forms of external perception which are not typically used with first person actors.

The clauses in (17) illustrate how the outsider's perspective implied by sensorial forms can affect verbal meaning. While the non-sensorial forms (17a) and (17b) refer to general feeling of drowsiness, the sensorial in (17c) suggests that the speaker actually nodded off and gained an outsider's perspective on themselves when waking.

- (17) a. ང་ མེག་དོག་ རྩལས་ཚར་ ཉ།
ŋà *mì:du* *kjap-ts^ha:* *ɲá* (completive [**non-committed**])
 1.SG eye(s) strike-CMPL TAG.ASR
 'I'm drowsy, I tell you.' (I've reached the state of drowsiness)
- b. ང་ མེག་དོག་ རྩལས་ཏོ་ ཉ།
ŋà *mì:du* *kjap-to* *ɲá* (imperfective [**non-committed**])
 1.SG eye(s) strike-IPFV TAG.ASR
 'I'm (being) drowsy, I tell you.' (I am in the state of drowsiness)

- c. ང་ མིག་དོག་ རྒྱབས་ཚར་ འདུག་(གེ་ཤོ།)
ŋà mi:du kjap-tsh'a du(-ke=εo)
 1.SG eye(s) strike-CMPL EX.SEN(-IN=AT) (sensorial completive)
 'I'm nodding off.' (I've actually nodded off)

As known by field linguists who have experience in monolingual and bilingual elicitation in various languages, the contact language often affects elicited forms to some degree. This is illustrated by comparison of Nepali clauses (18) and their Denjongke translations in (19).

- Nepali
 (18) a. *ma-lai bhog lag-yo.*
 1.SG-DAT hunger happen-PST.3G
 'I'm hungry.'
 b. *ma-lai bhog lag-echa.*
 1.SG-DAT hunger happen-discovery
 'I'm hungry, I discover.'

- Denjongke: translations of (18a) and (18b) respectively
 (19) a. ང་ཉོ་ རྩུང་བ་ རྩོགས་ཚར།
ŋà=to k'jəp to:-tsh'a:
 1SG=CEMPH stomach be.hungry-CMPL
 '(As for me) I'm hungry'

- b. ཡ་, ང་ཉོ་ རྩུང་བ་ རྩོགས་ཚར་གེ་ཤོ།
ja?, ŋà=to k'jəp to:-tsh'ake(=εo)
 Oh 1SG=CEMPH stomach be.hungry-CMPL.APH(=AT)
 'Oh, I'm hungry (I discover).'

A noteworthy factor is that upon translating from Nepali, consultant KN used the contrastive emphatic =*to*, which did not occur when translating from English. Perhaps the use of the emphatic is motivated by the Nepali dative formulation for the first person (*ma-lai*), but one cannot be certain. In (18b), Nepali uses the form *-echa*, on which Peterson (2000:16) comments that "[t]his category expresses both unexpected information and inference through results." It seems that three elements in the Denjongke translation in (19b) convey an effect similar to Nepali "mirative/inferential" *-echa*. First, sudden discovery is suggested by the interjection *jà?* (Nepali has no interjection). Second, the alterphoric *-tsh'ake* implies that the speaker obtains an outsider-like perspective on their own sensations. Thirdly, the sudden discovery is emphasized by the use of attention marker =*εo*, which marks attention-worthy information, including mirative-like uses.

In summary of this section, Denjongke does not conform to the general Tibetic pattern exemplified by examples (1) and (2) in that sensorial forms are not used as the default markers of speaker's inner sensations. Instead, the evidential values "personal" and "neutral" are used along with the evidentially non-committed completive form. Sensorials may also be used in contexts that

underline surprise and sudden discovery. The next section suggests a major motivating factor for the difference between Denjongke and the general Tibetic pattern.

4 Why the difference?

A significant factor is that in Denjongke the copulas/auxiliaries *í:* and *jò?*, which mark the evidential category “personal”, do not require the described action to be intentional,¹⁶ whereas the cognate markers in Common Tibetan, variously labelled as “personal” (e.g. Hill 2012) or “egophoric” (e.g. Tournadre & Suzuki 2013), are strongly associated with intentionality. For comparison, consider the Common Tibetan clauses in (20) and their Denjongke equivalents in (21).

- Common Tibetan
- (20) a. བཟླས་བ་ཡིན།
tā'-payin
 look-EGO.PFV
 ‘I looked.’ (Tournadre & Dorje 2003: 141)
- b. མཐོང་བྱུང།
thōng-cung
 see-EGO.PFV.RCP
 ‘I saw.’ (Tournadre & Dorje 2003: 141)
- c. *མཐོང་བ་ཡིན།
 **thōng-payin*
 see-EGO.PFV
 intended meaning: ‘I saw.’

- Denjongke
- (21) a. ལྟ་བོ་ཨིན།
ta-u í: (*ta-bo > ta-u*)
 look-NMLZ EQU.PER
 ‘(I) looked.’ (Yliniemi 2021: 87)
- b. མཐོང་བོ་ཨིན།
tʰò:-po í:
 see-NMLZ EQU.PER
 ‘(I) saw.’ (Yliniemi 2021: 87)

¹⁶ Some authors have used the term “volitional” in place of “intentional”. Haller (2000: 176), for instance, defines that “[a] verb is marked ‘volitional’ if the event that it describes takes place with the intention of the speaker”. I follow here Tournadre & Suzuki (2023), who use the terms “controllable” vs. “non-controllable” to describe lexical distinctions in verbs and the terms “intentional” vs. “non-intentional” to distinguish semantico-pragmatic distinctions expressed by auxiliaries.

As shown by (20), in Common Tibetan the intentional auxiliary *-payin*, which is used with controllable verbs, cannot be used with the non-controllable verb *thōng* ‘see’. In Denjongke, in contrast, controllable and non-controllable verbs are used with the same verbal ending *-po ĩ:* (cognate with *-payin*), showing that Denjongke verbal morphology does not mark intentionality (21).¹⁷

Other Tibetic languages exemplifying the central role of intentionality are Shigatse Tibetan (Haller 2000) and Dongwang Tibetan (Bartee 2007). Haller (2000: 176) divides Shigatse Tibetan auxiliaries into “volitional” (here: intentional) forms ending in *-jĩ* or *-jæ* (cognate with Written Tibetan ཡིན་ *yin* and ཡོད་ *yod* respectively), and “non-volitional forms” (here: non-intentional) ending in *-pie*, which is potentially related to Denjongke evidentially neutral copula/auxiliary *be?*. Similarly, Bartee (2007: 127, 130, 393) describes intentionality as a central category for Dongwang Tibetan auxiliaries, which are described as “intentional” and “unintentional”/“non-intentional”.

If personal/egophoric forms are in Tibetic languages strongly associated with intentionality, there would seem to be a functional need in the grammar to develop and use other forms for expressing speaker’s non-intentional experiences. At least some Tibetic languages indeed have, to use Tournadre’s (2003: 147) term for Common Tibetan, a “receptive egophoric” form, which can be used for expressing the speaker’s non-intentional actions and inner sensations. Common Tibetan example of speaker’s non-intentional action is (20b) above. Examples (22–24) illustrate the use of perfective receptive egophoric or similar form in expressing speaker’s inner sensations in Common Tibetan, Rgyalhang Tibetan and Sde.dge Tibetan respectively.¹⁸ The forms *-cung* (Common Tibetan), *ean* (Rgyalhang Tibetan) and *εũ:* (Sde.dge Tibetan) are all related to Written Tibetan *byung* ‘to come out/emerge’.

Common Tibetan

(22) a. ང་ན་བྱུང་།
ngā nā-cung
 1SG be.sick-EGO.PFV.RCP
 ‘I got sick’ (Tournadre & Dorje 2003: 147)

b. *ང་ན་ཡོད།
 **ngā nā yö’*.
 1SG be.ill EX.EGO.PRF
 Intended meaning: ‘I’ve become ill.’ (Tournadre, p.c. 2022)

¹⁷ According to Tournadre (p.c. 2023), another southern Tibetic language which lacks “intentional egophorics” is Dzongkha.

¹⁸ Hongladarom (2007: 32) describes *ean* as an “egophoric auxiliary” which “usually occurs with the first person subject when the speaker is not a volitional actor, such as when indicating that they have dreamt about something, were sick, or cried.” Häsler (1999: 191) states that experiential perfective “*εũ:* primarily expresses that the speaker has been affected, in some way, by an action or by an event.” With non-controllable verbs, experiential perfective “usually has the speaker as patient-subject” (Häsler 1999: 192).

Rgyalhang Tibetan

- (23) *ŋä nã-tei ɛaŋ*
 1SG sick-PFV AUX:SELF
 ‘I was sick.’ (Hongladarom 2007: 32)

Sde.dge Tibetan

- (24) *ndõ:sõ: tsʰẽ ndɛ ŋa tʂã: ɛũ:*
 last.night night this I.ABS be.afraid AUX
 མདང་སང་ མཚན་ འདྲི་ ང་ སྐྱལ་ ལུང་
 ‘Last night I was afraid’ (Häsler 1999: 192)

Denjongke, on the other hand, does not have the equivalent of a receptive egophoric form but uses the same auxiliaries for inner sensations as for the speaker’s intentional actions, see (25). That is possible because the personal auxiliaries *ɛ̃* and *jòʔ* (cognate with Written Tibetan *yin* and *yod* respectively) are not sensitive to intentionality.

Denjongke

- (25) a. ད་ ང་ ན་ ལྷོད་ ཡོད།
t'a ŋà nà dø: jòʔ
 now 1SG be.ill stay EX.PER
 ‘Now I have become ill (and am still ill).’
- b. ང་ ན་དོ་ ཞིན།
ŋà nà-do ɛ̃:
 1SG be-IPFV EQU.PER
 ‘I’m (being) ill.’
- c. ང་ ན་འོ་ ཞིན།
ŋà nà-u ɛ̃:
 1SG be.ill-2INF EQU.PER
 ‘I’m ill’ / ‘I was/became ill.’

The difference of Denjongke and Common Tibetan is further illustrated by the difference in future constructions. Whereas in Denjongke both the personal and neutral forms can be used for talking about projected future inner sensations (26), in Common Tibetan only the factual form (analogous to Denjongke neutral) can be used, because the egophoric form (analogous to Denjongke personal) is associated with intentionality (26).¹⁹

¹⁹ See Oisel (2017: 102) for a discussion on how Lhasa Tibetan egophorics may be divided into “narrow scope” and “wide scope” related to intentionality.

Denjongke

- (26) གཤམ་སྲིད་ ང་ ཟམ་ མན་ཟ་ནེ་ ང་(ལོ་) རྒྱུད་པ་ ལྷོགས་ཤང་ ཨིན།
k'ɛ:si? ɲà sàm mán-za-ne ɲà(=lo) k'jəp to:-ɛɛ í:/be?
 if 1SG food NEG-eat-COND 1SG(=DAT) stomach be.hungry-INF EQU.PER/EQU.NE
 'If I do not eat, I will be hungry.'

Common Tibetan

- (27) a. ... ལྷོགས་ཀྱི་ཡིན།
**tō'-kiyin*
 be.hungry-EGO.FUT
 Intended meaning: '...I will be hungry.' (Tournadre, p.c. 2022)
- b. ... ལྷོགས་ཀྱི་རེད།
tō'-kire'
 be.hungry-FAC.FUT
 '...I will be hungry.' (Tournadre, p.c. 2022)

In an attempt to describe the semantic difference between the personal and neutral forms, which are both possible in (26), consultant KN said that when using the personal *í:* the speaker as if already knows about the coming hunger at the time of speaking (spatiotemporal foregrounding, here and know). Using the neutral *be?*, on the other hand, suggests that the speaker will become aware of the hunger only in the future (spatiotemporal backgrounding, there and then). Thus, the semantic difference between personal and neutral forms is concerned with types of knowing and spatiotemporal backgrounding vs. foregrounding rather than intentionality.

The examples and the discussion in this section have shown that Denjongke personal auxiliaries, unlike their Common Tibetan cognates, are not by nature intentional. Therefore, Denjongke personal forms *í:* and *jə?* can be used along with neutral *be?* and evidentially non-committed form *-ts^ha:* as default auxiliaries in expressions of speaker's inner sensations. In contrast to Common Tibetan and other Tibetic languages in which auxiliaries are sensitive to intentionality, Denjongke has no functional need to use sensorial forms as the default forms for expressing speaker's inner sensations.

5 Summary

This article has shown that in expressing speaker's inner sensations Denjongke differs from the general Tibetic pattern of using sensorials as default markers. Instead of sensorial (marked by *du?*), Denjongke uses personal (*í:*, *jə?*), neutral (*be?*) and evidentially non-committed forms (especially completive *-ts^ha:*) as the default markers in clauses expressing speaker's inner sensations. However, sensorial markers, along with the alterphoric markers derived from them, are also used when the speaker wants to express sudden discovery or surprise. I suggested that a major motivating factor for the difference between Denjongke and the general Tibetic pattern lies in how the verbal systems relate to intentionality. Whereas in Common Tibetan and other Tibetic languages, such as Shigatse Tibetan and Dongwang Tibetan, verbal auxiliaries are sensitive to intentionality, in Denjongke they

are not. Disassociation from intentionality allows personal auxiliaries in Denjongke to be used in expressions of inner sensation when the cognate egophoric/personal forms are disallowed or strictly limited in Common Tibetan and many other Tibetic languages.

ABBREVIATIONS²⁰

AEMPH	anaphoric emphatic	FAC	factual
APH	alterphoric	IMF	imminent future
ASR	assertive	IN	intensifier
AT	attention marker	NE	neutral
CEMPH	contrastive emphatic	PER	personal
CMPL	completive	RCP	receptive
DEMPH	demonstrative-emphatic	SEN	sensorial
EGO	egophoric	V2:	verb in compound verb constr.
EQU	equative	TAG	tag
EX	existential		

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²⁰ Only those not in Leipzig Glossing Rules.

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Yliniemi: Expressing inner sensations in Denjongke: a contrast with the general Tibetic pattern

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