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ABSTRACT

The 'evidential' or 'egophoric' systems of various modern Tibetic languages are described as containing a 'factual' copula and a complex 'factual' existential, in opposition to the 'egophoric' copula *yin* and the 'egophoric' existential linking verb *yod*, e.g., Central and East Tibetan *red* and *yod.(na.)red*. Other descriptive terms are 'assertive' and 'statemental'. The two markers are also described as being 'neutral', falling thus outside the 'evidential' system. In my opinion, these terms are not very well defined. They are used as cover terms for various functions, such as referring to generic facts and shared or shareable knowledge, as indicating inferences and assumptions, even as describing mere hypothetical situations, as expressing or highlighting the speaker's non-involvement, or for other socio-pragmatic strategies. The terminological choice poses quite some problems, both with respect to the crosslinguistic use of 'factual' in the sense of realis mood (as opposed to various irrealis moods) and with respect to the position of the respective marker inside or outside the Tibetic 'evidential' or 'egophoric' system. Part of the problem may be connected also with the current understanding of the Tibetic 'evidential' or 'egophoric' systems.

KEYWORDS

Modern Tibetic languages, 'factual' or factuality, 'evidentiality', 'egophoric' marking, epistemic rights

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Facts and attitudes: on the so-called ‘factual’ markers of the modern Tibetic languages

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1 Introduction

The ‘evidential’ systems of various modern Tibetic languages are described as containing a ‘factual’ copula, contrasting with the ‘egophoric’ copula *yin*. Other descriptive terms are ‘assertive’ or ‘statemental’. Alternatively, the ‘factual’ copula is described as being ‘(evidentially) neutral’, falling thus outside the ‘egophoric’-‘evidential’ system.

The most common ‘factual’ copula is *red*, occurring in many Central and Eastern Tibetan varieties. A few varieties use a form which may be reconstructed as **sbad* (cf. Yliniemi 2021 for Denjongke /bɛʔ/) or as **ɥbad* (cf. Haller 2000a for /pie/ in the dialect of Shigatse). Other varieties may use a combination of the copula *yin* and some other epistemic element, such as Ladakhi (/inok/, /intsok/, etc., cf. Zeisler 2023). In existential statements, the ‘factual’ marker typically combines with the existential linking verb *yod*, such as Standard Spoken Tibetan *yod.red* or *yod.pa.red*, sometimes also rendered as *yog.red* (/jɔːreʔ/), Amdo Tibetan *yod.na.red*, Denjongke *yod.ba.*sbad* (/jɛbbɛʔ/), etc.

In my opinion, the term ‘factual’ or its alternatives are not very well defined, if not misleading. As Suzuki, Sonam Wangmo, & Tsering Samdrup (2021: 75) remark: “[s]everal terms refer to the factual/statemental category; however, there have not been any debates over which terms are exclusive and more suitable for the category.” What is likewise missing is a debate about how useful the category ‘factual’ or ‘statemental’ or ‘assertive’ or even ‘(evidentially) neutral’ is for the Tibetic languages.

I am further not fully convinced that the labels ‘evidential’ or ‘egophoric’ are the best possible labels for the functional oppositions in the auxiliary usages in the Tibetic languages. In my opinion, other factors, such as the question of epistemic rights and the speaker’s attitudes towards the content of the statement *and* towards the addressee, play a prominent role. To underline these doubts, I shall use single quote marks for these terms throughout the text. The following discussion is mainly a survey of the existing descriptions of the Central Tibetan ‘factual’ markers *red* and *yod.red* and their apparent counterparts in other Tibetic languages, grounded in my extensive and longstanding fieldwork on ‘evidentiality’ and speaker attitude in Ladakhi and its quite different dialects (see here Zeisler 2023).

The structure of the article is as follows: In section 2, General background, I shall first give an overview of the main features of the Tibetan ‘egophoric’-‘evidential’-epistemic marking system as background to the following discussion (2.1). I shall briefly comment on an inbuilt asymmetry that is based on the different semantics of the two linking verbs and auxiliaries, the copula *yin* and the existential *yod* (2.2). I shall further refer to the crosslinguistic understanding of terms related to the presentation of facts as facts (2.3). In section 3, I shall then discuss how the term ‘factual’ is defined for the Tibetan languages (3.1). However, since at least one scholar emphasises its use for general(ised) knowledge, I shall also try to define what could be understood by this notion (3.2). I shall further point to the fact that the ‘factual’ marker is used instead of a marker for direct knowledge in the case of identities (3.3). Section 4 then deals with the different usages of the Tibetan ‘factual’ markers, starting with the most commonly described usage, namely for generalised knowledge (4.1). I will then present examples for the use of the ‘factual’ marker for inferences and assumptions (4.2) and for hearsay (4.3). Subsequently, I shall describe various non-factual usages, such as imagined situations and counterfactuals (4.4) and what appear to be rather conventionalised usages (4.5). Finally, I shall describe motivations for the choice of a ‘factual’ marker instead of an ‘egophoric’ marker for the ego or epistemic *origo* (4.6). In section 5, I shall discuss the implications of these data and the alternative possibilities of analysing the Tibetan system in terms of an integrated system of ‘egophoricity’, ‘evidentiality’, and epistemic marking, with one of these items forming an overarching category, or in terms of a set of independent categories. In section 6, I shall present my conclusion.

2 General Background

2.1 *The Tibetan ‘systems’ of ‘egophoric’-‘evidential’-epistemic marking*

The complete ‘egophoric’-‘evidential’-epistemic systems of various modern Tibetan languages display a six-fold grammatical opposition in terms of ‘egophoric’¹ vs. experiential² vs. ‘factual’ or ‘assertive’ vs. inferential vs. epistemic vs. hearsay/ report/ quote markers,³ as shown in Table 1 for Standard Spoken Tibetan.

In contrast to the analyses by other authors, this table contains a line for inferential or ‘indirect’ forms that is almost a repetition of the line for ‘factual’ forms. The reason for this will become evident in sections 4.2 and 4.3. I hold that the so-called ‘factual’ markers are also, and most likely originally, ‘indirect’ markers, *used for* inferences and unspecified hearsay, with no or only slight connotations of epistemic hedging. Otherwise, only the perfect slot would contain an inferential form (without an unspecific hearsay function), namely *-bžag*.

¹ Also shortened to ‘ego’. Perhaps better: *origo*- or self-involved assertive, indicating personal or highest epistemic authority, typically associated with long-standing acquaintance, active involvement, or responsibility.

² Also known as ‘sensory’ (Tournadre 2008: 295), or ‘testimonial’ (Tournadre, *ibid.*; Hill 2012), sometimes classified as ‘direct’, e.g., in Garrett (2001: 11, (1)). Note that the situations referred to by such forms are ‘merely’ perceived (in a limited number of instances), thus somewhat less certain or somewhat more preliminary than facts of self-involved knowledge.

³ Although listed last, the quote markers do not convey uncertain knowledge, but mark a proposition as (more or less) directly perceived without any judgement over the content. Tibetan quote markers follow any of the other 5 markers according to the *perceived*, *remembered*, or *claimed* evaluation of the original speaker, while pronouns will usually be shifted as in indirect speech.

Function	Copula	Existential	Future	Present	Past	Perfect
'egophoric'	<i>yin</i>	<i>yod</i>	<i>-gi.yin</i>	<i>-gi.yod</i>	<i>-pa.yin</i>	<i>-yod</i>
experiential/ 'direct'	— ⁴	<i>hdug</i>	— ⁴	<i>-gis/-gi.mi.hdug</i>	<i>-byuñ,⁵-soñ</i>	<i>-hdug</i>
'factual'	<i>red</i>	<i>yod.red</i>	<i>-gi-red</i>	<i>-gi.yod.red</i>	<i>-pa.red</i>	<i>-yod.red</i>
inferential/ 'indirect'	<i>red</i>	<i>yod.red</i>	<i>-gi-red</i>	<i>-gi.yod.red</i>	<i>-pa.red</i>	<i>-bžag, -yod.red</i>
epistemic	various composite markers for assumptions, guesses, and probabilities					
hearsay/quote	(semi-) grammaticalised <i>verbum dicendi: zer</i>					

Table 1 Overview of 'evidential' oppositions, idealised pattern, based on Standard Spoken Tibetan⁶

These categories are person-related only in so far as they essentially relate to the *perspective* of the main speech act participant or "illocutionarily central participant"/ "illocutionarily focal speech-act participant" (Agha 1993: 160, 166) or *origo* (also called 'epistemic source', 'informant', 'asserter'), i.e., the speaker in statements, the addressee in information-seeking questions, and the original speaker in reported speech.

The status of the Tibetic epistemic markers as grammatical markers may be debatable, but their specific function is not derivable from the underlying lexemes and/ or morphemes. The epistemic markers are certainly not 'evidential' in the strict sense, but in my opinion, they need to be included in the system of verb marking. Whether this whole system should be called 'evidential' or 'egophoric' is another question, taken up in section 5.

The different Tibetic languages and dialects certainly vary in the respective cut-off points, and some varieties in the periphery may have less developed systems, where the 'egophoric' markers may be used more neutrally or 'factually' also for certain knowledge about situations outside the *origo's* sphere or 'territory of information' (see Kamio 1997 for this terminology). Nevertheless, the distribution of the markers may be described roughly as follows:

- 'Egophoric' markers or markers for self-involvement are used, when talking about one's own activities or situations one has been involved in, or responsible for, and, to a variable degree, when talking about situations in one's personal sphere with which one is fully acquainted and with which one identifies or sympathises. In other words, 'egophoric' markers are used exclusively for situations that fall into the *origo's* territory of information, the extension of which may vary due to more subjective or more pragmatically driven factors in the given communicative situation. For situations falling outside the *origo's* territory of information, any of the following

⁴ Identities cannot be perceived: while one can be acquainted with the identity of a person or item, one cannot *see*, not to speak of hear, touch or smell, the identity of a person, e.g., as a king, as the mother of X, as teacher or nurse, etc., but one can possibly infer or guess it from visible signs or hearsay information. Similarly, one cannot perceive future situations.

⁵ Tournadre (1994: 154 or all later publications) would count this likewise as 'egophoric', because the observed situation or result is directed towards the *origo*. Widmer (2020: 269, n. 4), among many others, follows this approach in describing *byuñ* as expressing an "an epistemic privileged perspective in combination with undergoers". But the *origo* is not actively involved or responsible, and the situation is merely observed. The *origo* may also be involved merely as the goal of some kind of physical or metaphorical psychological movement. This is one of the problems of the term *egophoric*. In this case, it expresses person-relatedness, but then it is no longer a category of evidentiality or epistemicity, but rather a category of deixis.

⁶ Other Tibetic languages may use partly different forms, e.g., *snañ* for *hdug*, may not make use of *byuñ* and *soñ*, or may use additional markers, such as the non-visual experiential marker *rag*.

markers may be appropriate, according to the specific access, source, or the pragmatic conditions.

- Experiential markers are used when one has *merely* perceived a situation (a limited number of times), including accidental situations, one happens to undergo. Experiential markers are used also when one perceives oneself in a dream or becomes aware of one's appearance in a visual representation.
- When one has not personally observed a situation, but has inferred or guessed it, one will use the appropriate inferential or epistemic/ assumptive marker.
- The quote/ hearsay marker is used when one has attributable and immediate second-hand knowledge (which may include written sources) and when quoting a person. It is added to the (perceived, remembered, or claimed) original marker of the original utterance, as if it were direct speech, while the pronouns are shifted, as if it were indirect speech. Speakers need not be fully truthful to the exact wording, neither with respect to the content nor with respect to the 'evidential' markers; and they may manipulate the wording according to their own assessment or according to the status of the quoted person.
- The 'factual' markers *red* and *yod.red* (and their regional counterparts) are used when one cannot, or does not want to, use any of these markers, usually for quite particular, often pragmatic reasons, e.g., because one is or was not personally involved or one has no exclusively personal access to the knowledge at hand. *red* and even more so *yod.red* are further used for inferences and assumptions of relatively high certainty and for unspecific or non-attributable hearsay. The markers may also signal the speaker's non-volitionality as a special case of non-involvement. There is also some evidence that the 'factual' markers may be used for pragmatically conditioned epistemic downgrading, that is, one may represent personal knowledge as non-personal simply in order to show one's respect or to be polite. The 'factual' markers are further commonly used in non-factual or irrealis contexts including merely imagined situations, predictions about the future, conditionals, and counterfactuals.

Given the underlying subjective perspective, there is the often-talked-about natural flip of markers: what is used for the first person in statements will be used for the second person in information-seeking questions, and the other way round. This is not so surprising, if one conceives of these markers as a sort of epistemic markers in the widest sense, which would be likewise projected to the addressee in questions in many other languages.

I have taken here the 'egophoric' markers as part of the 'evidential' system. From a cross-linguistic perspective, they would fall out of evidentiality in the strict sense (cf. e.g. Aikhenvald 2004: 264, based on DeLancey 1986: 210f.). This is also the original position of Mélac (2014: 46, 110, 145). Evidentiality in the crosslinguistic sense would encompass only perception, inference, and hearsay as strictly evidential categories. According to this narrow definition, 'egophoric' or self-involved knowledge would be non-evidential or evidentially neutral and thus 'factual'. DeLancey (2018: 584) explicitly states:

The Tibetic Egophoric category is not part of the evidential system; it is an independent, and more fundamental, category which affects evidential meanings that

come under its shadow. Rather than an evidential category, Egophoric is a category to which evidentiality is not applicable.

There are certainly arguments for this theoretical position. One reason is that active 'egophoric' self-reference with *yin* and *yod* stands in opposition to the 'evidential' categories 'direct' (*hdug*) and 'indirect' (*bžag*). Self-experienced activities are neither observed nor inferred, and the speaker usually expects the addressee to take the relayed facts as given. This holds also when applying these 'egophoric' markers to *other*, that is, mainly third persons. On the other hand, the 'egophoric' markers *byuñ* and *myoñ* are expressions of direct experience and thus fall into the category of evidential direct marking in the strict sense. As a result, the 'egophoric' category as commonly defined for the Tibetic languages is a deictic category, which crosscuts the category of evidentiality in the strict crosslinguistic sense.

Some authors thus prefer to talk about 'egophoricity' as the main category. Nevertheless, it is all but clear whether the strictly evidential markers for immediate perception, inference, and quotation/hearsay form a subsystem of the 'egophoric' system, whether 'egophoric' marking is a special subcategory of evidentiality or epistemic modality, or whether 'egophoric' marking and 'evidentiality' in the narrow sense should be seen as independent of each other but combining or interfering in a complex manner (cf. Zemp workshop call: 'Evidentiality 2.0: Integrating egophoricity'⁷). I shall take up this question again in section 5.

One may, by contrast, also argue that 'egophoric' or 'participatory', i.e., self-involved knowledge is a subtype of direct knowledge, and the most direct or immediate knowledge possible (cf. Faller 2002: 46). Mélac (2023; personal communication Dec. 2023) has changed his former analysis and now likewise treats 'egophoric' knowledge as a subtype of 'direct' knowledge.

Sun (2018: 54) additionally points to the fact that endopathic knowledge about one's internal states and processes is now commonly accepted as information source (at least when a non-visual marker is used). Accordingly, "awareness of one's intents and controllable conditions should also count as a source of evidence the speaker may adduce to vindicate an assertion" (Sun 2018: 54f.).

However, this is perhaps not the best argument. Endopathic perception is treated very differently in the Tibetic languages:

- The experiential marker *hdug* is used in most modern Tibetic languages (see Tournadre 1996: 206–207).
- In most Ladakhi dialects including Eastern Purikpa, the non-visual marker *rag* is used (see Koshal 1979: 187–188, 207–209 for the central dialects).
- In Western Purikpa, the 'egophoric' marker *yod* is used neutrally, but the experiential marker *hdug* is also used when focusing on the very moment, e.g., when checking whether some part of the body hurts (Zemp 2018: 599, 635).
- In some Baltipa dialects spoken in the border areas of Ladakh, the 'egophoric' marker *yod* is used for internal states; however, when presented as 'coming' from outside, the experiential marker *snañ* is used (own data, fieldwork 2022, 2023).

⁷ Released 01.10.2020 on the linguistlist, see <https://linguistlist.org/issues/31/31-2972.html>.

In all cases, one may think of a metaphorical extension to signal this specific access. From a more theoretical perspective, endopathic perception is an instance of ego-centred access, as only the epistemic *origo* can have access to his or her inner physical or mental states. Endopathic perception is thus ego-*phoric* in Tournadre's (1996: 206–207) sense. One may ask, however, whether even an intense feeling of, say, pain leads to *knowledge* in the strict sense (as against *information* about it). While we could say, *I know that there is or was a frog in the pond, because I have seen or heard it*, we would rather not say *I know that there is or was pain in my head, because I have felt it*.

Garrett (2001: 161), likewise takes 'egophoric' or self-involved knowledge as a specific type of 'evidentiality', but his description nevertheless convokes a notion of independence of evidential and epistemic justification, as also associated with the so-called 'factual' markers. According to him,

one is presented with one's own intentions, beliefs, desires, and other intentional states in a unique way. Knowledge of such states is not mediated by inference or perception, and is therefore not an example of the [direct] or [indirect]⁸ evidential modalities. As such, ego knowledge has a unique epistemological status.

The claim that ego evidentiality is default evidentiality amounts to the claim that the immediate knowledge indicated by ego evidentials is the only evidential option aside from direct and indirect evidential modalities. That is, if the speaker neither presents a proposition as known by inference, nor as known by perception, then it must be known in the ego way, i.e. as a proposition that presents itself in an immediate, non-perceptual and non-inferential way to the speaker.

In other words, the piece of knowledge presents itself to the speaker – and is presented by the speaker – as a *fact*, which does not need any further description of the perceptive or non-perceptive access channels of this knowledge. One could relate this to the Gricean Maxims of Quantity: "2. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required" (Grice 1975: 45) and Manner: "3. Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity)" (Grice 1975: 46), which means that if one has the best possible ground and the highest epistemic authority, then it would not be suitable to justify one's statement by specifying a particular source or access of knowledge, see also Masia (2017: 148) for a similar argument. This is an argument for treating self-involved knowledge as evidentially neutral or factual in the crosslinguistic sense, cf. also Kittilä (2019). At least Zemp (2017, 2018) has taken up this perspective, describing the existential linking verb *yod* in the Western Purikpa dialects as 'factual'. Since the Western Purikpa and Baltipa dialects show much less 'evidential' and epistemic marking for situations outside the *origo*'s territory of information than, e.g., Standard Spoken Tibetan, this is a reasonable position, except that the copula *yin* should be treated then as 'factual', too.

In the descriptions of Tibetic languages, the term 'factual' is usually taken as given and applied without a clear definition or at least without any attempt to compare the usages of the respective 'factual' markers against such a definition. When merely defined as 'evidentially neutral',

⁸ The original has only an en dash before 'or evidential modalities'. Edward Garrett via email (23.06.2022) suggested inserting 'indirect', but from the further context, it seems that both 'direct' and 'indirect' have to be inserted. Alternatively, one might read 'epistemic or evidential modalities'.

this definition stands in conflict with the, in the strict sense, 'evidentially neutral' 'egophoric' markers.

If there are two markers in a grammatical system that are 'evidentially neutral', then the system cannot be a system of 'evidential' marking and the two markers must be distinguishable with respect to another function. This function may be hidden in the notion of 'egophoricity' as a category, marking not so much a particular knowledge type, but the speaker's *commitment* (my preferred term, which would include acquaintance, involvement or responsibility, and identification or sympathy with a person), *empathy* (Häsler 2001), or perhaps also the speaker's *epistemic primacy* or *relative right to know* (Grzech 2016), also known as the speaker's *territory of information* (Kamio 1997). A further pragmatic factor, discussed under the term *engagement*, has to do with the potential knowledge (a)symmetries between speaker and hearer or the *intersubjective coordination of knowledge* (Evans, Bergqvist, & San-Roque 2018a/b).

In my opinion, the problem of having two 'evidentially neutral' markers might be solved when accepting a modal-like superordinate category of speaker attitude or stance in the sense of commitment, empathy, and/ or engagement. Stance is typically a discursive strategy that does not grammaticalise, but in the Tibetic languages, it seems that the complex system of self-involved, 'evidential', epistemic, and shared knowledge markers is best accounted for in terms of the speaker's ability and rights and obligations to commit him- or herself fully to the proposition or to take up a more distanced, less- or non-committed or less- or non-confirmative stance. This view would have the advantage that both the 'egophoric' and the 'factual' markers have a positive functional value, and one would not end up with two 'evidentially neutral' markers ('egophoric' and 'factual'). Under this perspective, the main function of the so-called 'factual' markers may be *pragmatic hedging* in the sense that a speaker downgrades his or her epistemic rights (or his or her conviction), presenting a fact thus *as if* s/he has only 'indirect' knowledge or *as if* s/he has less knowledge or, at least, *as if* s/he does not know better than the addressee. To a certain extent, the 'factual' markers may be used to represent the information as non-personal, while all other markers, except the quote markers, indicate the speaker's personal access and thus his/her greater or lesser epistemic authority. (In the case of quotation, the speech act and its content is immediately and personally perceived, but the epistemic authority for the content lies only with the quoted person.)

The question of (dis)-engagement or of speaker-hearer (a)symmetries has so far not been taken (fully) into account in the study of the Tibetic languages. Honkasalo (2019) seems to be the first to applying the concept of engagement to a Tibeto-Burman language. In a recent talk, Watters (2021) described the contrast between the Dzongkha copulas *î* ~ *ing* ([ʔi:], [ʔiŋ]) and *immä* ([ʔi:mmɛ])⁹ as indicating relative distance between interlocutors and as a means of profiling the knowledge towards the addressee or the speaker. My own work, showing a similar contrast between the copula *yin* and an apparent counterpart of *red* in Ladakhi (Zeisler, 2023) could be published only recently.

Table 2 lists the relevant 'egophoric' and 'factual' forms of those varieties of which I shall give some examples. This is, of course, only a selection. Apart from the experiential form of the existential linking verb and the various epistemic forms, a few varieties spoken in Amdo, and in our case the dialect of Gcig.sgril, are said to have also an 'experiential' copula, which seems to be

⁹ Hyslop & Karma Tshering (2017) Romanise the two forms as *'ing* ([iŋ]) and *'immä* ([imɛ]). Karma Tshering & van Driem (2019: 32) describe the initial as high register tone with an abrupt glottal release.

used mainly for attributes. The forms to be discussed here are not always classified as ‘egophoric’ vs. ‘factual’ by the respective authors. Haller (2000a/b) describes the opposition as volitional vs. non-volitional, while Häsler (2001), Huber (2000), and Karma Tshering & van Driem (2019) do not specify these forms in the glosses. In such cases, I shall add the gloss ANEGO for ‘anti-egophoric’ (i.e., standing in opposition to the ‘egophoric’ markers) in brackets. Huber (2005: 99) describes and glosses *jĩ:* as ‘generic’ and *jimbɛ:* as either ‘sensory’ or ‘inferential’.

The Ladakhi dialects lack the ‘factual’ copula *red*. However, the combination of the copula *yin* with an originally epistemic element derived from *hdug* forms a functional counterpart, which could translate many if not most usages of *red*, although not all usages of this Ladakhi form can be translated with *red*. The combination cannot be described as being neutral, except ‘neutral’ is meant as ‘being hard to define’. Elsewhere, I have called this combination a GENERALISED EVALUATIVE MARKER, shortly GEM, see Zeisler (2023). I shall keep here this designation for the Ladakhi data, leaving it thus open how strong the functional similarity with the ‘factual’ copula *red* and its other counterparts is.

dialect (of)	copula		existential linking verb	
	‘egophoric’	‘factual’ etc.	‘egophoric’	‘factual’ etc.
Standard Spoken Tibetan	<i>jĩn ~ jĩ:</i>	<i>rɛʔ</i>	<i>jɔʔ</i>	<i>jo:reʔ</i>
Dege, Kham(s)	<i>jĩ:</i>	<i>rɛ:</i>	<i>jɔ:</i>	<i>jɔ:rɛ:</i>
Western Ladakhi	<i>in</i>	<i>intsuk</i>	<i>jot</i>	<i>joteintsok</i>
North-eastern Ladakhi ¹⁰	<i>hin</i>	<i>hindak</i>	<i>jot</i>	<i>joteindak</i>
Gcig.sgril, Amdo	<i>jin</i>	<i>ret/zɛ, jinɔre</i> ¹¹	<i>jot</i>	<i>jokə, jotʰa</i>
Shigatse, Western Tibet	<i>jĩ</i>	<i>piɛ</i>	<i>jɔɛ</i>	<i>jɔapɛ</i>
Lende, Nepal	<i>jĩ:</i>	<i>jimbɛ:</i>	<i>jɔ:</i>	<i>jɔbajimbɛ:</i>
Denjongke, Sikkim	<i>ĩ:</i>	<i>bɛʔ</i>	<i>jɔʔ</i>	<i>jɛbbɛʔ</i>

Table 2 Overview of ‘egophoric’ versus ‘factual’ (var. ‘neutral’, ‘non-volitional’ or unspecified markers)

2.2 An inbuilt asymmetry

The copula and the existential linking verb mentioned in Table 2 do not yield exactly parallel paradigmatic patterns. While *yod* has an ‘evidential’ counterpart *hdug* for immediate perceptions, *yin* is lacking a strictly experiential counterpart. There are various reasons for it. *hdug* originally was a lexical perdurative position verb, denoting that a typically human being was

¹⁰ The common Central Ladakhi forms are *in*, *inok*, *jot*, and *joteinok*.

¹¹ The ‘evidential’ or epistemic value of *jinɔre* has not yet been analysed consistently. Tribur (2019: 278, Table 19, 327) describes the form as ‘factual’ in contrast to merely ‘allophoric’ *re*. Simon (2018: 10 n. 9) describes the form as “sensory resultative” and “explicative”, the latter further specified as “used when the speaker expects that the addressee has no knowledge about the given information”. By contrast, (Simon 2021: 296) defines the form as “ego-authoritative” (in contrast to “ego-participatory” *jən* and ‘factual’ *re*) with the additional description that the form is used for the locutor’s claim of his/her specific epistemic authority over the reported situation (“qui s’emploie pour exprimer que le locuteur revendique une autorité épistémique spécifique sur ce qu’il rapporte”). The speaker is not personally implied but knows better than the addressee does. This would correspond to having privileged access (Simon 2021: 299) and likewise to the ‘explicative’ function in Simon (2018). Whether that function should be subsumed under ‘ego’ is another question. In constructions without the equative copula, it is the ‘factual’ markers that are used for privileged access without involvement of the speaker, cf. Simon (2021: 305–308).

staying, living, even sitting at a certain place for a certain, that is, limited time. There may have been a connotation of observability from very early on. The copula *yin* was originally only used for identities. Apart from professions, most identities are not limited and they are not directly observable. The development of the Tibetic 'evidential' system started with the time-related opposition between the existential *yod* and a bleached verb *hdug*, which became an opposition between general truth and/ or a claim to best possible ground (*yod*) and preliminary truth (*hdug*) and/ or no further claim. This latter stance applied to inferences and assumptions as well as to first, unsettled observations. Only later, this broader functionality was restricted to mere or unsettled sense perceptions (see here Zeisler 2018a).

When the opposition became grammaticalised, the speakers apparently felt the need to fill a gap, and so combinations of *yin+hdug* came in use in some western regions, and elsewhere the resultative verb *red* 'became' was reinterpreted as a copula when the speakers did not want to claim best possible ground. However, since these new forms did not refer to immediate sense perception, there remained a larger epistemic or pragmatic load, that was already no longer available in the marker *hdug*. To even out this secondary asymmetry, the combination *yod.red* (and its counterparts) developed, but nevertheless some asymmetries remained in the system. E.g., it appears that *yod.red* is more likely to be used for inferences and assumptions – or at least to be described as such – than *red*. A further result is that the evidential markers in the strict sense are unevenly distributed over the temporal (or if preferred: aspectual) categories.

	'egophoric'		evidential			'factual'		epistemic compound forms
	<i>yin</i>	<i>yod</i>	<i>hdug</i>	<i>byuñ</i> <i>soñ</i>	<i>bžag</i>	<i>red</i>	<i>yod.red</i>	
copula	+					+		+
future	+					+		+
past/ 'perfective'	+			+		+		+
existential		+	+				+	+
present/ 'imperfective'		+	+				+	+
perfect/ resultative		+	+		+		+	+

Table 3 Distribution of linking verbs and auxiliaries in Standard Spoken Tibetan¹²

2.3 *The crosslinguistic notion of factuality*

With respect to the Standard European languages, factuality has been defined as referring “to the state of affairs of a proposition posed as a fact, viz., *something truly happening in the real world*” (Tantucci 2016: 183, emphasis added), equal to 'realis mood', thus forming an opposition mainly to epistemic modality.¹³ It also stands in opposition to evidentiality in the crosslinguistic sense as a mood that does not need any validation through the specification of the knowledge or

¹² Other languages may have more choices, particularly for the perfect construction. E.g., Ladakhi has an additional perfect construction with the copula *yin*; the epistemic compound forms accordingly double.

¹³ Tribur (2019: 113, Table 12, repeated p. 249) follows this definition at least in part and equals realis with factual (by adding the latter in brackets), even though she also assumes, besides egophoric, direct, and inferential, a fourth factual function which branches into 'factual allophoric' and 'factual egophoric'.

information source. – One may thus also describe factual assertions as evidentially neutral. – By their very definition, factual assertions cannot be qualified with afterthoughts, such as ‘but I am not sure’ (cf. Tantucci 2016: 204) or also ‘but I don’t believe’ or ‘but it is not true’.¹⁴

According to Mushin (2001: 75)

Adoption of a factual epistemological stance requires that the conceptualiser disassociate herself from the representation, resulting in a maximally objective construal, in Langacker’s ‘optimal viewing arrangement’. In other words, the speaker does not ‘own up’ to the fact that what they are talking about is their own representation of events, and not a description of the events themselves. The rhetorical effect of this disassociation is to represent information as ‘factual’ and hence unchallengeable. The unchallengeability of information presented from a factual epistemological stance makes it highly suitable as a means of expressing culturally shared knowledge.

The factual stance, so described, combines a notion of objectivity with a claim of truth, certainty, and unchallengeability, and thus also of knowing best. Abstracting from one’s subjective perspective, however, may also go along with signals of lack of personal authority (as the objective fact does not belong to the speaker’s subjective territory of information); and such signals may draw upon markers of epistemic low commitment *as if* the speaker was not sure, has *only* inferred the situation or has *only* heard about it. The objective fact then comes *disguised as* a subjectively hedged possibility. Which kind of presentation or which stance is chosen depends on the socio-linguistic conventions and thus on the respective culture. We cannot thus *a priori* decide that a marker chosen for the presentation of facts is necessarily a factual marker.

Several descriptions include visual observations under the notion of ‘factual(ity)’. Oswalt (1961: 244–245, 1986: 36–37) and Walker (2013: 320 2021) explicitly use the term ‘factual’ for visual evidentiality in the description of Kashaya and Southern Pomo (cf. Keinänen 2021: 555, 556, Table 3 for these citations); according to Oswalt (1986: 36), the term “also applies to classes of actions or states which have been observed enough by the speaker for him to generalize them as true and to classes which may simply be common knowledge”. Wierzbicka (1994: 84) similarly applies the term ‘factual’ both for visual observations (‘I know this because I see it’) and for generally known facts (‘I know this because everyone knows it’).

In a recent article, Kittilä (2019) tries to define a crosslinguistically valid notion of ‘factual’, which he equates with ‘general knowledge’. His description reveals two different functions of such ‘general knowledge’, only one of which could be applied to *red* and *yod.red*. Kittilä’s analysis gives an excellent opportunity for contrasting the notion of ‘general knowledge’ or ‘factuality’ in the crosslinguistic sense with the functionality of *red* and *yod.red*:

¹⁴ Tantucci (2016) extends this feature also to inferences of the ‘must’-type, as long as the circumstances for this inference are made explicit or perhaps rather: as long as the reasoning process itself is made explicit. Direct evidence, by contrast, would be questionable: “*I saw it was raining, but I am not sure/ but I think it was just an illusion*” (p. 204). – This, however, is not the typical hedging for ‘direct’ evidentials of the visual access type. When we see something, we are usually quite sure that there is no doubt, and statements involving visual perception are usually treated as non-hedgeable (cf. Maier 2019: 201–202), even if this certainty is limited as compared to ingrained knowledge. One could possibly also relativise a must-type inference, by stating that there may be some error or neglected factor in the reasoning process.

1. General knowledge is a part of the speaker's established world view (even though it is originally based on external evidence). It constitutes the speaker's internal information, and the speaker has subjective certainty of the truth value of the given information.
2. The speaker can refer to general knowledge without any kind of external evidence (sensory/hearsay evidence, inference, assumption). This also makes general knowledge more stable and less time-dependent than other sources of information, since no external evidence is needed. We can freely choose when we refer to general knowledge.
3. General knowledge is based on the speaker's previous experiences of the world, but the original source of information (which can be of any of the types discussed above) does not need to (or even cannot) be specified (Kittilä 2019: 1277).

Like the word 'factual' itself, Kittilä's definition, and especially the first point of the definition, would include all of what is presented neutrally, without any particular epistemic marker in any European language, including all references to oneself. The 'speaker's established world view' and 'subjective certainty of the truth value of the given information' would particularly also include everything that is usually understood by 'egophoric' with respect to the Tibetic languages, because all that a person has lived through and acted out would belong to his or her world view and cannot really be doubted, as long as it is well remembered. If a statement like *Stockholm is the capital of Sweden* or *Lisa is a professor of mathematics* is counted as based on 'general' or 'factual' knowledge (Kittilä 2019: 1277), then the statement *Stockholm is my hometown* or *I am a professor of mathematics* is based on 'general' or 'factual' knowledge, as well. The latter two statements certainly constitute 'the speaker's internal information' and represent the 'subjective certainty of the truth value of the given information'. According to Kittilä (2019: 1275), general knowledge "is seen as the speaker's own (endophoric) evidence (common knowledge in the first sense)" and can be "viewed as reliable evidence, since it is the speaker's own (endophoric) evidence the speaker has absolute certainty of." Given such definitions, 'egophoric' or self-involved knowledge is not opposed to, but at best a sub-category of, 'factual' knowledge.

Kittilä further emphasises that while the conveyed information may be against the facts, the speaker must believe the conveyed statement to be true (Kittilä 2019: 1278). At least, the speaker must present the conveyed statement as being true.

While Kittilä treats the terms 'fact' or 'factual' as being roughly equivalent to what he calls 'general knowledge' (Kittilä 2019: 1275), he excludes mental states (Kittilä 2019: 1276), as well as ongoing individual situations, such as *Lisa and John are jogging in the park* (Kittilä 2019: 1277), if these are observed for the first time. Observed habits, by contrast, would again fall under general knowledge. An important criterion is that the knowledge of habits is independent of time and place and independent of actual perceptive input (Kittilä 2019: 1277, 1280), as would be any knowledge about generic facts. 'General knowledge' according to Kittilä would also include the knowledge of individual past situations, if these are well-enough remembered (Kittilä 2019: 1280). Arguably, a past fact does not change anymore, and it is thus also independent of time and place and actual perceptive input.

'Factual' or 'general knowledge' in Kittilä's sense, therefore, could be defined as *non-perceptual*, in the sense of having become independent of an actual or recent sensory input. It may

be also seen as *non-deictic* or as independent of an anchor in time or space. Self-involved knowledge, being non-perceptual and non-inferential, clearly falls under Kittilä's definition, and Kittilä states explicitly that 'egophoric' markers or "ego-evidentials rather typically code general knowledge if they exist in a language" (Kittilä 2019: 1293). However, self-involved knowledge is deictic in the sense that it is bound to, or depends on, the *origo*'s inner perspective.¹⁵

A somewhat different perspective on factuality is taken in the discussion of presuppositions. A presupposition is what is taken and presented in the discourse as given or granted, the so-called common ground, on which each further conversational turn builds. Definite expressions in particular, as well as certain types of subordinate clauses, presuppose a preceding establishing of common ground. Presuppositions need no further justification and usually go unchallenged (except in cases of errors or lies) and are thus factual (see Masia 2017). From this perspective, Tibetic finite sentences that convey new information would not be 'factual', whether they are formed with the 'factual' markers, the 'egophoric' markers, or the perceptual markers, since they only fill into the common ground for the further discussion. As any new information or any filling the common ground implies a speaker-hearer asymmetry, the different choices of the Tibetic 'evidential' markers reflect the speaker's wishes or obligations of how to minimise and heal or how to confirm this asymmetry.

3 The so-called 'factual' category as commonly used for the Tibetic languages

A 'factual' marker has been first described for Central Tibetan or more precisely for Standard Spoken Tibetan *red*. Standard Spoken Tibetan has further received more treatment and by more authors than any other Tibetic variety. Subsequent descriptions of *red* or its equivalent in other Tibetic varieties typically follow the descriptions established for Standard Spoken Tibetan. I shall thus likewise focus mainly on Standard Spoken Tibetan. However, I will also draw upon data or descriptions from other Tibetic languages. It has been argued by one of the reviewers that what I take to be counterparts of Standard Spoken Tibetan may function quite differently in that particular language. This is certainly the case. However, as far as the morphemes in question are treated as being 'evidentially neutral', the problem that I discuss here remains the same.

Unfortunately, usages of *red* (or its regional counterparts) that cannot be described as 'factual' in a meaningful way are often neglected or only hinted at; hence, I can only unsystematically draw upon whatever I have come across in the literature. I do not want to suggest that all usages of individual counterparts of *red* and *yod.red* must be found also in Standard Spoken Tibetan, nor do I want to suggest that all non-factual usages of *red* and *yod.red* are to be found in other Tibetic languages. Nevertheless, I hold that it would be beneficial if further research could then clarify which usages are attested and where any particular language has another solution.

¹⁵ As already indicated in note 5, p. 3, several scholars treat the receptive marker *byun* as 'egophoric'. According to the original treatment by Tournadre (1996), endopathic sensations would likewise be treated as 'egophoric'. Kittilä's definition might thus only hold for the markers of active involvement *yin* and *yod*, for which I would like to reserve the term 'egophoric', see Table 1.

3.1 *It's a fact – so what?*

As already mentioned, a common assumption is that Standard Spoken Tibetan *red* would be neutral with respect to 'evidentiality', that is, it would simply refer to, or assert, a 'fact' without specifying the knowledge source or access channel, see only recently DeLancey (2018: 583, 588):

The speaker feels no need to justify the claim, and asks the addressee to simply take it as given. ...

But this establishes the true function of the Factual category: it simply disregards the question of evidence.

Tournadre (in Tournadre & LaPolla 2014: 241) presents the following three alternative statements about the presence of a person:¹⁶

- | | | |
|----------------------|---|--------------------------|
| [1] a. <i>mi yod</i> | 'I have somebody (with me)' | (egophoric) |
| [better: | 'There is somebody – and I took him/her along'] ¹⁷ | |
| b. <i>mi ḥdug</i> | 'There is somebody' | (sensory or testimonial) |
| c. <i>mi yod.red</i> | 'There is somebody' | (it's a fact) |

My first question to Tournadre's paradigm would be: if only the statement in c. represents the situation as a fact, what do the other two statements represent: fiction? Of course, this is the wrong question, all three statements represent the situation as a true fact, the difference being one's mode of access *and* one's epistemic rights *and* one's presentation of the fact in a corresponding manner. It does not matter whether one calls the marker in statement c. 'factual' or 'statemental' or 'assertive'. These ascriptions would certainly hold for the statement in a. Due to its non-perceptual knowledge base, the statement in a. refers to an unquestionable fact, and the addressee is expected 'to simply take it as given'.

Garrett (2001: 41) describes the Tibetic system as follows:

The three evidential modalities form a hierarchy: ego > direct > indirect. Ego marks the most intimate kind of evidence, direct the next most intimate, and indirect the least intimate. In the usual case, it is a Gricean implicature that if you use an evidential lower on the hierarchy, then you lack stronger evidence for your assertion.

In other words, 'ego' knowledge is non-perceptual, non-inferential, and non-mediated by hearsay.

¹⁶ All examples that are given by the authors in transliteration of an idealised written form shall be given in a unified transliteration, see abbreviations and conventions at the end, p. 57. Glossing will likewise be streamlined to a certain extent (e.g., an "IMP" for imperfective will be rendered as 'IPFV'), but I shall keep the functional values, even if I disagree. One important change is the use of the underscore "_" instead of the equals sign "=" for clitics, if these are marked by the respective authors. The equals sign "=" will be used here for exactly this function 'equals' or 'summing up' the morphemes on the left side into their grammatical function on the right side.

¹⁷ The original translation in a.) is too narrow, especially for the Tibetic languages in general. The sentence is not about possessing another person, thus the speaker is not the subject. The existential *yod* could be used to state that *there is somebody* in a particular place, if one talks about family members or members of one's monastic community, or if one is somehow involved in, or responsible for, the situation, e.g., as a hotel manager or host, or when one has taken the person along, as in Tournadre's suggested translation. Depending on the variety in question, the 'egophoric' existential may also be used when one is well acquainted with the situation due to repeated observations (cf. Chang & Chang 1984: 604, ex. 1).

In the crosslinguistic discussion, ‘direct’ knowledge, that is, knowledge based on sensory input is usually understood as having the highest epistemic force and as having an (almost) objective quality or as giving the best possible ground (for the last notion cf. Nuyts 2001: 394f., Faller 2002) – or perhaps only the second-best. Terms such as ‘testimonial’ or ‘eyewitness’ refer to this quality, particularly when talking about evidence in the court room. By their very definitions, sense perception, and testimony are about facts in the real world and not about possible facts in possible worlds, misperceptions and errors (and dream reports) notwithstanding. Speakers usually treat their personal observations as reality that cannot be disputed.¹⁸ One would not normally say: *It is raining (as I can see), but I don’t believe it* (see also Maier 2019: 201–202), except when expressing one’s surprise, in which case the first part is still presented as being true. Personal observation or witnessing counts as crucial evidence in the law court. Errors can creep in not only in perceptions, but also in whatever one takes for given. The potential fallibility of perceptions is not really a counterargument for a factual status of statements based on perceptions. Hence, the statement in b.) likewise presents the fact as a fact.

Therefore, the three alternatives given above should be better represented as

- [1’] a. *mi yod* ‘There is somebody – it’s a fact, *and I claim exclusively personal knowledge or higher epistemic rights than you have.*’
 b. *mi hdug* ‘There is somebody – it’s a fact, *(because) I witness(ed) it personally.*’
 c. *mi yod.red* ‘There is somebody – it’s a fact, *but I don’t want to claim exclusively personal knowledge or higher epistemic rights than you have.*’

To sum up, all three statements are ‘factual’ in the crosslinguistic sense, but one may say that the third one – if not to be interpreted as inferential or second-hand knowledge – presents the fact somewhat more neutrally *only* as fact, while the other two expressions are *more specific* about the way one obtained the knowledge or about the rights to specify it as exclusively personal knowledge. Nevertheless, one should always ask what the particular motivation is for presenting the fact without the said specifications. One will then see that there is quite a bunch of possible motivations that could be summed up as either epistemic hedging, as in the case of inferences, assumptions, unspecific hearsay, and unrealis contexts, or as pragmatic downgrading, as in the case of generic and shared knowledge, or in the case of various other socio-pragmatic conventions. The so-called ‘factual’ markers may be ‘evidentially neutral’ or perhaps only underspecified with respect to evidentiality. However, this holds also for the so-called ‘egophoric’ markers, if one defines evidentiality in the crosslinguistic sense. Accordingly, DeLancey (1986) and, based on his work, Aikhenvald (2004: 264) do not include the Lhasa Tibetan ‘egophoric’ markers in the domain of evidentiality. The particular opposition between the ‘egophoric’ and the ‘factual’ markers points to a different conceptual dimension that could be called modal in the widest sense or more specifically speaker attitude or stance. It may have to do with a person’s rights to speak (Grzech 2016) or a speaker’s territory of information (Kamio 1997), see also further below.

¹⁸ While speakers of Tibetic languages typically refer to dreams with the experiential or visual markers, they will usually explicitly specify that what they have seen was in a dream; and within the dream, of course, the perception appears to the dreamer *as if* it was reality.

3.2 *Personal, general, and generic knowledge*

In the discussion of the 'factual' marker, general and generic knowledge tend to be confounded. Independently of how the speakers of any given language treat the differences, it is necessary to discriminate between individual facts, habits, and generic facts, but likewise between general knowledge as potentially personal knowledge, on the one hand, and common knowledge or shared and shareable knowledge to which no speaker has exclusive rights, on the other. The boundaries between personal and common knowledge are certainly quite fuzzy and need to be established and re-established in each communicative interaction.

Both general and generic knowledge are *generalised* knowledge, that is, abstracted from a certain number of observations, e.g., *the sun rises on this side and sets on the other*, or *if I touch the fire, it hurts*. Some such observations can be made privately (*fire hurts, a ball rolls when pushed, the smaller round item can be put upon the larger flat item, but rather not the other way round*), but many generalisations are taught during childhood, along with our private observations (*it is very difficult to balance the book upon the ball, but not completely impossible*) or also when we have no or only few private observations of the relevant situation (*owls hunt in the night, this berry is poisonous*). In the case of repeated private observations, the individual time-bound and localised episodic experiences merge into a single memory independent from time and localisation of the original experiences. Accordingly, when we observe *Lisa and John are jogging in the park* for the first time or if *we are jogging in the park* for the first time, this episodic experience lacks the abstraction from time and space. But if we observe *Lisa and John* everyday or if we experience ourselves running everyday, we develop generalised knowledge about a repeated and predictable behaviour, which we call a 'habit'. See Kittilä (2019: 1277) for the argument about Lisa and John. Kittilä calls the knowledge about habits 'general knowledge'. I should like to add a qualification: it is personal general knowledge, or by another term used in the discussion of the Tibetic languages: it is personal assimilated knowledge.

Generic facts are timeless states or regularly re-occurring situations and natural laws, which have been observed in the past by some persons, but are theoretically observable by everybody. Generic facts are inherently shared or shareable knowledge, and with the possible exception of the first discoverer (or inventor), no speaker has the right to present this as his or her (exclusively) personal knowledge.

Individual facts may also be or become common, de-personalised knowledge when they have been witnessed by many observers or when the information about them has been handed down across many generations or is available through the documentation in authoritative public media. Mythical or legendary traditions, e.g., the claim rather than the fact that a certain (historically unattested) Thonmi Sambhoṭa introduced the Tibetan script, are likewise common knowledge, shared by the whole community.

Personal or private knowledge comprises time-bound episodic knowledge of one's own actions and observations of others, as well as timeless general knowledge about one's own habits and those of others.

Knowledge about oneself, one's habits as well as one's individual acts, leads to the *right to present* such events as *unchallengeable exclusively personal knowledge* – except when talking to the family members who share this knowledge or when talking to persons who participated in the events talked about.

Knowledge about others is usually more fragmentary and one's right to present such knowledge as personal and certain or authoritative depends on one's own acquaintance with the person or thing talked about and potentially also on the addressee's acquaintance or non-acquaintance.¹⁹ That is, habits within one's personal sphere or situations in which one was actively involved or even responsible for can constitute certain and unchallengeable personal knowledge, at least as long as one talks to persons who don't know.

Other events that have been merely perceived once or in a limited number of instances belong to personal observations, but not to the most certain or most authoritative knowledge. Single events as well as habits of persons outside one's personal sphere may have been observed by others, as well, and in such cases, one would not have the right to present one's observations as exclusively personal. Especially when talking to the observed persons, the speaker has no right to present his/her observation as exclusively personal knowledge, except the observed person does not remember. Some events that have incited the speech community in a positive or negative manner and have been talked about many times from all angles may become common knowledge; and at the same time, they may become personal acquainted knowledge, even if one has not witnessed them. The latter factors have been observed for various Ladakhi dialects; they may or may not be as prominent in other Tibetic varieties. Each language will have different cut-off points.

Similarly, questions of politeness or respect may (or may not) lead to the treatment of personal knowledge as if it were non-personal, e.g., when the addressee has shown some interest to know, or in institutionalised settings, such as teachings or official speeches. In such contexts, to mark personal knowledge as shareable knowledge can be seen as an invitation to the addressee to share this particular piece of information,²⁰ and the corresponding framing of a question *as if* referring to non-personal knowledge can be seen as a polite request to share this piece of information with the person asking. By contrast, the use of an 'egophoric' marker in a question may go along with an aggressive connotation of inquiry or accusation.

While speakers of the Standard European languages usually do not distinguish between individual, general, common, and generic facts, and only optionally ameliorate potential speaker-hearer asymmetries, speakers of most Modern Tibetic languages are quite sensitive to these differences.

3.3 *Identities: between assumptions and shared knowledge*

The identity of a person or a thing is an abstract quality that can be known through acquaintance or indirectly through hearsay or inference; but by no means can it be perceived. If one does not know that person over there, one cannot *see* that this *is* Sonam, unless one may see a nametag or one is told by another person. Similarly, one does not *see* that Sonam *is* a teacher, unless one is told or unless one can observe him or her in action in school. For this reason, there is no truly experiential or visual counterpart for the copula *yin*. In the context of identifications,

¹⁹ The latter factor may or may not play a role in different Tibetic varieties. It does so at least in the Zanskarpa dialect of Ladakhi (Field data 2022, 2023).

²⁰ I owe this idea of an invitation to share one's knowledge to either Daniel or Diana Hintz in the subsequent discussion to their talks at the conference *The Nature of Evidentiality*, Leiden, June 14–16, 2012 (TNE2012). Along similar lines, Sun (2018: 60) suggests that "the speaker may show empathy with the addressee by using an indirect evidential to report a state or action known to herself, but unknown to the addressee" (cf. also Aikhenvald 2004: 233 for Archi).

the so-called 'factual' copula may thus, first of all, indicate that one is not acquainted with the person and came to know about him or her only indirectly. At the same time, the identity of a member of a particular community is usually known by most members of that community, and is thus shared and generic knowledge. Apart from this, in the context of introductions, the 'factual' copula may have further pragmatic values of politeness, cf. section 4.5.4 below.

- (1) Standard Spoken Tibetan (Garrett 2001: 67, a and b)
kho bkra.šis red. khoñ dge.rgan red.
 he Tashi IND.COP hon.s/he teacher IND.COP
 'He **is** Tashi. S/he **is** a teacher.' (Talking neutrally about an **unrelated/ not closely related person**)

Upon seeing an animal, plant, or gadget for the first time, one does not *see* what it is, what kind of animal, plant, or gadget, one also does not *see* how to treat or handle it, and thus one needs to be taught about it. Upon seeing a similar item, one will *infer* that it belongs to the same class (of animals, plants, or gadgets), unless being told otherwise.

Finally, seeing a person from far may necessitate a short process of thinking in order to recognise that person as a family member or friend. In such cases, Ladakhi speakers cannot use the copula *yin*, but use *inok* (var. *intsok*, *hindak*, etc.), the GEM as the counterpart of the 'factual' marker, instead. Similarly, when identifying victuals by sight or taste or the quality of a cloth by sight or touch, Ladakhi speakers cannot use the copula *yin*, but must use the GEM for an identification based on immediate visual observation, and another marker for identifications based on non-visual perceptions (see Zeisler 2023: 41–43).

In a similar manner, in Standard Spoken Tibetan, the combination *red* & *hdug* may be used for an *ad-hoc* identification upon visual input:

- (2) Standard Spoken Tibetan (Garrett 2001: 91, ex. 32, adapted)
khoñ dge.rgan red.hdug
 hon.s/he teacher IND.COP.DIR.EX
 'I see **he's** a teacher.'

Garrett (2001: 91ff.) states that he cannot explain the appearance of the visual existential *hdug*, since being a teacher would not be, in his words, a stage level predicate, or an expression of existence, for which *hdug* would be used. He hesitates to conclude, "that there is *something else* that is perceived, something which justifies the fact". But I should think this is exactly the case. One cannot *see* that the person *is* a teacher, but there can be some visual input, e.g., seeing the person in a school talking to children, which can then lead to the *conclusion* that the person is a teacher. I should think that the compound form is not an existential but corresponds to the combinations of *yin* & *hdug* (or its equivalent *snañ*) found in various languages, e.g., *in-du?* in Denjongke (Yliniemi 2021: 297) with a more experiential function, or *in-suk* (<*yin* & {*ste*} & *hdug*) in Purik (cf. Zemp 2018) or *in-man* (< *yin* & {*pa*} & *snañ*) in some Balti dialects (cf. Jones 2009) with a more epistemic function of inference, hearsay, or just becoming aware.

4 The different usages of Standard Spoken Tibetan *red* and *yod.red* (and their regional counterparts)

I shall start the discussion with the usage that has been claimed to be the essential function of the ‘factual’ markers: generalised knowledge (4.1.1). Generalised knowledge, however, is not the exclusive domain of the ‘factual’ markers. The ‘egophoric’ marker *yod* is used for generalised knowledge falling into the origo’s territory of information (4.1.2). Subsequently, I shall give examples for the use of the ‘factual’ markers for indirect knowledge: inferences and assumptions (4.2) and unspecific hearsay (4.3). These functions were quite prominent in the earlier analyses only to be veiled by the now dominant description of the ‘factual’ as not specifying any kind of access. In my opinion, the reclassification does not invalidate the earlier analyses.

I shall then present data for the use of the ‘factual’ in non-factual or irrealis contexts (4.4). In these contexts, the ‘factual’ marker is the neutral or natural choice, and one cannot assume that the speakers have the particular intention to *present* the hypothetical or imagined situations *as real facts*. I shall then discuss what appears to be conventionalised usages (4.5). Finally, I shall focus on the possible motivations for self-descriptions with the ‘factual’ markers (4.6).

4.1 Generalised knowledge

4.1.1 *red* (and its equivalents) as a marker for generic facts or shared knowledge

DeLancey (2012: 550) defines the ‘factual’ marker *red* as “generic”. More recently, at the Himalayan Languages Symposium in Sydney 2019, DeLancey answered my rather desperate question about the meaning of ‘factual’ that, “of course”, the ‘factual’ represents generic knowledge. Nevertheless, with respect of the ‘factual’ markers *red* and *yod.red*, this can only be half of the story.

Given the fuzzy boundaries between personal general knowledge and common (shared) knowledge, these two types of knowledge tend to be confounded. It is thus necessary to take the hierarchy of epistemic rights into account when analysing the function of *red* and *yod.pa.red* and their equivalents. One should always ask: Do the respective markers refer to individual facts, to generalised knowledge, to habits, or to generic facts? Do we deal with personal or with shared or shareable knowledge?

In the Tibetic languages, private facts, memories of what one has done and one’s own habits and general situations are usually *not* represented with *red*, but with an ‘egophoric’ marker. ‘Egophoric’ markers may also be used for habits of persons in one’s personal or even cultural sphere, at least, as long as one identifies with these habits or as long as there are no discourse-pragmatic restrictions against the use of the ‘egophoric’ markers.

By contrast, habits of an unspecified plurality of beings may be presented with an experiential marker, indicating that one’s observation of the habit is comparatively limited. Suzuki (2012: 12, ex. 41), e.g., gives an example with the experiential marker /ṅṅ/ (< *snañ*) for the generic fact that “[t]he mouse eats crops stealthily”. Similarly, in the Ladakhi dialects, one may present the fact that one’s own cat catches mice with the ‘egophoric’ marker, one may also use the ‘egophoric’ marker with reference to all the cats in one’s village, but one will rather use the experiential marker when referring to cats in general, highlighting one’s recent perception (see Zeisler 2018b: 96). If

one wants to abstract from one's personal observation, e.g., in the context of teaching, one will use the counterpart of the particular 'factual' marker *red* or *yod.red*.

The following examples show the use of the existential *yod.red* and its regional counterparts in generic contexts.

- (3) Standard Spoken Tibetan (DeLancey 2018: 582, ex. 3, adapted)
pø²-la jā² j̄:re².
 Tibet-ALL yak exist.FACT
 'There **are** yaks in Tibet.' (**Generic knowledge**)
- (4) Dialect of Gcig.sgril (Amdo; Tribur 2019: 295, ex. 284, glossing corrected)
mñi za-ṁkhan-gə ɕtak jonəret.
 person eat-NLS-GEN tiger FACT.EX
 'There **are** man-eating tigers.' Or, 'man-eating tigers **exist**.' (**General** or even **generic knowledge**.)
- (5) Denjongke, Sikkim (Yliniemi 2021: 303, ex. 7.90, glossing adapted)
óna gjømpo_tei²¹ jèbbe?
 there monastery_INDF NTR.EX
 'There's a monastery there.' ("The copula *jèbbe?* here marks **generally known, uncontested knowledge**.")
- (6) Tagmacikpa (Shamskat, Western Shamma, field data 2019)
ɕʒamupa(:) r̄ta met-pa-intsok; balan jot-e-intsok.
 Jammu.person.AES horse NG.have-NLS-GEM=PRF cow have-CC-GEM=PRF
 'The people of Jammu **do not have** horses (**as is generally known**); [they] **have** cows (**as is generally known**).'
- (7) Shachukulpa (Kenhat, Lalokpa, field data 2016)
ŋa thorim-loptenəŋa urdu sil-pin.
 I university.PPOS Urdu study-RM=SCK
urdinəŋa galip m̄a: faeri [read: faer] m̄a: miŋfan-ŋik h̄indak.
 Urdu.PPOS:in Ghalib very poetry [read: poet] very famous-LQ be.GEM
khō-e haweli dilli-a ɕama maɕjid-eŋēða hot-e-indak.
 hon.s/he-GEN villa Delhi-ALL Jāma masjid-PPOS:near exist-CC-GEM=PRF
t̄e haweli(:)nāa galib-e kū-ɕik hot-e-indak.
 that villa.PPOS:in Ghalib-GEN statue-LQ exist-CC-GEM=PRF
khō-e t̄iŋɕug-e naɕfa hot-e-indak.
 hon.s/he-GEN last-GEN photograph exist-CC-GEM=PRF
 'I studied Urdu [literature] at the university. Ghalib is very famous among the Urdu poets. His villa **is** near the Jāma masjid in Delhi. In that villa **there is** a statue of Ghalib [and] **there is** a photograph of him in his last days.' (Suggestion for a talk in a seminar; the audience is not expected to know. *hoteindak* indicates **shareable knowledge**. The speaker further does not claim authority, as Ghalib is not a Ladakhi. The speaker, however, claims certain knowledge based on her studies. The part about the *haweli* is based on my

²¹ See n. 16. The underscore represents a combination with a clitic.

request for translation and my claim of certain knowledge through academic instruction and a personal visit of the *haveli*.)

4.1.2 *yod* for generalised knowledge about habits in one's personal sphere

As already mentioned, not all generally known habits are presented with the 'factual' marker. One's own habits, those of family members, and, depending on the language or dialect, even those of other persons, if one knows them well, are commonly presented with the 'egophoric' marker. Of course, when talking about third persons there is no longer any 'phoricity' or reference to the speaker. What the 'egophoric' marker indicates instead is that the speaker has a) very certain knowledge from acquaintance and b) knows better than the addressee does and c) feels no need to focus on the potential interests of the addressee. As Garrett (2001: 195) puts it:

[I]t is not that ego requires there to be a first-person argument somewhere, but rather that ego requires that the *origo* be in an ego *evidential* relation to the situation she is describing.

- (8) a. Standard Spoken Tibetan (Garrett 2001: 174, ex. 73, adapted)
ña phyi.logs-la hgro-dus, rtag.par grod.khog ltogs-gi.yod.
 I outside-ALL go-when always stomach be.hungry-EGO.IPFV
 'Whenever I go out, I always hungry.'
- b. Standard Spoken Tibetan (Garrett 2001: 177, ex. 81, adapted)
bkra.šis ga.bar hgro-na, grod.khog ltogs-gi.yod.
 Tashi where go-CD stomach be.hungry-EGO.IPFV
 'Wherever Tashi goes, he's hungry.'

4.2 *red* (and its equivalents) used for inferences and assumptions

Many usages of *red* as an auxiliary refer to individual situations (typically of other persons), in the future, in the present, or in the past. There cannot be any firmly established knowledge of a future situation, not even a certain expectation, if one is not involved in, or responsible for, the planning. The future situation presented with *-gi.red* is thus merely assumed (cf. Garrett 2001: 13, ex. 8) or imagined (cf. Garrett 2001: 44f., ex. 23) or hypothesised. Future situations, whether expected, intended, or merely imagined, are not facts.

When using *-pa.red* for a past situation, the situation is not necessarily well-remembered and the knowledge thus likewise not necessarily firmly established. Some scholars thus treat *red* and *yod.red* as (a kind of) 'indirect' markers or have treated them so in their earlier approaches. Some scholars (among them one of the reviewers) have argued that *-pa.red* is used for assimilated knowledge, and that this may include knowledge derived from observation and inferences. This is certainly true also for the assimilated knowledge about one's own past or past situations in one's personal sphere when they trigger the 'egophoric' marker *-pa.yin*. Many of the following examples will show, however, an explicit or contextually given lack of assimilation. Where the knowledge about the situation can be assumed to be already assimilated, namely in the case of a speaker's own past actions, the use of the 'factual' marker highlights a lack of volition, a lack of awareness, or the speaker's non-identification with the situation, such as cases of regret or perhaps also astonishment. These latter examples will be treated under section 4.6.

Therefore, not all usages of *red* and its combinations correspond to the strong subjective believe, that Kittilä describes as a necessary condition for a factual marker. This is particularly the case with the just mentioned assumptive future and past time references, but it is also the case with the use of past tense/ 'perfective' *-pa.red*, present tense/ 'imperfective' *-gi.yod.red*, or perfect *-yod.red* in traditional narrations, where neither narrator nor audience necessarily hold particular beliefs about the veracity of the narrated events.

Tournadre (1994: 152) originally calls *red* an 'indirect assertive' marker that would indicate hearsay knowledge taken for certain or generally known facts. Tournadre & Konchok Jiatso (2001: 74) refer to the "assertive or indirect evidential" with the following description:

The speaker did not either personally observe the process or infer it from traces but he asserts a fact about which he has no doubt. The statement may refer to a reported fact that the speaker trusts entirely or to common or gnomic knowledge.

Caplow (2017: 231, Fig. 1, 232, Tab. 1) classifies *red* and *yod.red* as 'factual', but also as forming a sub-category of 'indirect', and further comments that

[t]he factual evidentials [...] are flexible in terms of their evidential status; [...]. On the one hand, they can indicate that evidence providing verification of the proposition exists, but this evidence will not be specified by the speaker. On the other hand, they can be used when no such source of information exists, in which case they function as epistemics, but not as evidentials (Caplow 2017: 234).

While Tournadre and other scholars have reframed their analyses and their terminology towards 'factual' and 'evidentially neutral', the earlier analyses are not necessarily completely wrong. Rather they show that the markers may have an epistemic or evidential residue and that we may be in need of a different functional description than just 'factual' or 'evidentially neutral'.

4.2.1 *Use with epistemic expressions*

From the crosslinguistic definition of factuality as expressing a speaker's *unqualified* belief, the use of epistemic adverbs of doubt and mere guessing with an *explicit grammatical* marker of factuality should be precluded. As described initially, 'factuality' in the crosslinguistic sense implies certainty or a belief in the truth of the proposition (Kittilä 2019: 1277f.). Accordingly, factual sentences are not normally followed by an afterthought, *but I am not sure* (Tantucci 2016: 204). Similarly, sentences of (heightened) factuality, such as, *but the fact is that ...* would not be followed by a hedging adverb, such as, *but the fact is that Thonmi Sambhoṭa is *perhaps/ *presumably historically unattested.*

However, Vokurková has a few examples of the use of *red* and *yod.red* with epistemic expressions (including those of heightened certainty), besides the use of epistemic markers. This would indicate that the so-called 'factual' markers are, after all, epistemic markers of (slightly) weakened epistemic force or that they are at least also neutral with respect to the assumed factuality.

- (9) a. Standard Spoken Tibetan (Vokurková 2008: 145/146, exx. 179/182, adapted)
khoñ phal.cher yoñ-gi.red.
 hon.s/he perhaps come-FACT.FUT
 'She **will** perhaps come.' (She did not promise to come.) / 'She **will** probably come.'

b. Standard Spoken Tibetan (Vokurková 2008: 146, ex. 181, adapted)

*gcig.byas.na phur.bu yon-[g]i.red.*²²
 perhaps Phurbu come-FACT.FUT
 ‘Maybe, Phurbu **will** come.’

c. Standard Spoken Tibetan (Vokurková 2008: 147, ex. 183, adapted)

*khoñ gtan.gtan yon-[g]i.red.*²²
 hon.s/he certainly come-FACT.FUT
 ‘She **will** certainly come.’

d. Standard Spoken Tibetan (Vokurková 2008: 148, ex. 186, adapted)

ña-s byas-na khoñ nañ-la yod.ma.red.
 I-ERG do.PST-CD hon.s/he home-ALL NG.FACT.exist
 ‘I don’t think he is at home.’ Lit.: ‘In my opinion, he **is not** at home.’

A similar use with epistemic expressions is also found in the dialect of Shigatse. Note that Haller (2000a/ 2000b) does not describe the forms in question as ‘factual’, but as contrasting with the ‘volitional’, i.e., ‘egophoric’ markers. The ‘non-volitional’ copula would be ‘evidentially unspecified’,²³ while the ‘non-volitional’ existential linking verb is described as ‘non-evidential’.

(10) a. Dialect of Shigatse (Haller 2000b: 188, ex. 36a)

p^humo-ti piēmiē oama piē.
 girl-DF Pema.GEN younger.sister be.NVOL (ANEGO)
 ‘This girl **is** Pema’s younger sister.’ (“The speaker **knows** her.”)

b. Dialect of Shigatse (Haller 2000b: 188, ex 40a)

p^humo-ti k^hã.ɬ^hi^heniè piēmiē oama piē.
 girl-DF probably Pema.GEN younger.sister be.NVOL (ANEGO)
 ‘This girl **is probably** Pema’s younger sister.’ (Inference: “She **looks like** Pema.”)

(11) Dialect of Shigatse (Haller 2000b: 188, ex. 39a)

ŋa khōtỳ phā:ɬē tēṅkā:-na jòapie.
 I at.that.time probably loft-LOC exist.NVOL.NEVID (ANEGO)
 ‘I **was probably** in the loft at that time.’ (Inference: “A visitor tells the speaker that he had wanted to visit him some time ago and found the door of his house open, but nobody around. The speaker responds with this sentence, implying that he **must have been** in the loft where he could not hear the visitor.”)

I have observed a similar statement in a similar context in the Leh dialect of Ladakhi. My landlady had wondered why I did not say goodbye that day. When I replied that I had uttered that quite loudly, but did not get any answer, she mused that she may have been in the shrine room on top of the roof. In this case, the Ladakhi distance marker already expresses some kind of epistemic hedging, so there was no need for an additional epistemic expression of probability.

²² The form *kyi-red* that appears in her examples (181) and (183), here (9) b. and c., seems to be a copy error from a preceding *yong.gi.yod.kyi.red* in her example (180).

²³ This description seems to be due to the fact that there is no experiential form of the copula available.

- (12) Ladakhi, Leh dialect, overheard 2022

ŋa fhotkhaŋ-a jot-kjak.

I shrine.room-ALL exist-DST²⁴

'I must/ may have been/ I probably was in the shrine room [on top of the roof].'

4.2.2 *Assumptions about the future*

If one has not been involved in the planning of a future event, one can only assume that it will happen with a greater or lesser likelihood. The most neutral representation of a future event of another person will be with the 'factual' or 'indirect' future *V-gi.red*.

Tournadre's (2016: 636f.) suggestion that future situations are presented as facts only shows how one's choice of terminology may influence one's interpretation. There is no reason why any speaker would feel the need to present his/her expectations or assumptions about future activities of other persons as facts. Even statements about a speaker's own future actions are not statements about facts but statements about plans. To say that such statements are not about facts does not mean that these statements have a weak epistemic force. What speakers indicate in both cases is that they feel quite certain about their expectations and plans.

The main difference between a statement about one's own intentions and plans to act and a statement about other persons' intentions and plans to act is that one has better reasons (the best possible ground) and greater rights to talk about one's own intentions and plans, while one has only more indirect knowledge (inferences from observed behaviour, second-hand information from the person in question or from somebody else) about another person's intentions and plans. Even if we would treat future statements as being about 'facts', a speaker 'owns', so to speak, the 'facts' of his/her own future, but s/he does not 'own' the 'facts' of another person's future. Future acts of other persons do not belong to a speaker's territory of information.

- (13) Standard Spoken Tibetan (Garrett 2001: 14, ex. 8, adapted)

kho hgro-gi.red.

he go-IND.FUT

'He'll go.' "[eg. I **assume**]"

- (14) Standard Spoken Tibetan (Garrett 2001: 257, ex. 24, adapted)

khyed.rañ gžas hdi ñan-gi.yin-na, skyid.po byuñ-gi.red.

you song this listen-FUT-CD pleasant get-IND.FUT

'If you'll listen to this song, it'll be pleasant for you.' (**Assumption**, because the speaker cannot know for sure.)

²⁴ Note that Tournadre & Suzuki (2023: 300, 336) classify this combination as 'factual'. Hundred pages later, however, the marker *kyag* is analysed as "reportative-inferential", whether following a verb, the copula, or also the existential (pp. 421, 431, 432). Unlike the past inferential marker *tog*, which also has a hearsay function, but signals a more immediate becoming aware, a Ladakhi distance marker may signal a more complicated process of weighing different elements of evidence. It may also signal a greater distance in time and a longer chain of transmission or a greater feeling of not belonging (mental distance). The resulting knowledge is usually associated with a minor degree of doubt or guessing. However, the notion of greater distance in time and a long chain of oral transmissions makes it a preferred marker for historical facts, legends, and tales. This may have prompted the misinterpretation by Tournadre & Suzuki, while the misinterpretation itself may perhaps shed some light on the use of the 'factual' markers in such contexts. That is, the 'factual' markers might similarly signal distance in time and a transmission chain and thus also interpersonal or impersonal knowledge, rather than factuality.

4.2.3 Inferences or assumptions about ongoing situations (inclusive habits)

Situations ongoing at the time of the utterance receive an existential auxiliary. Self-involved activities are marked as *V-gi.yod*, immediately observed situations as *V-gi-hdug*. In the spoken language, this is typically realised as *V-gi* with a possible written rendering as *V-gis*. In negation, the full form *-gi-mi-hdug* is found. Inferences and depersonalised generic statements are marked with the complex existential form of the ‘factual’ as *V-gi.yod.red*.

DeLancey (1985: 65) describes the present tense/ ‘imperfective’ form *V-gi.yod.(pa.)red* as “indirect” and expressing “report or inference”. Similarly, Garrett (2001: 15) describes the form as “indirect”, expressing an assumption or a report.

- (15) a. Standard Spoken Tibetan (DeLancey 1985: 65, ex. 3, adapted)
Bsod.nams-gyis thañ.kha ḥgel-gyi[s].
 Sonam-ERG thangka hang.up-DIR.IPFV
 ‘Sonam is hanging a thangka/thangkas.’ “(Direct perception)”
- b. Standard Spoken Tibetan (DeLancey 1985: 65, ex. 4, adapted)
Bsod.nams-gyis thañ.kha ḥgel-gyi.yod.pa.red.
 Sonam-ERG thangka hang.up-IND.IPFV
 ‘Sonam **is** hanging thangkas.’ “(Report or **inference**)”
- (16) a. Standard Spoken Tibetan (Garrett 2001: 15, ex. 10, adapted)
kho da.lta kha.lag za-gi.hdug.
 he now food eat-DIR.IPFV
 ‘He’s eating now.’ “[eg. I see him]”
- b. Standard Spoken Tibetan (Garrett 2001: 15, ex. 11, adapted)
ñi.ma rtag.par bkra.šis-gis tshoñ.khañ de thoñ-gi.yod.red.
 day always Tashi-ERG store that see-IND.IPFV
 ‘Tashi **sees** that store every day.’ “[eg. I’m *told*, I **assume**]”

4.2.4 Inferences or assumptions about a present resulting state

Yukawa (1971/1975, trns. 2017), gives an example for an inferential perfect – he does not call it so – with the ‘factual’ existential marker *yod.red*:

- (17) Lhasa Tibetan (Yukawa 2017: 204, ex. 57, adapted)
ʔkoŋ-gi ʔšālaa ʔčö-ʔyoo.ree.²⁵
 he/she-ERG hon.food hon.eat-is (ANEGO=PRF)
 ‘He **will have** already **eaten** (it seems).’

Yukawa continues: “The assertion in (57) is based on the assumption that the man has already eaten, because it is past dinner time, which implies that it would not be rude to visit him now.” The translation might thus be rendered alternatively as ‘He should have eaten [by now].’

Garrett (2001) provides a similar example that likewise implies some kind of reasoning. In example (18) from a narrative, the background is that several leading nuns have given birth. Accordingly, the remaining nuns come to the conclusion that a man *must have been* around.

²⁵ The transcription conventions are nowhere specified, however, a voiced letter, *g, d, b*, etc. stands for a non-aspirated voiceless consonant /k/, /t/, /p/, etc., a voiceless letter *k* etc. stands for an aspirated letter /kh/ etc.

- (18) Standard Spoken Tibetan (Garrett 2001: 40, ex. 18, adapted/ Chang & Chang 1984: 621)
da gdan.gdan na.tshoḥi dkyil-la khyo.ka gcig slebs-yod.red.
*tha tētēē ḡatsōō kī-lā khōqā chi lēē-yōre.*²⁶
 now definitely we.GEN middle-ALL man one arrive-IND.PRF
 ‘Now, there **must certainly be** among us a man who has come here.’

4.2.5 Inferences or assumptions about the past

In his earlier articles, DeLancey (1985: 66, ex. 2; 2001: 371, ex. 4) analyses the past tense form *V-pa.red* (in his terminology: “perfective”) as “indirect” and as “based on report or inference”. Similarly, DeLancey (1986: 210) states that it “has a clearly inferential sense”. His translation of (19) is rendered even as a mere assumption:

- (19) Standard Spoken Tibetan (DeLancey 1986: 210, ex. 21b, adapted)
khon-gis yi.ge bri-pa.red.
 hon.s/he-ERG letter write-IND.PFV
 ‘S/he wrote a letter (**it seems**).’ (“the speaker **knows only by inference**, e.g., from the existence of the letter”)

Garrett (2001: 11) speaks of an ‘indirect past’, and shows its usage for both shared knowledge and inferences:

- (20) Standard Spoken Tibetan (Garrett 2001: 14, ex. 6, adapted)
kho phyin-pa.red.
 he go-IND.PST
 ‘He left.’ “[eg. I **infer**, *it is known*]”

With its inferential function, the ‘indirect’ past *V-pa.red* may stand in competition with the inferential perfect *V-bžag*. According to DeLancey (1985: 67f.), the inferential perfect (in his terminology: the “inferential perfective”) is preferable when the inference is drawn immediately upon some perceptive input (here visual) about a resulting state, while the ‘indirect’ past (in his terminology: the “indirect perfective”) would imply some more indirect evidence. One could perhaps describe the difference also as an immediate becoming aware in the case of the inferential perfect (*V-bžag*), in contrast to a somewhat more complex process of reasoning and combining the evidence in the case of the ‘indirect’ past (*V-pa.red*). The difference between the two forms may not always be easy to establish and may also depend on the individual situation. DeLancey’s suggested interpretations may thus not be the only possible ones, but in all cases, we deal with an individual situation, newly inferred by some evidence, not with assimilated generic (or general) facts.

- (21) a. Standard Spoken Tibetan (DeLancey 1985: 67, ex. 12, adapted)
Bsod.nams gñid sad-bžag.
 Sonam sleep wake-INF.PFV
 ‘Sonam woke up.’ (The “speaker has seen the subject up and about, but did not watch him wake up”)

²⁶ Note that in Chang & Chang’s transcription system “k” stands for the palatalised velar or written cluster *ky* /kʲ/ “q” stands for the non-palatalised velar *k*, and “c” stands for the palatal affricate, written *c* or /tʃ/.

b. Standard Spoken Tibetan (DeLancey 1985: 67, ex. 13, adapted)

Bsod.nams gñid sad-pa.red.

Sonam sleep wake-IND.PFV

‘Sonam woke up.’ (“*hearsay* or **inference** from indirect evidence such as an empty bed”, emphasis added)

A similar distinction between the visual perfect and a past inferential in a comparable situation has been observed in the Ladakhi dialects. My landlady in Leh asked me: *nono lays-tog-a?* ‘Did [my] son get up (is there any sign)?’ I took up the question form in the answer: *lays-tok* ‘[He] apparently got up’. However, as I could confirm later on with one of my informants, since I had seen him up and going to the toilet, I might have as well or even better used the visual perfect construction *kho lays-te-duk* ‘he has risen (I can infer, because I saw [him around])’. As this usage indicates, the visual perfect like the inferential perfect in Standard Spoken Tibetan can be used for an inference upon positive visual evidence, in both cases: seeing the person up and about. Less immediate evidence or inference from absence triggers the past inferential *-tok* or even a marker with stronger epistemic hedging force in Ladakhi. Accordingly, when a speaker of Standard Spoken Tibetan uses the form *-pa.red*, this signals that the evidence is slightly weaker than when using the inferential perfect *-bžag*. Hence, the form *-pa.red* cannot be merely ‘neutral’.

(22) a. Standard Spoken Tibetan (DeLancey 1985: 67, ex. 15, adapted)

Bsod.nams-gyis ku.šu bzas-bžag.

Sonam-ERG apple eat.PST-INF.PFV

‘Sonam ate the apple.’ (Inference upon visual input: “the speaker sees that an apple which used to be there now exists only as a gnawed one”.)

b. Standard Spoken Tibetan (DeLancey 1985: 67f., ex. 16, adapted)

Bsod.nams-gyis ku.šu bzas-pa.red.

Sonam-ERG apple eat.PST-IND.PFV

‘Sonam ate the apple.’ (**Conclusion**: “if the speaker and Sonam were alone in the house [...] the eaten state of the apple and the speaker’s knowledge that he himself was not responsible for that state necessarily identify Sonam as the eater”.)

Particularly when used for the speaker’s own activities, the marker *red* may indicate that the speaker does not remember well, and that s/he thus has to infer the event or that s/he was told about it. This is certainly due to the so-called ‘first-person’ effect (see Aikhenvald 2004: 219–233) that applies whenever an epistemically weaker form is used for the first person (e.g. an inferential or hearsay marker instead of the unmarked form or, in our case, a ‘factual’ or ‘neutral’ marker instead of the ‘egophoric’ marker.) The use of the ‘factual’ marker may concern events in the more distant past, and so can be subsumed under assimilated knowledge, indicating, however, a marked stance of non-volition, regret, or other connotations of self-distance, see section 4.6.3. Inferences of one’s own actions may also concern more recent events, and the conclusions arrived at constitute non-assimilated, new knowledge. This very effect indicates that the form *-pa.red* cannot just be merely ‘factual’ or ‘neutral’.

Example (23) shows in more detail how a conclusion may be derived through reasoning from the contextual background. The example is about a person who has lost his memory. He studies a sheet of paper with two columns: the left column has a list of names, and the right column contains, for each person, the holiday destination of the last year. Since the person still

remembers his name (Tashi), he looks for his name on the list, and then finds out where he went, thinking aloud as follows:

- (23) Standard Spoken Tibetan (Garrett 2001: 40, ex. 19a-c, adapted)
bkra.šis New.York-la phyin-pa.red.
 Tashi New.York-ALL go-IND.PST
ña bkra.šis yin.
 I Tashi EGO.COP
byas.tsañ ña New.York-la phyin-pa-red.
 therefore I New.York-ALL go-IND.PST
 ‘Tashi went to New York [as I can see/ **as they write**]. I am Tashi. Therefore, I went [or **must have been**] to New York.’

Note that not only the conclusion is presented with the ‘indirect past’, but also the list entry, corresponding here also to second-hand information. In this case, the assimilated (remembered) knowledge is marked with the ‘egophoric’ *yin*, while the information marked with *red* is non-assimilated. While the above example certainly sounds unnatural, one could well think of a more suitable context, where an ordinary person who has been travelling a lot tries to sort out to which places s/he went in which year.

4.2.6 *Inferred alterable identities of the speaker*

The above-mentioned first-person effect can be found also with the identifying copula. When using the marker *red* (or its regional counterparts) for him/herself, a speaker may indicate that s/he just becomes aware of that particular *alterable* identity. Suitable contexts for this are when one has been assigned a special task, like being a cook, or when after an accident, one finds oneself in the hospital as a patient. A less likely context would be finding out that one’s nationality or one’s inalterable identity as being a member of a particular family has suddenly changed or for some reason has turned out to be different from what one believed it was.

- (24) Dialect of Lende, Kyirong (Huber 2000: 159, ex. 7/ 2005: 101, ex. 67, adapted)
ŋa mačẽ: jimbe:.
 I cook be (ANEGO)/ INF.COP
 ‘I am/ **must be** the cook.’ (“This example can be uttered in a situation where different tasks are being assigned to a group of people. Because the other members of the group already have got their jobs, the speaker **infers** that he must be the cook. The sentence can as well be used after some utterance of another person which leads the speaker to the **assumption that he must be** the cook.”)

A comparable example is found in Dzongkha, where the copula for (recently) ‘acquired knowledge’ *ime* (see Karma Tshering & van Driem 2019: 107) or in Watters’ (2018) terminology: the ‘exophoric’ copula *imme* is used by a person who wakes up in a hospital without knowing how s/he has landed there. After s/he has got used to the situation, s/he may then use the copula for ‘assimilated’ or ‘old, ingrained background knowledge’ *ij* (Karma Tshering & van Driem 2019: 107), i.e., in Watters’ (2018) terminology: the ‘egophoric’ copula *ij*.

(25) a. Dzongkha (Karma Tshering & van Driem 2019: 109, ex. 13, adapted)
ŋa nep ʔme bo: te. ŋa ee:-ra ma-ee:.
 I patient be (ANEGO) [CTEXP] [RHEM] I know-[STR] NG-know
 ‘So, I’m a patient! I had no idea.’ (**Realisation**, after finding oneself in a hospital bed.)

b. Dzongkha (Karma Tshering & van Driem 2019: 109, ex. 13, adapted)
ŋa nep ʔŋ.
 I patient be (EGO)
 ‘I’m a patient.’ (Talking to a visitor, the speaker has become accustomed to the situation.)

4.2.7 Delayed recognition of identities

A possible motivation for the use of the ‘factual’ or ‘indirect’ marker could be the slightly delayed recognition of identities through some intermediate mental process. As I could observe for Ladakhi, this may concern the identification of a person who is coming from far or the identification of an item or its quality through a perceptive test.

Chang & Chang (1981: 152, 1984: 609) provide a possible example for Standard Spoken Tibetan from direct speech within a narrative. In that story, an astrologer boy, whose father had been killed before the boy was born, has read in his father’s book what has happened. The boy digs up the place where his father is buried, finds the corpse of his father and the corpse of the latter’s horse, and recognises their identity. He already knew from the book that it was the prime minister who killed his father, but he presents this as an inference or, perhaps more likely, as second-hand information.

(26) Standard Spoken Tibetan (Chang & Chang 1981: 152, 1984: 609 adapted)
tha t̥i ŋɛɛ p̄p̄a rē. t̥i ŋɛɛ p̄p̄ē t̄a rē.
 now this I.GEN father be.IND this I.GEN father.GEN horse be.IND
ʃɛp̄ē-ghi s̄ē-p̄a.rē. ...
 prime.minister-ERG kill-IND.PST
chɛ̄ ts̄ã ʃɛp̄ē-ghi ŋɛɛ p̄p̄a s̄ē-p̄a.rē.
 do.PST since prime.minister-ERG I.GEN father kill-IND.PST
 ‘Now this **is** my father (as I **realise**/ as I **can confirm**). This **is** my father’s horse (as I **realise**/ as I **can confirm**). The prime minister **killed** them. ... So the prime minister killed my father.’ Or perhaps: ‘**must have killed** [my father].’

Chang & Chang (1984: 609) think that the reason for using *red* for the identification has to do with “subjective emotional distance”, in this case triggered by temporal distance, so that the translation should be ‘that *was* my father’. Such analysis would be correct when telling one’s friends or other family members who was at the door (or on the phone, cf. Zemp 2018: 537, no. 648, 555, no. 724) or who was the person over there across the street with whom one just has talked before coming back (see Zeisler 2023: 81–84). However, here we deal with the identification of a family member in the presence of the addressee(s). Identities, especially within a family, do not necessarily change with the time or with the death of one person, and speakers of any language might hesitate to use a form that refers to the past, virtually cancelling the relationship.

In the context of example (26), where the boy seeks revenge for the murder of his father, he would identify with his father, rather than be emotionally distanced. There are most likely a few other motivations at play. One motivation could be the recognition over a greater distance,

here the temporal distance, which might need some mental processing (cf. Zeisler 2023: 43–44 for Ladakhi) or the identification of a person or item in a photograph that one has not taken oneself (cf. Jones 2009: 53, ex. 34 for Baltipa). See also Oisel (2017: 110) for the possible use of a ‘factual’ besides various other epistemic markers in the case of a “recognition”. At the same time, the previous knowledge from the book that the father was to be found exactly here could be counted as second-hand knowledge. Another motivation could be the speaker’s attitude of confirmation or what Oisel (2017: 109f.) treats as “emphatic assertion”, triggering the factual marker, cf. examples (67) and (68) in section 4.6.4 below. Finally, the utterance serves as an explanation and justification for an accusation. In such contexts, the GEM as a ‘factual’ marker is a common option in Ladakhi (Zeisler 2023: 98–108).

I should suggest, more generally, that with the notion of ‘emotional distance’ Chang & Chang might not be very far from the right track. In my opinion, a speaker may use the ‘factual’ marker to distance him- or herself to a certain extent from the content of the statement, *as if* it were not due to his or her own observation or knowledge. One could liken this to the use of modal forms in the Standard European languages to signal some personal restraint. Hence, instead of saying *I want, je veux, ich will* one might say *I should like, je voudrais, ich hätte gerne*, etc. without hedging one’s epistemic authority.

4.3 Hearsay

According to Garrett (2001: 39), the ‘indirect’ (or ‘factual’) marker is often used for un-specific or non-attributable hearsay, that is, unhedged information that the speaker has learned through others. Some of the above examples have already indicated that the statement may be based on hearsay rather than on inference, cf. (15) b., (16) b., (21) b., and (24), and in principle also through written information, (23) and perhaps (26). The following example is originally from Chang & Chang (1984). Here again, both interpretations as hearsay and as assumptive or inferential are possible.

- (27) Standard Spoken Tibetan (Garrett 2001: 39, ex. 16, adapted/ Chang & Chang 1984: 619)
- | | | | | | |
|---------------|-------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| <i>de.rin</i> | <i>ħdir</i> | <i>mchod.chañ</i> | <i>spro.bo</i> | <i>že.drag</i> | <i>yod.red.</i> |
| <i>thirī</i> | <i>tĕĕ</i> | <i>chōcāñ</i> | <i>tōpō</i> | <i>šetāñ</i> | <i>yǝrgĕ.</i> |
| today | here | hon.wine | tasty | very | IND.EX |
- ‘The wine here today **is** very delicious.’ “[I’ve **been told**; I *assume*]” “the speaker implies that she hasn’t tasted the wine”.

4.4 Non-factual: imagining, counterfactuals, and story telling

While any linguistic term may be used as a cover term for quite different functions, the description of the Tibetic ‘factual’ always emphasises that the speaker ‘simply’ asserts or states a ‘fact’. A fact, however, is according to the Oxford Dictionary of English: “That which is known (or firmly believed) to be real or true; what has actually happened or is the case; truth attested by direct observation or authentic testimony; reality...” In other words, a fact is something that has been the case in the past or is the case right now, but not something that is expected or predicted or even merely hypothesised to be the case in the future. In so far, the term ‘factual’ is already unsuitable for the future tense/ assumptive form *-gi.red*, discussed above in section 4.2.2. Moreover, *red* and its regional counterparts can be found in clearly unrealis or imaginative situations, such as giving imagined examples in explanations or when talking about hypothetical situations. ‘Factual’

markers are also found in the apodosis of conditionals and counterfactuals. A further non-factual context are stories and tales.

In the case of conditionals, the projected situation can only become a fact if and only if the situation of the protasis can be established as a fact, but as long as this has not happened, the projected situation is a mere possibility. Even if the situation of the protasis has been established, other factors could have obstructed the realisation of the projected situation. Everyday life does not always follow simple mechanic rules of cause and result. In the case of counterfactuals, the hypothesised situation is even no longer possible, because the situation of the protasis has never been realised as a fact. For similar irrealis contexts in Ladakhi, triggering either the epistemic distance marker or the potential ‘factual’ counterpart, the GEM, see Zeisler (2023: 59–65).

4.4.1 Giving examples with imagined situations

- (28) Standard Spoken Tibetan (Oisel 2017: 106, ex. 38, adapted)

pē:na tshāca'-na, ŋɛʔ khālaʔ sɔʔ-pareʔ-ta
 example put.down-CD I.ERG meal prepare.PST-FACT.PST-QT
 ‘For example, **let’s say**, I cooked!’

- (29) Denjongke, Sikkim (Yliniemi 2021: 390, ex. 9.20, glossing adapted)

ʃeŋɛ:_lo pʰate tʰiwa ŋà tʰi-ɛɛ beʔ.
 hon.you_DAT thither question I ask-NLS NTR.COP
 ‘(**Let’s imagine**) I’ll ask you a question.’

- (30) Denjongke, Sikkim (Yliniemi 2021: 390, ex. 9.19, glossing adapted)

ŋà gju-do beʔ, tʰa:riŋ, kor bak-ti.
 I go-PROG NTR.COP far.away tour carry-CC
 [The speaker has asked the addressee to transfer a handsome sum of money. Upon being asked what he would do with the money, he replies:] ‘I’m going, far away, roaming around.’
 Perhaps better: ‘[In that case,] I **might be** going, ...’

4.4.2 Imagined play roles

A related context are role assignments, whether more seriously for a drama or when children take up play roles. In such cases, the speaker imagines the role s/he will take up (and possibly also the corresponding roles of the other player(s)). At least one such example has been observed in natural discourse:

- (31) Standard Spoken Tibetan (Hongladarom 1993: 1154, ex. 6, adapted)

ŋa āmɑ.la: re:, khjērɑŋ phumɔ jinta.
 I mother.hon IND.COP you daughter EGO.COP.ADHORTATIVE
 ‘**I[’d] be** the mother and you the daughter.’

Hongladarom adds:

I asked the mother of the child who spoke this sentence why *ree* is used here. She explained that this was because the speaker is not the real mother, but here the child assumes the role of a mother.

4.4.3 Conditions and counterfactuals

The 'factual' marker is commonly used in past and present conditional and counterfactual constructions for all persons, cf. examples (32) to (33) for the future construction with the copula and (34) to (35) for the perfect construction with the compound existential marker. Such constructions describe possible or hypothetical situations but not facts. According to Garret (2001), only the 'indirect' future is commonly used in the apodosis of a counterfactual conditional, see examples (36) and (37). His statement is to be understood in the sense that the 'egophoric' copula is not allowed, even when the projected situation concerns a first person, cf. also examples (38) and (39) by Vokurková (2008). Vokurková further shows that an epistemic marker may be used instead of, or besides, the 'factual' marker *red* in similar contexts, corroborating the inherent epistemic character of *red*, example (38).

- (32) Standard Spoken Tibetan (Tournadre & Sangda Dorje 1998: 226, adapted)
kjokpo thē²-na mato², nāmṭu fjesin-kimare².
 fast hon.go-CD except plane be.able.to.catch-NG.FACT.FUT
 'If [you] don't hurry (lit. except if [you] go fast), [you] **won't/ might not** catch the plane.'
- (33) Standard Spoken Tibetan (Tournadre & Sangda Dorje 1998: 226, adapted)
khjēraŋ sapsap fhe²-na mato², fāla² lā²-to:-kire².
 hon.you attention do.PST-CD except thing get.lost-go-FACT.FUT
 'If you do not pay attention (Lit. Except if you pay attention), [your] things **will/ might** get lost.'
- (34) Standard Spoken Tibetan (Tournadre & Sangda Dorje 1998: 167, adapted)
kam-la kotəa² kjap-jø²-na, təāla² lā²-jo:mare².
 box-ALL lock apply.PST-EX-CD thing get.lost-NG.FACT.PRF
 'If [we/ you/ s/he] had put a padlock on the box, the stuff [inside] **would not** have got lost.'
- (35) Standard Spoken Tibetan (Denwood 1999: 160, adapted)
mē: di se-bə-ji-nə, sɔgbu dəbu təhā:-dɛ:-jɔ:re:.²⁷
 medicine this eat.PST-NLS-COP-CD body well become-stay-FACT.PRF
 'If [I/ you/ s/he] had eaten this medicine, [I/ you/ s/he] **would** have got better.'
- (36) Standard Spoken Tibetan (Garret 2001: 44, ex. 23, adapted)
šog.bu med-naḥi, las.ka byed-dgos-red.
 paper NG.exist-even.if work do-need-FACT
*šog.bu yod-na, na las.ka gžan.dag gcig byed-gi.red. / *byed-gi.yin.*
 paper exist-if I work another one do-IND.FUT *do-EGO.FUT
*tshoñ.khañ las.ka byed-gi.ma.red. / *byed-gi.med.*
 store work do-NG.IND.FUT *do-NG.EGO.FUT
 'Even though [I] don't have [work] papers, [I] have to work. If [I] had papers, [I]'d do some other work. [I] **wouldn't** work in the store.'

²⁷ The phonological transcription should possibly look more like *mē: t̥i sɛ:-pa-j̥i-na, suku tɛpo təhā²-tɛ²-jɔ:re?*

- (37) Standard Spoken Tibetan (Garret 2001: 269, ex. 46, adapted)
ña kha skom-gi.yod-na, ña chu thun-gi.red.
 I mouth dry-IPFV-CD I water drink-IND.FUT
 ‘If I were thirsty (now), I’d drink some water.’
- (38) a. Standard Spoken Tibetan (Vokurková 2008: 91, ex. 69, adapted)
rañ-gis ña-r rog.pa ma-byas-na, ña ši-yod.red.
 you-ERG I-ALL help NG-do.PST-CD I die-FACT.PRF
 ‘If you had not helped me, I **would have** died.’
- b. Standard Spoken Tibetan (Vokurková 2008: 144, ex. 177, adapted)
rañ-gis khon-la rog.pa ma-byas-na, khon ši-yod.kyi.red.
 you-ERG hon.s/he-ALL help NG-do.PST-CD hon.s/he die-EPISTEMIC.PRF
 ‘If you had not helped him, he would most probably have died.’
- (39) Standard Spoken Tibetan (Vokurková 2008: 142, ex. 174, adapted)
ña-r sañ.ñin dus.tshod med-tsañ,
 I-ALL tomorrow time NG.exist-because
ma.gtogs khyed.rañ mñam.po hgro-gi.red.
 otherwise hon.you together go.PRS-FACT.FUT
 ‘If I had time tomorrow, I **would** go with you.’ (Literally: Because I have no time, otherwise, I **would** go with you.)

4.4.4 Story telling

The Tibetic ‘factual’ markers are the standard choice in story telling. When telling a story or tale, it is evident that the narrator need not hold any particular belief that what s/he tells is true, nor would the listener necessarily believe that what s/he hears is true. By using these forms, the narrator signals that s/he is not talking about facts; *it’s just a story*. The ‘factual’ past appears for the main events of the story line while the ‘factual’ present/ ‘imperfective’ is used for various narrative conventions, whether backgrounding or marking of dramatic turns, see Zeisler (2004, part II, chapter 4.4.3 for Standard Spoken Tibetan and chapter 5.4.3 for East Tibetan).

- (40) Standard Spoken Tibetan (Chang & Chang 1981: 233, adapted)
ānī phomō ti sēm-tshāp-ni, kuqū qiiqūū-thi yaq cīq chē-pa.reè.
 then girl this mind-be.afraid-TOP quick window-this up once open-IND.PST
qiiqūū chē-peε qhutūū, ñimā maq šiū-tu-qī.yəḏreè.
 window open-NLS.GEN occasion sun down set-go-IND.PRS
 ‘Then the girl became anxious and quickly **opened** the window. At the moment [she] opened the window, the sun **was [already] about to set.**’

There are, of course, also stories that by their very nature are assumed to be true, namely historical or religious legends. In such cases, the ‘factual’ markers indicate that what is narrated are (commonly believed) facts, but at the same time they signal that what is narrated is not the exclusively personal knowledge of the narrator, but is handed down through oral and written tradition, and may already be known by at least part of the audience.

4.5 Conventionalised and socio-pragmatic usages of red (and its equivalents)

4.5.1 Neutralised self-representation

As Agha (1993) observes, the, in his terminology 'impersonal', i.e., 'indirect'/'factual', marker can be used to make 'neutral' or 'objective' statements of fact about oneself:

- (41) Lhasa Tibetan (Agha 1993: 174, ex. 22, adapted)
ŋa lūptu: re?
 I student IMPERS.COP
 'I'm a student.'

In this context, Agha (1993: 175) writes,

the speaker speaks impersonally about *himself* ... To speak this way is to speak of the self impersonally, detachedly, as if to say 'that is simply the way things are.'

Unfortunately, Agha does not explain in which communicative context or out of which motivations a speaker would use this strategy. One option is that the speaker states or confirms what the addressee already knows.²⁸ Another motivation could be that the speaker either gives a reason or explanation for some other proposition or that some further explanations might follow. A further motivation could be that the speaker does not fully identify with this situation and wants to be something else. See the corresponding example (63) from Shigatse in section 4.6.1 below.

According to (Garrett 2001: 42), a faint memory about the distant past might also lead to the use of a 'factual' or, in his terminology, the 'indirect' form. His example, however, is more about giving an explanation, because what is presented with *red* is the fact that the speaker once was a child, which is certainly well remembered. In this case, *red* may possibly also signal that the speaker no longer identifies with the earlier self or that this situation or fact is no longer of any importance for the speaker. Compare also the subsequent natural example (43) from an interview.

- (42) Standard Spoken Tibetan (Garrett 2001: 42f., ex. 21, adapted)
bslab.grwa-la ma-phyin goñ-la
 school-ALL NG-go.PST early-ALL
ñas-gis [!]²⁹ ña.rañ-gi skor-la ha.go-gi.med.
 I.ERG-ERG myself-GEN about-ALL know-NG.EGO.IPFV
gañ yin zer-na, ña lo lña-gi sñon-la
 what EGO.COP say-CD I year five-GEN before-ALL
ña ga.re byed-gi.yod-med ña ha.go-gi.med.
 I what do-EGO.IPFV-NG.EX I know-NG.EGO.IPFV
ga.re yin zer-na, de.dus ña chuñ.chuñ red, phru.gu red.
 what be say-CD that.time I small IND.COP kid IND.COP

²⁸ Garrett (2001: 44, n. 8) comments: "It is not clear to me what contextual factors trigger this kind of impersonalization, which is especially common in copular clauses. It may be relevant that such knowledge is public and general, something that anybody could know." Cf. also Oisel (2017: 109f.) for a confirmative or "emphatic assertion".

²⁹ Garrett does not comment upon this feature, which reappears in some but not all examples with the first person pronoun. It is possible, that these are due to copy errors. Nevertheless, double ergative marking has been observed as a common feature after open syllables in the Tibetan dialect of Lende in Kyirong (Huber 2000: 157, n. 11, 2005: 61). I have also observed it in the eastern-most Zanskarpa dialect of Thrable (field data 2023).

‘As far as before I went to school, I don’t know much about myself. Because I don’t know what I was doing before I was five years old. Because at that time, I **was** small. I **was** a kid.’ (**Detached perspective** and/ or **explanation**.)

(43) Standard Spoken Tibetan (Ward 2016: 26, glossing corrected and adapted)

31 *tog.tsam bsam-gyi.hdug.*
 little think-TEST.IPFV

32 *lo chuñ.chuñ, red-pa.*
 year young FACT.COP-QT

33 *že.drag bsam-thub-kyi.mi.hdug.*
 much think-be.able-NG.TEST.IPFV

34 *ga.hdra hdra-žig re-gi.yod-na bsams-son, red-pa.*
 how like-LQ become-PRS-CD think-TEST.PST FACT.COP-QT

35 *ani gžug-la rgya.mi-gis ña-tsho groñ — chuñ.chuñ red-pa.*
 then after-ALL Chinese-ERG 1-PL village small FACT.COP-QT

‘[I] was thinking only a little (retrospective outside observation). (**As a matter of fact,/ As you know,/ If I look back at myself**), [I] was [still] small, right? I was not able to think much (retrospective outside observation). [I] thought (retrospective outside obser- vation) ‘how, if it is getting like this?’, it was [like this] (**as a matter of fact/ as you know,/ if I look back at myself**) right? And then, after the Chinese [came to] our village ... (**As a matter of fact,/ As you know,/ If I look back at myself**), [I] was [so] small, wasn’t I?’ (My translation.)

The addition of “(As a matter of fact,)”, given here as first alternative, does not imply a neutral, detached presentation of a fact. In this context, it is an excuse. Furthermore, the addressee is expected to know. The example is part of an interview. The interviewer wanted to know when the speaker became aware of the changes brought about by the Chinese invasion. The interviewer would have known that the interviewed person was a child at that time. The speaker, however, avoids an answer, explaining that she was too young to be aware of what was going on and to think about it (see Ward 2016 for more background details). This stance of avoiding and apolo- gising is further reinforced through the confirmation-seeking question tag. Given the experiential marker in the other sentences, which represent the retrospective observation from outside, the use of the ‘factual’ marker instead of the copula may similarly represent the same retrospective looking at oneself from outside.

According to Tournadre (2017: 115), the ‘factual’ marker may also be used for situations about which “the speaker’s access to information is cognitively limited”, such as the statement where one was born. In this case, the speaker was not actively involved and further cannot have a clear memory of the situation. Most likely, the speaker has only second-hand knowledge about this fact (which may now also include a glance into the birth register). Furthermore, this fact will be shared knowledge within the speaker’s family. Apart from this, such statement might well be an official declaration.

(44) Standard Spoken Tibetan (Tournadre 2017: 115)

ña chab.mdo-la skyes-pa.red.

I Chamdo-ALL be.born-PST.COMPLETED.FACT

‘I **was** born in Chamdo.’ (The speaker **was not actively involved**; possibly **second-hand** or **shared knowledge**; possibly an **official declaration**.)

4.5.2 *Non-personal or depersonalised knowledge*

Situations outside a speaker's territory of information receive various 'evidential' and epistemic markers for immediate perception, inference, or assumptions. In all these cases, the speaker presents the piece of information as personally accessed. However, there are also situations where a speaker can or even must defocus from his or her mode of (personal) access and thus uses the 'factual' markers. This may concern situations that have been observed also by other persons (shared or common knowledge) and/ or situations in which one was only marginally involved as a bystander, so that one may have observed only some parts of the situation described. See here DeLancey's statement cited below that "the narrator had no direct connection with" the "events in the story". One could well say that the situation 'is presented as a mere fact', but this also means that because the speaker omits all clues to his/her epistemic commitment, his/her epistemic commitment is somewhat weaker than if s/he specified his/her access as direct observation, inference, or (attributable) hearsay. From a crosslinguistic point of view, however, the veracity would be perceived as being stronger when a marker of explicit subjectivity is lacking, and this could be the reason why some scholars insist on 'objectivity' (e.g., Tournadre & Suzuki 2023: 411 or also one of the reviewers) or on the idea that the addressee is asked 'to simply take' the information 'as given' (DeLancey 2018: 583).

DeLancey (2018: 588–589, 592–594) brings fragments of a personal narrative about the atrocities by the Red Guards. As DeLancey (2018: 592f.) describes,

The story concerns a nomad who fled and rejoined the commune several times, finally resulting in the Red Guards chasing him out of the countryside, beheading him and bringing the head back as trophy. Early in the story, after one return to the commune, he is summoned to speak with commune officials. The narrator has to translate, because the nomad speaks only Amdo.

According to DeLancey (2018: 589), the

events are related as part of a story in which the narrator herself is a player, and so [these events] could in principle be expressed with Direct or Inferential Evidential forms. But they are not major events in the story, and *the narrator had no direct connection with them*, so their evidential status does not need to be specified (emphasis added).

DeLancey gives no further details how the speaker may have observed the 'major events' or their immediate results personally. It is thus all but evident that the speaker could have used "Direct" *hdug* or "Inferential" *bžag* in other parts of the narrative. In the segments published, the speaker distinguishes sharply between events she observed directly and personally in her role as a translator and events that she might have come to know as a non-involved observer or even more indirectly, as these latter events may have been observed also by others. Rather than presenting these events as unquestionable facts, she presents these events in a distanced or depersonalised or pragmatically hedged manner.

I have amended DeLancey's translation tacitly for minor issues. Where there are substantial differences, the original translation by DeLancey is given in double quotes, followed by my translation in single quotes.

- (45) a. Lhasa Tibetan (DeLancey 2018: 588, ex. 15, adapted)
dehi.rjes.la ya theñs.ma gsum.pa de,
 that.PPOS:after_FOC occasion third that
drug.cu_re.gñis lo-la yin-na, re.gsum lo-la yin-na,
 sixty_sixty.two year-LOC be-CD sixty.three year-ALL be-CD
de.hdra gcig-la ya kho tshur log-yoñs-pa.red.
 that.like one-ALL_FOC he back return-come.PST-FACT.PFV
 ‘After that, the third time, be it in 62 or in 63, he came once more back like [before].’
 (Remembered situation, not necessarily personally observed, **potentially shared knowledge**.)
- b. Lhasa Tibetan (DeLancey 2018: 589, ex. 16, adapted)
rnam.lha gtan.gtan sdad.bzod mi-bde-pa byuñ-yog.red.
 Namla certain stay.patience NG-easy-NLS get-FACT.PRF
 ‘Things had gotten really difficult for Namla.’ / ‘Namla, for certain, had become uneasy [and had no] patience to stay.’ (Remembered situation, not necessarily personally observed, **potentially shared knowledge; perhaps hearsay**.)
- c. Lhasa Tibetan (DeLancey 2018: 593, ex. 29, adapted)
gñis-kyis kho-r yañ skad.cha bšad-son̄.
 two-ERG he-ALL_FOC speech tell-DIR.PFV
 ‘[Those] two [officials] spoke to him.’ (Immediately observed by the speaker.)
- d. Lhasa Tibetan (DeLancey 2018: 593, ex. 30, adapted)
dehi skabs-la ya, nas skad.gyur byas-pa.yin.
 that.GEN time-ALL_FOC I.ERG translation do.PST-EGO.PFV
 ‘That [particular] time, I translated [for them].’ (Speaker actively involved.)
- e. Lhasa Tibetan (DeLancey 2018: 593, ex. 31, adapted)
khos «mtsho.dmar nañ-la sdad-kyi.yin»_ze zer-son̄.
 he.ERG Red.Lake in-ALL stay-EGO.IPFV[=FUT]_QUOT say-DIR.PFV
 ‘He said, «I will stay in Red Lake.»’ (Utterance immediately observed by the speaker.)
- f. Lhasa Tibetan (DeLancey 2018: 593, ex. 32, adapted)
kho mtsho.dmar-gyi šañ nañ-la bsdad-pa.red.
 he Red.Lake-GEN village inside-ALL stay-FACT.PFV
 ‘He stayed in Red Lake village.’ (Remembered situation, not necessarily personally observed, **potentially shared knowledge, perhaps hearsay**.)
- g. Lhasa Tibetan (DeLancey 2018: 594, ex. 33, adapted)
de nas ña.rahi mi.tshe hdihi.thogla ya mgo mthon-ba dan.po yin.
 that I.ERG I.self.GEN lifetime this.PPOS:in_FOC head see-NLS first be.EGO
 ‘That was the first time I ever in my life saw a (severed) head.’ (Identification of a personal situation, potentially indicating the speaker’s emotional involvement.)

h. Lhasa Tibetan (DeLancey 2018: 594, ex. 34, adapted)

mgo mthon-ba dan.po de red.

head see-NLS first that be.FACT

‘That **was** the first [occasion of] seeing a [severed] head.’ / ‘The first [time of] seeing a [severed] head **was** that.’ (**Distanced representation**. Possibly suppressing the emotional involvement.)

From the forms chosen, it is quite evident that sentences a., b., and f., in contrast to c. and e., are not based on an exclusively personal observation. Most likely, the whole commune would have observed these facts. I should further assume that the speaker did not observe all aspects of the situation even if she was present in the settlement when it happened. She would not necessarily have observed how the person came back each time, nor how the person came back the third time. She would rather have observed his presence and could have drawn a conclusion about his return. Similarly, if she was not a close acquaintance of the person, she could have known about his difficulties only through inference from his behaviour or from what he said or from what other people were saying. From the description given or rather not given by DeLancey, it is even not clear whether the speaker was herself an inhabitant of the Red Lake settlement or of another village. From the way the speaker puts it, one can assume that she did not belong to the Red Lake settlement, but was an outsider. Otherwise, she could have said something like ‘our village/settlement/ commune’.

Sentences c. and e., by contrast, are based upon the speaker’s almost exclusively personal and immediate observation. This observation was not shared with the community, as there were only the two guards, the nomad, and the speaker, the latter being further immediately involved as a translator – and this apparently not against her will, hence the marker for self-involved knowledge for her own activity in sentence d.

What is quite intriguing is the different presentation of the same fact in sentences g. and h. In sentence g. with the copula *yin* for self-involved knowledge, she apparently focuses on the fact that *in her life*, it was the first time she saw a human head (without the body). When resuming the situation, she apparently shifts the focus from her own life experience to a more abstract description of the observation as the first one, using accordingly a third person or outsider perspective. While I cannot read the mind of a speaker, especially not in a fragmentary second-hand representation, I would nevertheless assume that with this shift of perspective, the speaker also tries to regain some distance to her erstwhile feelings of horror.

Far from being a ‘neutral’ representation of the facts as mere facts, the choice of a so-called ‘factual’ marker indicates the speaker’s personal assessment of the situation as not being part of her personal sphere or territory of information, as not being immediately observed (only) by herself, or as not being part of what she likes to remember. If the function of the so-called ‘factual’ markers here is to show her non-involvement or her emotional distance or also the fact that she deals with a situation that is or was widely known among the speech community or that she only has indirectly knowledge of, then these markers are not neutral, at all. They may not specify a particular type of knowledge access, but they specify or accentuate the speaker’s distanced or pragmatically hedged stance or attitude towards the conveyed information and towards the addressee. As such, the markers contrast sharply with the ‘egophoric’ markers, which not only indicate that the speaker has immediate access, but also the highest epistemic rights and the highest commitment to that particular knowledge.

4.5.3 *Shared observations*

Anderson (1986: 277) observes:

When the claimed fact is directly observable by both speaker and hearer, evidentials are rarely used (or have a special emphatic or surprisal sense).

It is thus no surprise that Yliniemi (2021: 274) states with respect to the South Tibetan language Denjongke:

[The neutral copula *sbad*] can be used, for instance, when the speaker and the addressee share the same visual experience at the moment of speech, and, therefore, it would be redundant for the speaker to use an evidential to make explicit how the information was received. [...] The term “neutral” [...] derives from the Denjongke system where neutrality is defined as absence of sensorialness and personalness.

- (46) Denjongke (Yliniemi 2021: 290f., ex. 7.53 a/b)
di k'ola_tsu t'ika bε? / *du?*
 this clothing_PL dirty NTR.COP SENS.EX
 ‘These clothes are dirty (/ I see).’

Yliniemi (2021: 291) comments:

One context for saying (7.53a) [with *bε?*] rather than (7.53b) [with *du?*] is when the sensory experience where [!] the knowledge acquired **is shared by the speaker and the addressee**. In these cases, there is no need to base one’s assertion with [!] an evidential.

- (47) Denjongke (Yliniemi 2021: 291, ex. 7.56 b/c)
εiŋ di na do kε:p(o) du? / *bε?*
 field_DEM.EMPH.LOC stone much SENS.EX NTR.COP
 ‘There are a lot of stones in the field. / The stones in the field are many.’

Yliniemi (2021: 291) comments:

(7.56b) [with *du?*] would be said by someone who has just seen the field for the first time (or after a very long time) as a comment to someone else who does/did not share the same experience. Example (7.56c) [with *bε?*], in contrast, featuring the general neutral copula *bε?*, can be said by someone who has never seen the field before **to an accompanying friend who also sees the field**. In this case, the sensory evidential *du?* is not needed, because the knowledge is mutual (they both see the field). Furthermore, (7.56c) could also be said in a situation where the speaker has knowledge about the field from before (old knowledge) but wants to, for some reason, distance himself from the epistemically more committed copula *jə?*, which would imply personalness of knowledge.

An interesting case is reported by Tribur for the Amdowa dialect of Gcig.sgril. Here the use of the ‘allophoric marker’ for the speaker’s own activity implies that it is observable to the addressee. Tribur uses the term ‘egophoric factual’ and ‘allophoric factual’ for a complex construction with the nominaliser *na* plus copula *yin* or *red*, which may correspond to a present perfect with a possible present continuous side function. In order to avoid misunderstandings about the notion

of 'factual', this form shall be glossed here FX. The plain copula *red* is called 'non-evidential' 'allophoric' in Tribur's terminology, corresponding thus to 'neutral' elsewhere. Whatever the terminology, the 'allophoric factual' is used in place of the 'egophoric factual' for a statement concerning the speaker.

(48) Dialect of Gcig.sgril (Amdo) (Tribur 2019: 114, ex. 68, adapted)

ŋi jɿɣe bɕi-ko-nare.

I.ERG letter write-PROG-FX.ALLO

'I'm writing a letter (**as you can see**).'

A similar avoidance of the experiential marker has been observed in Ladakhi. The specification of sensory input is likewise obsolete or seen as inappropriate by many speakers, as long as one does not need to draw the attention of the addressee to the situation. In the context of commenting the tallness of a person seen by both speaker and addressee, one informant further explained that if she looks at that person together with the addressee, she cannot be sure that the addressee shares her impression (Tagmacikpa, field data 2022; cf. also Zeisler 2023: 94–98 for shared observations, 98–99 for shared activities).

4.5.4 *red as indication of respect and usage in formal settings*

In Standard Spoken Tibetan as described by Tournadre & Sangda Dorje (1998), the 'factual' copula seems to indicate some sort of respect in the presence of a higher-ranking person, whereas the 'egophoric' copula is apparently used more freely for persons of a lower status.

Tournadre & Sangda Dorje do not comment upon the different usages in the following examples. However, one may observe that in example (49), the first speaker (Lōsaŋ) asks about an obviously elder person and the second speaker (Dølkār) introduces this person as her father. The latter's status is higher, with respect to both speakers, and hence both use the 'factual' marker *red*. The higher status of the person introduced is also indicated by the honorific marker *-la'* and the honorific 3rd person pronoun *khōŋ*. Dølkār further introduces the first speaker Lōsaŋ to her father as a friend, using again the honorific pronoun and the 'factual' marker, which may indicate some kind of (respectful) distance. The context seems to indicate that Lōsaŋ is not a very close friend, otherwise, he might have already known Dølkār's father or he would have known that he was going to be introduced to Dølkār's father. In both cases, he would not have asked.

(49) Standard Spoken Tibetan (Tournadre & Sangda Dorje 1998: 77, adapted)

khōŋ sū re'?' – ŋɛ: pāla' re'.

hon.s/he who be.FACT – I.GEN father.hon be.FACT

pāla', khōŋ ŋɛ: tʰokpo lōsaŋ-la' re'.

father.hon hon.s/he I.GEN friend Lōsaŋ-hon be.FACT

khōŋ t̪āci-la'-ki phu re'.

hon.s/he Tāši-hon-GEN son be.FACT

[Lōsaŋ:] 'Who **is** he?' – [Dølkār:] 'He **is** my father. Father, this **is** my friend Lōsaŋ. He **is** Tāši's son.'

In example (50), the first speaker, the same Lōsaŋ, introduces his French friend to his father, using the 'factual' marker *red* and the honorific pronoun *khōŋ*, as it seems, out of respect for the foreign friend – or perhaps also out of respect for the father. The second speaker is Lōsaŋ's father, and, by virtue of his age, he is much higher in status than the addressee, his son's

friend. Old-fashioned as the father seems to be, he refers with *yin* to his wife, who, alas!, traditionally has a lower status, equally indicated by the lack of the honorific marker *-la*[?] and by a demonstrative pronoun instead of a (±honorific) personal pronoun.

- (50) Standard Spoken Tibetan (Tournadre & Sangda Dorje 1998: 191/192, adapted)
- | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|---------------|---------------|------------------------|--------------|
| <i>tāci</i> | <i>tēle</i> [?] | <i>pāla</i> [?] | <i>khōŋ</i> | <i>ŋɛ:</i> | <i>ʈhokpo</i> | <i>mi:ɛe:</i> | <i>re</i> [?] | – |
| fortune | auspicious | father.hon | hon.s/he | I.GEN | friend | Michel | be.FACT | |
| ... | <i>ŋɛ:</i> | <i>miŋ-la</i> | <i>tāci</i> [?] | <i>ser-kijø</i> [?] | <i>t̥i</i> | <i>ŋɛ:</i> | <i>tawo</i> | <i>jin</i> . |
| | I.GEN | name-ALL | Ṭaši [?] | say-EGO.PRS | this | I.GEN | wife | be.EGO |
- [Lōsaŋ:] ‘Blessings, father. He **is** my friend Michel.’ – [Ṭaši[?]:] ‘... My name is Ṭaši[?]. This is my wife.’

In example (51), the speaker appears to be of the same age group as the addressee – despite the fact that he bears the same name as the father in (50). As a more modern man, he introduces his wife with *re*[?], using also the honorific personal pronoun *khōŋ* and an apparently more formal designation, while using *jin* and a demonstrative pronoun for his little daughter, although the question about the child was formulated with *re*[?]. The form of the question thus seems to be irrelevant.

With the use of *re*[?], the speaker apparently downplays his or her epistemic authority (or ‘possession’) vis-à-vis a respected person, while the use of *jin* may, by contrast, signal that there is, for whatever reason, no need for such a distanced attitude or that one is in complete control (or possession) of the other.

- (51) Standard Spoken Tibetan (Tournadre & Sangda Dorje 1998: 197/198)
- | | | | | | |
|--------------|----------------------------|---------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| <i>khōŋ</i> | <i>ŋɛ:</i> | <i>kyēnen</i> | <i>re</i> [?] | ... | – |
| hon.s/he | I.GEN | spouse | be.FACT | | |
| <i>phumo</i> | <i>təhuŋteuŋ</i> | <i>the</i> | <i>sū</i> | <i>re</i> [?] [?] | – |
| girl | little | that | who | be.FACT | |
| <i>the</i> | <i>ŋaŋi²-ki</i> | <i>phumo</i> | <i>jin</i> . | | |
| that | we.two-GEN | girl | be.EGO | | |
- [Ṭaši[?]:] ‘She **is** my spouse ...’ – [Michel:] ‘Who **is** that little girl?’ – [Ṭaši[?]:] ‘That is our daughter.’

In the context of an evaluation of another article, one of the reviewers remarked that the use of *red* would not be a sign of polite downgrading, but would simply represent or ‘assert’ the situation as a ‘fact’. The use of *yin*, by contrast, would be either emphatic or would indicate that the speaker is quite possessive (cf. also Agha 1993: 176 for the notion of a “possessor perspective” or a pragmatic foregrounding of the relationship between the speaker and his/her daughter). The particular notion of ‘emphatic’, however, was not further specified by the reviewer. Whatever its exact function, the copula *yin* is certainly referring to, or asserting, a fact (and not a hypothesis or a dream or a wish). Given the use of the non-honorific forms in combination with *yin*, I think one can rule out an emphatic or engaged usage of *yin* that might indicate one’s greater attachment to the person in question. A possessive stance, however, fits well with the use of the non-honorific forms. The elderly man apparently treats his wife as his ‘possession’ and so does the younger man with respect to his child. By contrast, the first speaker talks about her father in a less possessive, less attached, or, if one wants so, more neutral manner, and so does the younger man with respect to his wife. I would think that this more detached or less possessive way of speaking is certainly

more respectful than the possessive stance. Whatever the notion of 'factual' is supposed to mean (if it does mean anything, at all), one should always look for the motivation behind using a more 'factual'/'neutral' or detached expression in contrast to a less 'neutral' or more engaged/ affective expression.

A related issue is the genre of refrained speech in official settings. Be it a contribution in an official gathering or be it an official interview, the speaker may feel the obligation to downgrade his or her epistemic stance, and thus use the 'neutral' or 'factual' marker for him/herself.

(52) Dialect of Gcig.sgril (Amdo) (Tribur 2019: 148, ex. 86, adapted)

n̄i n̄ima ɣ̄ni-kə lam-a ʃta zon-n̄are.

I.ERG day two-GEN road-LOC horse ride-FX.ALLO

'I rode a horse for two days.' (**Official interview, downplaying** one's epistemic authority.)

Tribur comments the usage as follows:

Even though the speaker/assertor is the agent of the controllable action verb 'ride', the *speaker has chosen to downplay the assertor's role* in the event and highlight the factuality of the assertion by marking it as allophoric. In fact, the use of allophoric marking with an action event clause with a volitional assertor participant is unusual. In the case of (86), the factual allophoric marking corresponds to a *formal register used in official interviews*, but even so, it is likely that the reason allophoric marking has such formal connotations is because of the effect it has of presenting an egophorically neutral perspective (emphasis added).

It may thus similarly be a case of respectful downgrading when a speaker addresses his/her interlocutor in a question about the latter's possessions with the 'factual' or 'neutral' marker. It seems to indicate that the addressee is not taken to be responsible. In the Standard European languages, a similar downgrading would be achieved by the use of a modal verb.

(53) Dialect of Gcig.sgril (Amdo) (Tribur 2019: 82, ex. 34, adapted)

tə c^hu k^hapar ə-re?

DF you.GEN phone QM-ALLO.COP

'Is that your phone?' Or perhaps rather: '**Could** that **be** your phone?'

(54) Lhasa Tibetan (Agha 1993: 183., ex. 30, adapted)

t̄i kh̄are r̄ē:ʔ / ʃi:ʔ

this what be-IMPERS.COP be-PERS.COP

'What **is** this? / What **is** this (thing of yours)? [What do you use it for?]

As Agha (1993: 184) comments, *red* is used, as one may say: neutrally, without implicating any relationship (of possession or responsibility, etc.) between the object and the addressee, while *yin* not only foregrounds this relationship, but also implies a more specific interest: *what do you use it for?* – This seems to be a more intrusive question, particularly if one has no close relationship with the addressee.

4.5.5 *Absence or distance of the person or item talked about*

In Denjongke as well as in various Ladakhi dialects, the choice between the 'egophoric' and the 'neutral' copula for identifications and property ascriptions based on one's pre-existing

knowledge depends also on the presence or absence of the person talked about. That is, when the person is present, the ‘egophoric’ copula will be used, but when the person is absent or if s/he has left the room, the ‘neutral’ marker will be used.

- (55) a. Denjongke (Yliniemi 2021: 289f, ex. 7.50 a/b, adapted)
k^hõ: *tɕ^higɛ:bo* *ĩ:* / *bɛ?*
 hon.s/he foreigner PERS.COP NTR.COP
 ‘He’s a foreigner (referent present / **referent in photo**).’
- b. Denjongke (Yliniemi 2021: 290, ex. 7.51 a/b, adapted)
di *k^hoŋ_{gi}* *k^him* *ĩ:* / *bɛ?*
 this hon.s/he_GEN house PERS.COP NTR.COP
 ‘This is his house (owner present / **owner absent**).’

Unlike in Standard Spoken Tibetan and examples (49)–(51) above, the use of the ‘egophoric’ copula in Denjongke and similarly in Ladakhi³⁰ seems to be a sign of respect towards the person talked about. Yliniemi (2021: 290) likens this to the observation by Chang & Chang (1984: 609) that *red* may indicate “emotional distance”³¹ and to Häslers’s (1999: 151) opposition between *yin* and *red* as marking “strong” and “weak empathy”.

Tournadre & Sangda Dorje (1998: 205) present an example that might also point to an effect of distance. The speaker shows his home to his friend. The latter had asked about the identity of the first room. The speaker identifies this as his (and his wife’s) sleeping room using the copula *yin*. All further rooms are identified by using the ‘factual’ copula *red*. It is possible that in the first case, the speaker emphasises that this is *his* (and his wife’s) room – in contrast to that of his children etc., and that he wants to signal a certain attachment. Another possibility might be, that in the first statement, the copula *yin* serves as a firm assertion, while the subsequent identifications are additional information, and thus somewhat attenuated. However, it might also be the case that the copula *yin* is triggered by standing inside the room in question, while *red* is used when the speaker is merely pointing to the other rooms. The Tibetan text has the proximate demonstrative pronoun *t̪i* for all rooms. The translations, however, do, in fact, differentiate: *c’est* or *it’s* for the first room vs. *ça c’est* and *that’s* for the other rooms (Tournadre & Sangda Dorje 1998: 206; for the English version see Tournadre & Sangda Dorje 2003: 234). The different factors could possibly also combine. Unfortunately for a textbook, the shift from *yin* to *red* remains again uncommented.

³⁰ In Ladakhi, the main point seems to be whether or not the third person can hear or understand what is said about him/her. If that is not the case, e.g., because s/he is a foreigner, who does not speak the language, the counterpart of *red* can be used neutrally. It is not a sign of disrespect. However, a person who hears that s/he is talked about in this way may get the impression that s/he is treated like a thing or, even worse, like a beggar (Zeisler 2023: 83).

³¹ But cf. example (26) above. Chang & Chang’s further observation that *red* would be used for a dead father, while *yin* would be used when the father is alive, certainly needs some qualification, as examples (49)–(51) above indicate. Furthermore, Chang & Chang’s example is a case of recognition, not of introducing or pointing out, and there are also other motivations at play.

(56) Standard Spoken Tibetan (Tournadre & Sangda Dorje 1998: 205, adapted)

tɛ: *khare* *rɛʔ*, *ɲɛ:kaŋ* *mɛn-ʈo.* –
that what be.FACT bedroom NG.be-PROB
t̪i *ŋaŋi²-ki* *ɲɛ:kaŋ* *jin.*
this we.both-GEN bedroom be
tha *theneʔ* *t̪i* *pūkutsø:* *ɲɛ:-sa* *rɛʔ.*
now then this child.PL.GEN sleep-place be.FACT
t̪i *[h̄ykaŋ]* *rɛʔ.* *t̪i* *[h̄hōkaŋ]* *rɛʔ.*
this wash.room be.FACT this shrine.room be.FACT

[Michel:] ‘What **is** that? Maybe (Lit. Might that not be) a bedroom?’ – [Tashi] ‘**It’s** our bedroom. Now then, this/ that one **is** the room where the children sleep. This/ That one **is** the bathroom. This/ That one **is** the shrine room.’³²

4.5.6 *Too ‘subjective’ to be a fact? On ‘subjective’ vs. ‘objective’ connotations*

The use of the ‘egophoric’ markers is not infrequently described as having a personal or ‘subjective’ note. The ‘factual’ markers (as well as the sensorial markers) would then automatically have a more ‘objective’ note, see also the crosslinguistic definitions of ‘factual’, discussed p. 10 above. The two terms, ‘subjective’ and ‘objective’, are, of course, open to different interpretations. One could assume that a more ‘subjective’ stance would be more hedged or more drawn back, in the sense of *in my humble opinion, as far as I know*, or in the sense of *I’m not telling you, I’m only suggesting*, and the like. The idea of an ‘objective’ stance would then, by contrast, indicate generally accepted knowledge and thus the highest degree of truth and/ or likelihood or certainty. ‘Subjective’ could also mean that a speaker indicates his/her personal acquaintance, involvement, or possession. By yet another interpretation, a ‘subjective’ stance could go along with the claim to superior rights in describing or defining a situation. ‘Objective’ would then be associated with a more detached or impersonal stance, possibly also with a more humble, back-drawn stance.

The problem of interpretation can be illustrated with the following examples of a dispute between stepfather and stepchild, presented by Nicolas Tournadre in a recent workshop:

(57) a. Tournadre & Dickey Tsang Tsering Wangdue (2024, ex. 10a, adapted)

na *raŋ-gi* *a.pa* *jin.*
I fam.you-GEN father be.EGO

‘I **am** your father [I consider that I am your father, on the basis of my experiential knowledge].’

b. Tournadre & Dickey Tsang Tsering Wangdue (2024, ex. 10b, adapted)

na *raŋ-gi* *a.pa* *red.*
I fam.you-GEN father be.FACT

‘I **am** your father.’ (Statement “presented as **a fact**”.)

³²The French translation runs as: ‘Qu’est ce que c’est? C’est surement une chambre à coucher.’ – ‘C’est notre chambre. Ça, c’est la pièce où dorment les enfants. Ça, c’est la salle de bains. Ça, c’est l’oratoire.’ The English translation runs as: ‘What’s this? Maybe it’s a bedroom.’ – ‘It’s our bedroom. That’s the room where the children sleep. That’s the bathroom. That’s the shrine room.’

- (58) a. Tournadre & Dickey Tsang Tsering Wangdue (2024, ex. 11a, adapted)
khyed.rañ ñaḥi a.pa min.
 fam.you I.GEN father NG.be.EGO
 ‘You are not my father [i.e., “I don’t consider you as my father (from now on)”].’ (Statement “based on experiential knowledge”.)
- b. Tournadre & Dickey Tsang Tsering Wangdue (2024, ex. 11b, adapted)
khyed.rañ ñaḥi a.pa ma.red.
 fam.you I.GEN father NG.be.FACT
 ‘You **are not** my father [it is **a fact**].’ (“Factual knowledge, answer to the stepfather”.)

Without further context, and a “real life” example, it is not immediately apparent what the difference should be, and how the notion of ‘experiential knowledge’ agrees with the decisive character of (58) a., ‘I don’t consider you as my father (from now on)’. Unless ‘inner feeling’ is meant, such spontaneous decision is not a question of ‘experiential knowledge’; it is possibly not knowledge at all. But if we take the argument further, the two sentences do not contrast an experience with a non-experience, but the *presentation* of a fact or assessment as mere (?) experience (or rather: ‘subjective’ ingrained knowledge?) and the *presentation* of the same as a plain (?) fact. In the discussion, Tournadre described the use of the ‘egophoric’ copula as being a “subjective” statement, emphasising again the decisive tone in the case of the child. As a result, the ‘factual’ mode should then correspond to a more ‘objective’ and thus a less decisive stance, as hinted also in the gloss in (58) b. When asked whether ‘subjective’ could mean some kind of hedging, Tournadre rejected such an interpretation; both statements would have the same epistemic force.

If the question of ‘subjective’ and ‘objective’ is not about hedging vs. generally accepted knowledge, and if the ‘egophoric’ marker in the child’s statement in (58) a. is about defining the future relationship, then it is a high-stake claim of epistemic authority in defining the relationship with the addressee, as was the earlier claim by the father in (57) a. In both cases, there could be a connotation of ‘I know best, better than you’ or a connotation of ‘this is it, you have to accept it, end of discussion’. By contrast, a more ‘objective’ rendering might concede that the addressee knows equally well, which in the case of the child’s rejection of the stepfather’s claim might go along the line of ‘You are not my father, and you know it well, so don’t tell me such and such!’ or of ‘You are not my father, as everybody knows, thus stop bothering me!’ One could expect some further comment, such as the ones just outlined, with the more ‘objective’ ‘factual’ stance. There could be also a more positive continuation, such as ‘but I think your advice is good’. By contrast, in the case of the ‘subjective’ decisive stance, this could well be the end of any discussion, followed by a smashing of doors, if not worse.

One might also say that the more ‘subjective’ stance conveyed by the ‘egophoric’ markers tends to be more emotional, perhaps also more spontaneous, and that the more ‘objective’ stance conveyed by the ‘factual’ markers is more cooled down and more reasoned. One could further expect that the more ‘objective’ or detached stance is socially more adequate in some contexts, particularly when the addressee is likewise somehow involved, while the ‘egophoric’ markers may still be the neutral or most common choice in other contexts. Admittedly, this is all speculation, as I try to make sense of Tournadre’s descriptions, which are given without any further context (e.g., how the statements might be followed up by the respective speaker or the addressee).

In Ladakhi by contrast, the GEM as the ‘factual’ counterpart would signal a father’s insistence upon his domestic dominance and a boy’s aggressive rejection of the same by treating the

father like a stranger (field data 2024). Such questions are not so much questions of knowledge access but questions of social conventions and pragmatics in the communicative interaction.

4.6 Motivations of self-distancing

4.6.1 Non-volitionality and non-involvement

It is well known that in Tibetan, verbs that describe situations that nobody can control, such as falling or forgetting, cannot take the 'egophoric' markers. In such cases, *red* necessarily replaces the auxiliary copula *yin*, without turning the situation into a mere 'fact'. This replacement may also happen, when the speaker denies his or her active involvement in a particular activity. One such example has been frequently cited from Chang & Chang (1980):

- (59) a. Standard Spoken Tibetan (Chang & Chang 1980: 17, adapted)

ŋɛ̀ lhēēsāā chī-pajīl̄.
I.ERG Lhasa.ALL go.PST-EGO.PST

'I went to Lhasa [that is, by my own decision].'

- b. Standard Spoken Tibetan (Chang & Chang 1980: 17, adapted)

ŋa lhēēsā: chī-parè.
I Lhasa.ALL go.PST-IND.PST

'I went to Lhasa (for example, when I was small; i.e. I **was taken there**).' (Cf. Garrett 2001: 42, ex. 20.)

In such cases, we certainly deal with assimilated knowledge, but the contrast with an expectable 'egophoric' marker signals a marked usage, the lack of intention or control, not just the 'neutral' presentation of the situation as ('objective') 'fact'. The 'factual' marker may also indicate that the speaker does not have any particular memory about the situation and just knows about it from an outside perspective.

- (60) Standard Spoken Tibetan (Tournadre 1994: 157, ex. 10, adapted)

ña lo gsum skabs-la rgya.gar-la phyin-pa.red.
I year 3 occasion-ALL India-ALL go.PST-ASSERTIVE[=FACT].PST³³

'I have been to India when I was three years old (**but I don't remember the journey**).'³⁴

Oisel (2017) gives two examples that demonstrate the lack of volition or intentionality on the part of the speaker. In example (61), the speaker had been left waiting for the addressee and now shows her embarrassment. In example (62), speaker B is forced to stay and agrees to do so, but indicates that this is against his or her will.

- (61) Standard Spoken Tibetan (Oisel 2017: 115, ex. 74, adapted)

tshēriŋ khare tshē²soŋ ŋɛ[?] kārma maŋpo ku²-pare²-ta:
Tshering what do.PST-SENS.PST I.ERG minutes a.lot wait-FACT.PST-QT

'Tshering! What happened? I waited/have been waiting [or rather: I've **been left** waiting] for you a long time, eh?' '(My girlfriend is **scolding** me)'

³³ Tournadre (2008: 296, n. 33) explicitly clarifies his use of terminology: "I have so far used the term assertive [...] but I now prefer to use the term 'factual'."

³⁴ « je suis allé en Inde quand j'avais trois ans (et je ne me souviens pas du voyage) »

- (62) Standard Spoken Tibetan (Oisel 2017: 115, ex. 75, adapted)

[A:] *rəŋ tɕʰ!* –
you stay.IMP

[B:] *ŋa tɕʰ-kimɛn; mu-koʰ.* –
I stay-NG.EGO.FUT NG-want

[A:] *rəŋ tɕʰ!* –
you stay.IMP

[B:] *jaja, ŋɛʰ tɕʰ-kireʰ.*
alright I.ERG stay-FACT.FUT

‘[A:] ‘You! Stay!’ – [B:] ‘I won’t stay. I don’t want.’ – [A:] - ‘Stay!’ (Threatening voice) – [B:] ‘Okay! Okay! I **will** stay.’ (**Frightened voice**)

A speaker’s self-distanced usage of the relevant marker, indicating absence of volition or absence of identification with the situation, has been described also for Shigatse by Haller (2000b):

- (63) Shigatse (Haller 2000b: 187, ex. 34a)

ŋa ʔtā-jie lāptɕà piè!
I now-FOC student be.NVOL (ANEGO)

‘I **am** still a student!’ (The speaker **does not want to be** a student any more.)

4.6.2 Conditional hedging

The ‘factual’ marker also appears for statements about oneself and one’s plans, when they depend on certain conditions. According to Agha (1993: 189), the condition should better be spelled out.

- (64) Lhasa Tibetan (Agha 1993: 188, ex. 33c/ 189, ex. 34, adapted)

ʔ(khō̃:-qiʰ ŋa: khuqap tɕʰ-na,) ŋa lɛ:ka ʃhi-ki.reʰ.
hon.s/he-ERG I.ALL chance give-CD I work do-IMPERS.FUT

‘?(If he gives me the opportunity,) I’ll do the work (**depending** on conditions/ on this condition).’

4.6.3 Non-identification or looking at oneself from outside

In other cases, where the ‘factual’ marker *-pa.red* is used instead of the ‘egophoric’ marker *-pa.yin*, the contrast between what could have been expected and what is used signals some kind of non-identification with the situation or one’s earlier behaviour, and thus an outside perspective on oneself. This could be a context of regret, self-blaming, or perhaps also (positive) astonishment about one’s earlier non-conforming behaviour. Such a marked stance cannot be described as presenting the situation ‘neutrally’ as a mere ‘fact’. Rather, the speaker indicates that there was some deviation from normal behaviour and presents the situation as if it were related to another person or as if s/he were looking upon him/herself from outside.

- (65) Standard Spoken Tibetan (Oisel 2017: 119, ex. 85, adapted)

ŋa khō̃ntro laŋ-tyʰ ŋɛʰ phumpa ti ʃāʰ-pareʰ.
I anger rise-when I.ERG vase this break-FACT.PST

‘I [**stupidly**] broke this vase when I was angry.’

(66) Dialect of Dege (Häsler 2001: 16, ex. 37, adapted)

ŋɛ kho dḡ:-zĩ rɛ:
I.ERG s/he-ABS hit-PFV be (ANEGO)

'I hit her.' ("The speaker **cannot really remember** having done so." The speaker may say this "after having lost her temper, to imply that she cannot remember what she has done in her rage.")

This example could be alternatively explained as a situation where the speaker did not pay attention to his/her action, acted with less control or uncontrolled, or at least with lowered intentions. This is at least the description given by Oisel (2017: 118) for example (65) above. He adds that in such situations, the use of the 'egophoric' marker is inappropriate or incorrect.

4.6.4 *Emphatic assertions*

Oisel (2017) points to a particular emphatic usage of the 'factual' markers in cases where the 'egophoric' markers would be expected for a neutral, informative statement about oneself. However, in the examples given, the statement is not simply a detached way of stating how the situation is, but through the contrast with the expected, informationally neutral 'egophoric' statement, the speaker signals his or her insistence on the performance through "presenting it as a specific or well-known fact" (Oisel 2017: 110). One might say that by presenting the information *as if* already known by the addressee, the speaker urges the addressee to accept and believe the reported situation together with the implied side-notations of courage (or heroism) or non-conventional (bohemian) behaviour. Such instances, but only these, would conform to DeLancey's (2018: 583) description that the speaker "asks the addressee to simply take [the claim] as given".

The above explanation holds particularly for example (67) a. (Oisel's example 53), whereas in the case of example (68) a. (Oisel's example 55), we deal with an instance of knowledge already shared with the addressee. The motivation for using the 'factual' marker might thus be much less emphatic, as the addressee might have signalled friendly curiosity, and the speaker might have answered accordingly. Alternatively, the speaker may have reacted more emotionally to a statement of disbelief or even criticism. Without more context or the speakers' explanations of their choices, this cannot be decided.

(67) a. Lhasa Tibetan (Oisel 2017: 109, ex. 53, adapted)

lɔ 1998 ŋɔ daramsala-la tɛh[ĩ]n³⁵-pare?
year 1998 I Dharamsala-ALL go.PST-FACT.PST

'I *did* go to Dharamsala in 1998. [**Believe me, I took the risk**; it was forbidden.]' ("In this example the speaker i[s] making a provocative statement to his addressee and to focus [!] on the dangerousness of his act.")

b. Lhasa Tibetan (Oisel 2017: 109, ex. 54, adapted)

ŋɔ l̄asa-la tɛh[ĩ]n-pajin.
I Lhasa-ALL go.PST-EGO.PST

'I went to Lhasa.' ("[T]he speaker tells his addressees, who[] had not seen him for a while, what he has been up to".)

³⁵ Throughout his article, Oisel transcribes this verb with low tone: "chĩn". However, given the written form *phyin*, the verb should have high tone; and it is listed with high tone in Bielmeyer & al. (2018: 208b).

- (68) a. Lhasa Tibetan (Oisel 2017: 109, ex. 55, adapted)
re². ŋɔni² fʰāŋsa kjap-jo:mare².
 be.FACT we.two marriage engage.in.PST-NG.FACT.PRF
 ‘Correct! We *aren’t* married [**whether you believe it or not**].’ Or:
 ‘Yes, [**as you say/ assume**] we are not married.’ ([T]he speaker insists on the fact he did not get married to the girl in question even if people cannot believe it”. Or: The speaker was asked to confirm.)
- b. Lhasa Tibetan (Oisel 2017: 110, ex. 56, adapted)
ŋɔni² fʰāŋsa kjap-me².
 we.two marriage engage.in.PST-NG.EGO.PRF
 ‘We aren’t married (unfortunately).’ (The speaker informs neutrally without being asked to confirm.)

5 Implications

Although the data are still quite fragmentary, I should think that I was able to demonstrate the following linguistic facts:

1. The so-called ‘factual’ markers do not only, and not even in the majority of their applications, refer to general facts, not to speak of *generic* facts.
2. The so-called ‘factual’ markers are not only used to refer to established, real facts, but are also commonly used to refer to merely possible and sometimes even impossible situations or to mere imagination or fiction.
3. The so-called ‘factual’ markers are not neutral in the sense that they would be the most natural way of representing facts irrespective of the *origo’s* knowledge base. They are particularly not a *morpheme zero* that encompasses all functions of the marked counterpart(s), especially not in relation to the ‘egophoric’ markers. That is, whenever the so-called ‘factual’ markers are used instead of an ‘egophoric’ marker, this yields a marked meaning shift. As long as the ‘egophoric’ markers are the default choice for the representation of one’s own activities, the non-default use of the ‘factual’ markers signals that something is ‘wrong’, e.g., that there is a lack of memory or certainty (epistemic hedging) or a lack of volitionality or responsibility or authority, including the lacking right to represent a family member or friend as one’s possession (pragmatic hedging). Other marked usages indicate an outside perspective on one-self, e.g., in cases of regret (subjective hedging). Finally, through the contrast with the expected default use of an ‘egophoric’ marker, the ‘factual’ markers may signal that the situation is in some way not as usual, and thus may signal indirectly also a stance of proud defiance.

While it is true that the ‘factual’ markers *red* and *yod.pa.red* (and their regional counterparts) are commonly *used for* generic knowledge, this is by far not their only function. Most importantly, both markers are *used for* ‘indirect’ knowledge about individual situations, be it *for* inferences and assumptions or be it *for* unspecific second-hand knowledge.

I should further think that when used to express generally known facts, including historical and mythical facts of oral tradition, the markers in all likelihood do not signal that the “speaker feels no need to justify the claim, and asks the addressee to simply take it as given”, as DeLancey

(2018: 583) suggests. Neither is the speaker the only one to know about these facts, nor is the addressee necessarily ignorant about these facts. The speaker is further not responsible for the facts or in any particular way more related to them than the addressee or the rest of the speech community. The speaker thus has no particular rights to represent these facts with such indisputable authority. The only instances where DeLancey's description holds are emphatic assertions about oneself as a reaction to asserted (or merely assumed) disbelief, see section 4.6.4.

The common view among the scholars of modern Tibetic languages that the speaker simply states the fact authoritatively without any epistemic or evidential connotation – just like an indicative statement in a Standard European language without any epistemic hedging – seems to reflect the way we Standard Europeans use to talk and treat our addressees. We are used to talk from an authoritative stance, telling everybody, especially those who we think to be below us (children, women, lower class people), how the world is, and expect them to take this as given, although we are able to talk more cautiously, and do so in one or the other situation. Speakers of other societies may nevertheless have the feeling that it is imposturous and impolite to present generally known facts from an authoritative stance and may thus present these facts in a much less authoritative way *as if* one were not fully sure or rather: *as if* one had only second-hand knowledge, which is how generic facts actually should be treated, if language use would follow logic.

The so-called 'factual' markers are 'indirect' markers in the sense that they refer to both inferences or assumptions and unspecific hearsay knowledge. While the quote marker emphasises that the speaker assumes no epistemic authority at all over the quoted information, the 'factual' markers possibly indicate that the speaker has integrated the information into his/her knowledge base and thus assumes some kind of low epistemic authority. This is what happens in Ladakhi, where an 'indirect' marker for inferences also covers unspecific hearsay. One speaker described the reason for not using a quote marker with the words that it "is my perception" (Tagmacikpa, field data 2022). The epistemic authority has thus shifted in these cases from the reported speaker to the reporting speaker. Knowledge about generic facts could similarly be seen as a special case of unspecific hearsay, possibly with a less complete shift of epistemic authority.

Furthermore, the 'factual' forms appear neutrally in traditional narrations and tales, where they likewise may have a connotation of pragmatic hedging: *it's only a tale*, rather than indicating a strong believe in the veracity of the narrated events. In the case of history and legends, the markers would indicate that this is hearsay from hearsay from hearsay (oral tradition) and, at the same time, knowledge ideally shared by the whole community. Other pragmatic factors similarly lead to some kind of downgrading or pragmatic hedging, e.g., when the speaker wants to show his or her respect towards a person of higher rank. Pragmatic hedging may also underlie the usage of the 'factual' markers to indicate, particularly in Standard Spoken Tibetan, the speaker's lack of personal active or intentional involvement.

All factors may also combine, so that in any given utterance, there may be more than one motivation at play and it may be increasingly difficult to figure out what the speaker intended to signal. It further lies in the nature of pragmatic variation that the motivations for using this or that form depend on the context and vary accordingly up to the point that this may appear contradictory (*it's just a story, not necessarily true*, in the case of fairy tales vs. *it is shared knowledge and an established fact*, in the case of historical narratives).

As one can see in the Standard European languages, modal constructions (*I'd like, one should*, etc.) can be used as a strategy to downgrade one's epistemic authority for reasons of politeness. In such cases, the modal expressions do not convey any notion of uncertainty or disbelief. A

similar pragmatic factor may thus lie behind the use of *red* and *yod.red* when the speaker, in fact, has no epistemic authority, as in the case of generic facts and oral traditions, of situations outside his/her personal sphere, and, in some Tibetic languages, at least, also in the case of shared observations and shared activities.

Epistemic hedging, on the other hand, underlies the usage of the ‘factual’ markers for assumptions, and particularly in non-factual, that is, irrealis contexts.

Some authors have hinted at a hidden motivation behind the use of the ‘factual’ markers for oneself. Chang & Chang (1984: 609) mention ‘emotional distance’, while Agha (1993: 175) mentions that one may speak ‘impersonally’ about oneself. I should thus suggest that the ‘factual’ markers, far from stating an unquestionable fact, represent depersonalised knowledge or knowledge for which the speaker cannot, or does not want to, claim full or highest epistemic authority.

DeLancey (2018: 587–588) indirectly and involuntarily also points to a speaker’s attitude towards the fact and to the pragmatic downgrading in the communicative interaction when the addressee shares the knowledge:

Both narrative style and expression of generic knowledge are prominent functions of the form, but neither is in fact a basic meaning, which is simply the absence of any specification of source of knowledge. [...] Emphasizing the use of this form to express ‘generally known facts’ is thus misleading. It is used in that function, because, by definition, *one can always assume that one’s interlocutor shares one’s attitude toward such facts, and so their evidential status is not in question* (emphasis added).

This, however, is quite different from presenting a fact or situation from one’s own, private, self-involved perspective. In the latter case, the addressee is not expected to already share the knowledge and even less to share one’s own attitude towards the fact or situation.

I would think that no speaker of any Tibetic language could ‘ask the addressee to simply take as given’ any kind of general knowledge that (at least theoretically) could be known by the addressee or a wider group of compatriots. One of the reasons is that no speaker can claim privileged knowledge through active involvement or even responsibility for such facts. Such facts simply do not fall into the speaker’s territory of information. Presenting such general knowledge as unquestionable and claiming ‘ownership’ would be taken as presumptuous. It is, by contrast, exactly the ‘egophoric’ markers that turn the utterances into an unquestionable ‘matter of fact’ ‘owned’ by the speaker or belonging to his/her territory of information.

The insistence on neutrality or on factivity or general knowledge that we can come across in the literature on the Tibetic languages is based only on one particular pragmatic usage, namely the treatment of shared or shareable knowledge. It seems, however, that the implications of this type of context are not fully understood. In the case of shared knowledge, the speaker does not know better than the addressee does, there is no or only a minimal speaker-hearer asymmetry. In the case of shareable knowledge, a speaker may, and the speakers of Tibetic language apparently do, attenuate or minimise the asymmetry by talking in a downgraded manner. As either Daniel or Diane Hintz once said in a discussion, when presenting knowledge as if it were already mutual knowledge, the addressee is kindly invited rather than ordered to share the information presented by the speaker. For their concept of mutual knowledge, see Hintz & Hintz 2014/2017. One of my informants commented along similar lines about the use of the non-‘egophoric’/ ‘factual’ copula or GEM *intsuk* in the Ldumrapa dialect of Sumur. S/he said that she would feel freer to ask for further details, than when the speaker uses the ‘egophoric’ copula (see also Zeisler 2023: 99).

Unfortunately, the notion of 'engagement' (see Bergqvist & Kittilä 2020) or the question of speaker-hearer (a-)symmetries is only slowly gaining some relevance in the discussion of Tibetic 'evidentiality'. Nevertheless, as important as this function may be, it is only one of several pragmatic and epistemic functions.

Mélaç (2023, p.c. Dec. 2023) argues that the indirect usage is not semantically inherent to the 'factual' and that it therefore falls out of the epistemic-evidential categories. This is, to some extent, true synchronically, although the 'factual' markers might have started as indirect or epistemic markers.³⁶ Factuality, however, is likewise not semantically inherent but an implication when indirectness and other functions do not apply. Furthermore, by Mélaç's own criterion, 'egophoric' markers would likewise not belong to the epistemic-evidential categories, since the 'direct' knowledge component is not semantically inherent or at least not central. In my opinion, one should either treat both, the 'factual' and the 'egophoric' markers as being non-evidential (in the crosslinguistic sense) but modal or treat both as being an essential part of a knowledge-based system in the wider sense, say, pragmatically conditioned evidentiality or epistemicity.

I should rather side with Garrett, who analyses both *red* and *yod.red* as 'indirect' markers and as part of an 'evidential' system that also includes the *origo's* ego-centred knowledge as represented below in Figure 1. Although I am not particularly satisfied by the term 'indirect' for first-hand inferences, on the one hand, and for second-hand hearsay, on the other, it is clearly preferable to the, in my opinion, misleading classification as 'factual' or 'neutral'. Since the crosslinguistic category of 'indirect' knowledge is associated with connotations of comparatively strong epistemic hedging, one should perhaps qualify the respective Tibetic markers as *assertive indirect* (cf. Tournadre's 1994: 152 original 'indirect assertive'). The resulting unified 'evidential' system could be represented as in Figure 1, orange frame.³⁷ It would contain two subsystems, the 'egophoric' markers on the one hand and, on the other hand, the 'evidential' markers in a narrow, crosslinguistic ("c-l") sense, that is, 'direct' or experiential and 'indirect', that is, inferential, indirect assertive, *and* quotation. The epistemic markers would then constitute a separate modal category.

One could well conceive of the so-called 'factual' markers as indicating a kind of 'evidential' garbage bag for what is not (to be emphasised as) immediately perceived, for what is not (to be emphasised as) inferred upon sensory input, and for what is not (to be emphasised as) directly heard from somebody else. Like the epistemic markers, the assertive indirect markers would indicate a speaker's reduced commitment to the content, but in contrast to the epistemic markers, this reduced commitment would not be necessarily be associated with low certainty. One might also think of the 'factual' markers as markers of weak 'evidentiality' or as markers of pragmatic and slight epistemic hedging.

³⁶ As suggested elsewhere (Zeisler 2022: 52f.), *red* originally was a resultative verb, indicating that something became something else. Saying that something only *became X* appears to be less 'absolute' than saying something *is X*. Thus, *red* may have had some connotation of epistemic or pragmatic hedging from the very beginning of its use as a copula. That epistemic markers may develop into markers for shared and shareable knowledge to be used in explanations has been observed at least for the Ladakhi dialects. While functioning as inferential or assumptive and probability markers for individual situations, they lose their force of epistemic hedging when used for general and generic facts (Zeisler 2023).

³⁷ Frames of different colour are used to group together subsumable elements. Broad frames are used for main categories. Frames may overlap with other frames, as in the case of personal knowledge and non-personal information. Where the categories form a fundamental binary opposition, as in Figure 3, a red bar is added.

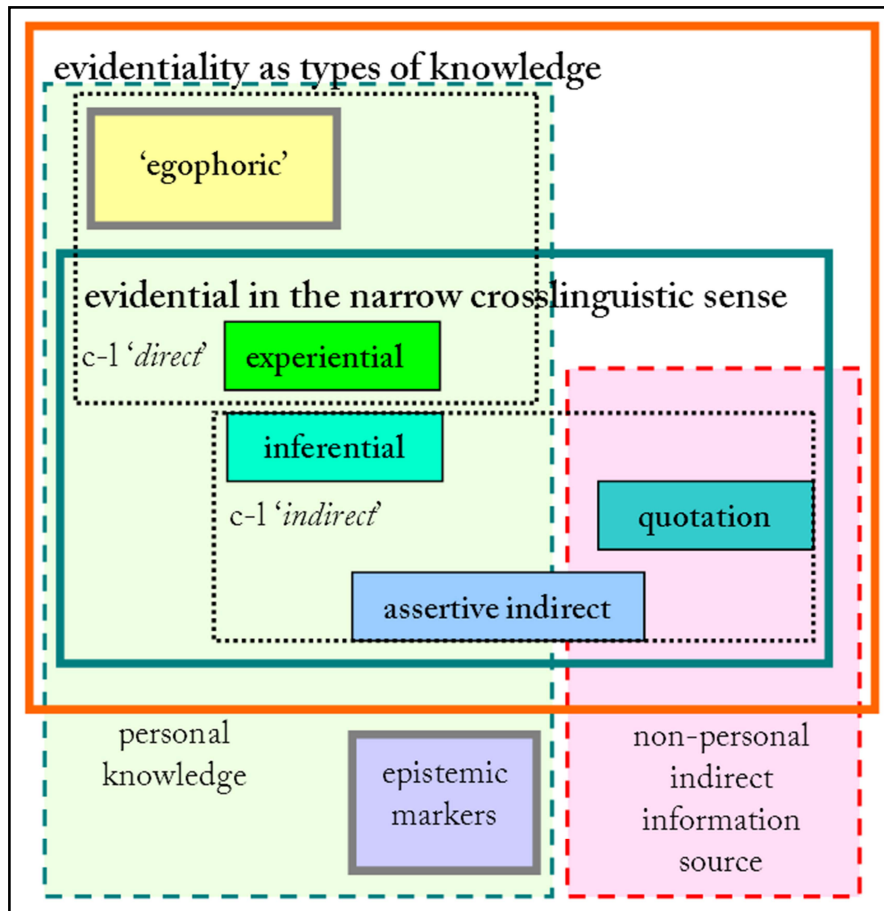


Figure 1 The unified 'evidential' cum 'egophoric' system

If, however, notions of epistemic and pragmatic hedging and irrealis mood are excluded from the definition of the 'factual' markers, in order to make them more factual, we encounter a problem that is usually not addressed: the 'factual' markers would have the same assertive force as the 'egophoric' markers – as has been claimed by Tournadre in the context of examples (57) and (58) in section 4.5.6 above. But then the question arises, why exactly would there be two different means of assertive marking. If the assertive force of the 'factual' markers were even stronger than that of the 'egophoric' markers, then the very special status of the latter cannot easily be explained. If, on the other hand, for various epistemic and pragmatic reasons, the assertive force of the 'factual' markers is somewhat weaker than that of the 'egophoric' markers, the very designation 'factual' is misleading.

A further problem, usually not addressed, is that when the 'factual' markers are described as 'evidentially neutral' and when they are seen as standing in opposition mainly to the 'egophoric' markers, then the latter cannot be 'evidential' markers either. Apart from the fact that the 'egophoric' markers fall outside the narrow crosslinguistic evidential categories, a system that contains two 'evidentially neutral' markers cannot be an 'evidential' system (by whatever definition), at all. At least one of these 'neutral' elements must be positively marked for some particular non-evidential function. One would thus need a higher order, possibly modal, category with three independent sub-categories, namely a) non-evidential 'egophoric' vs. 'non-egophoric' or 'allophoric' marking,

b) evidential marking in the narrow cross-linguistic sense, and c) the non-evidential epistemic markers of greater or lesser probability and/ or certainty, see Figure 2.

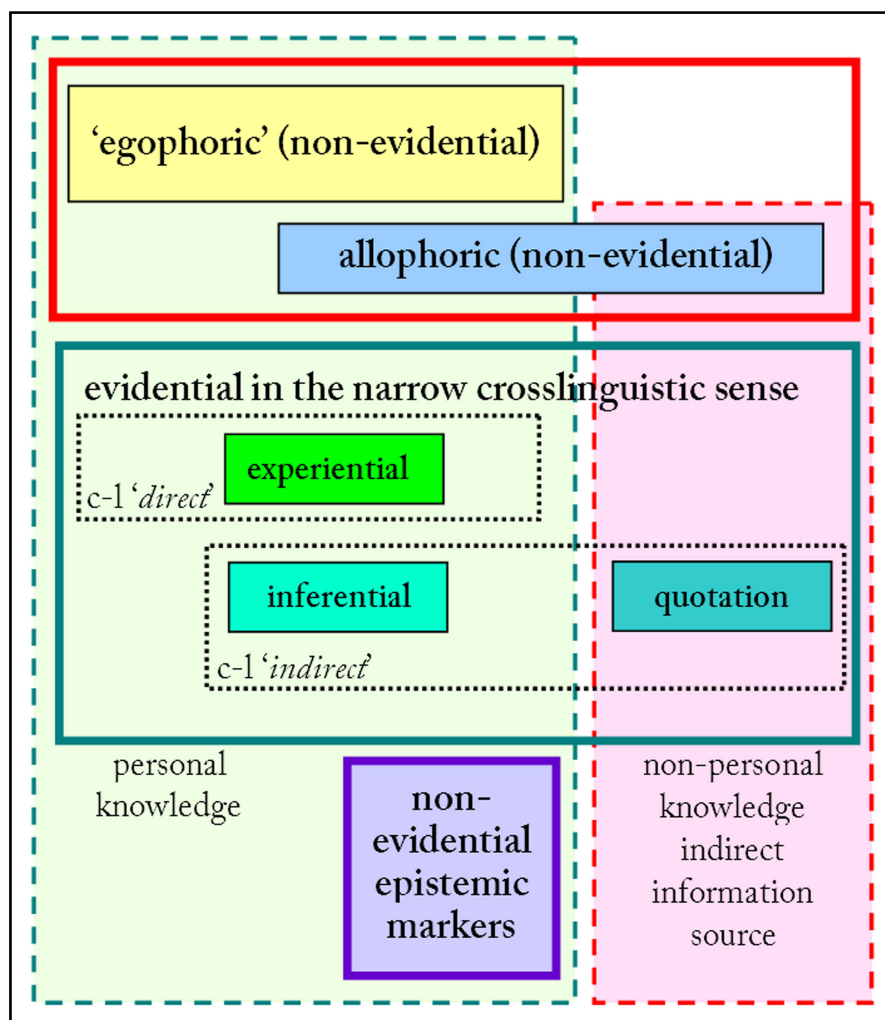


Figure 2 The tripartite 'egophoric' – 'evidential' – epistemic system

Alternatively, one could think of a binary system of a speaker's stance of active involvement or responsibility or of highest epistemic authority and commitment ('egophoric') vs. everything else. This latter domain would then have the sub-categories of a) evidential marking in the narrow crosslinguistic sense, b) the so-called 'factual', and c) the epistemic markers. One could then again think of including the so-called 'factual' or 'assertive indirect' markers as instances of weak 'evidentiality' and pragmatic hedging within the evidential domain, see Figure 3. As an alternative to the 'evidential' system of Figure 1, this scenario would best account for the special status of the 'egophoric' markers as indicating the highest epistemic authority and commitment. In a recent publication on Thewo Tibetan, Sangsrgyas Tshering (2023: 41-42) independently suggests:

Egophoricity is a category defined in terms of binary opposition. Its key semantic-pragmatic oppositions are the 'controllability', and the 'authority', that the speaker wants to express. On the other hand, evidential contrast occurs only under non-

egophoric conditions and functions to code information sources [...] egophoricity is not a contrast between person and information source but relates to more complex semantic-pragmatic factors.

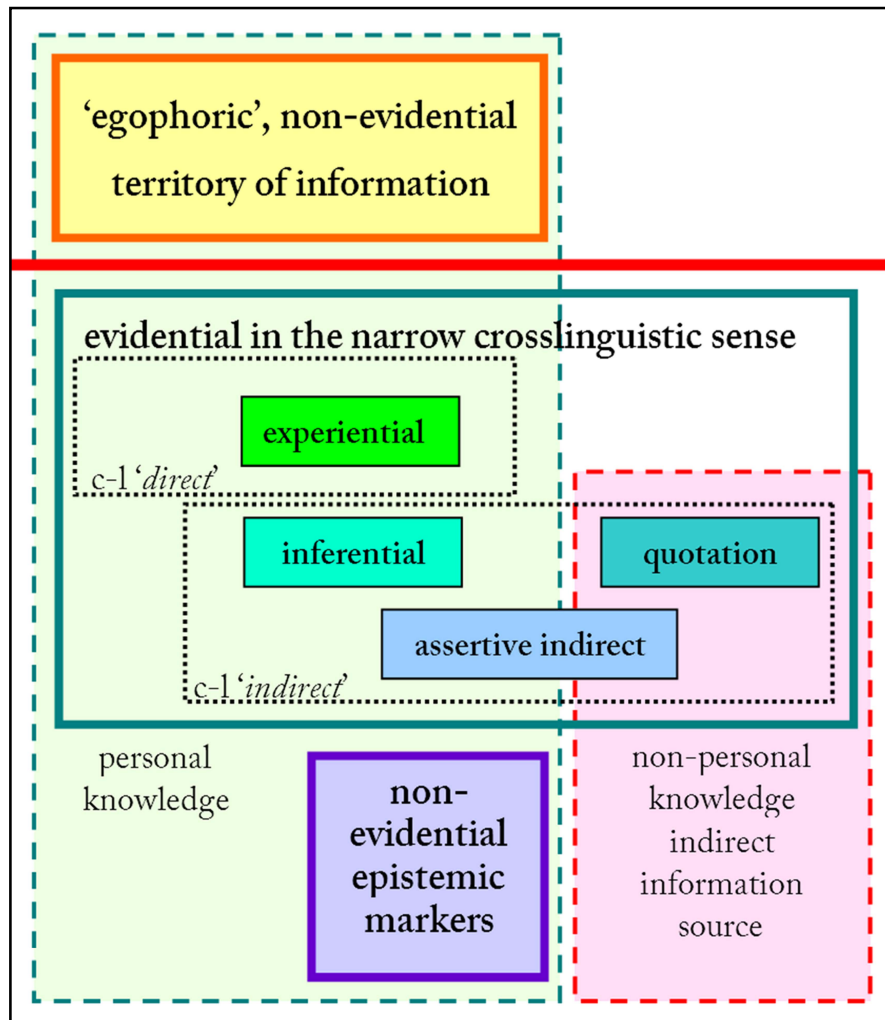


Figure 3 The binary system of epistemic rights and commitment

Finally one could also think of an, in the widest sense, modal system with four independent elements: a) the ‘egophoric’ markers, b) the ‘non-evidential’ markers of pragmatic hedging, c) the three types of evidential markers, and d) the epistemic markers, Figure 4. This would certainly be the least likely scenario. It should be noted that in order to be ‘neutral’ any form needs a marked counterpart of the same category and should be nested together with its marked counterpart inside such category. If constituting an independent category, the so-called ‘factual’ markers cannot be neutral. I, for my part, can only think of epistemic *and* pragmatic hedging. Tribur (2019: 111) thinks of “an evidentially and epistemically neutral category of assertion, which [...] represents a distinct grammatical category within these paradigms.” Since the ‘factual’ markers are usually described only negatively as being not this and not that, this may be an indication that most authors do not seriously think of a system as modelled in Figure 4.

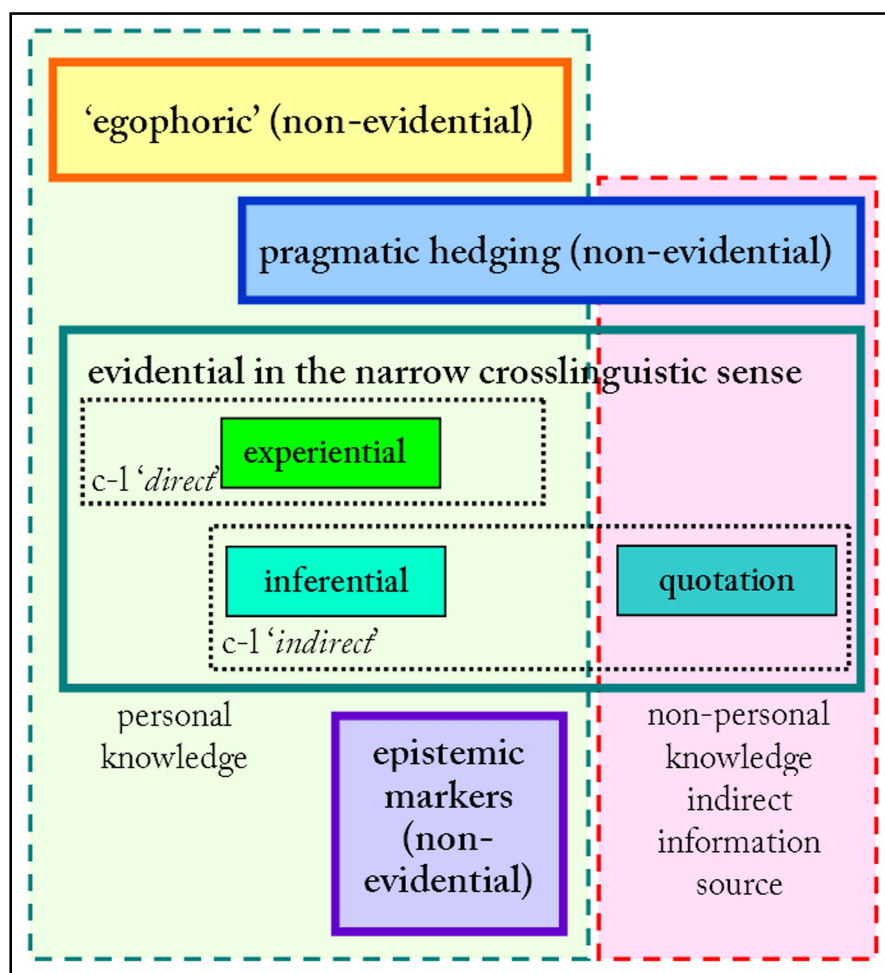


Figure 4 A model of four independent epistemic modal categories

With these four models, we are back to the question whether ‘egophoric’ marking can be integrated into the category of evidentiality and whether thus this category needs to be redefined (cf. Figure 1). Are the two categories perhaps independent, although overlapping (cf. Figure 2)? Or should we, by contrast, think of a category of ‘egophoricity’ or perhaps better of epistemic rights within which the ‘evidential’ and the ‘factual’ markers would be found in a sub-domain (cf. Figure 3)? These questions are certainly to be answered differently for different languages, but for the Tibetic languages, the last option (i.e., Figure 3) might provide a more suitable perspective. I cannot definitely answer this question for Standard Spoken Tibetan or the other languages mentioned here, for lack of data, but I would answer it in the positive for the Ladakhi dialects, where the observed flexibility and the interplay between the ‘egophoric’ copula and the counterpart for *red* is best accounted for in terms of epistemic rights.

As Bergqvist & Grzech (2023: 1) argue, the prevailing conceptualisation of evidentiality – and that would also hold for ‘egophoric’ marking – “is based on the idea that evidentials encode the perception and cognitive processes of a solitary speaker”. This would be an oversimplification (p. 3). Bergqvist and Grzech also argue that “evidential forms cannot be retrieved in the absence of context because evidentials qualify part of the context of an utterance” (p. 2). In particular, deictic forms, such as evidentials – and even more so ‘egophoric’ markers – could not be interpreted

in isolation from the context. Bergqvist and Grzech further emphasise the self-understanding, but often ignored fact, that “evidentials situate events in an on-going linguistic exchange and the characterization of evidentials and evidentiality must therefore be grounded in the dialogical exchange between interlocutors and in the inter-personal context” (p. 2f.).

In other words, speech acts do not usually happen in the void. There is always a situation of social interaction, often associated with inequalities, and thus the use of a particular marker related to knowledge may actually be less about knowledge and more about how one can control the situation or how one can position oneself. There is thus also a pragmatic dimension behind the assumed ‘subjectiveness’ of the ‘egophoric’ markers and the assumed ‘objectiveness’, particularly of the ‘factual’ markers.

Generic knowledge described as a case of reduced epistemic authority (or even second-hand knowledge) may be seen as contradicting Kittilä’s suggestion that a “speaker does not refer to a piece of information as general knowledge (or fact) in case s/he cannot take responsibility for his/her claim” (Kittilä 2019: 1279). Perhaps this statement is formulated too vaguely. A few pages earlier, Kittilä refers to the difference between first-hand or direct knowledge and knowledge based on information from others. According to him “we can [...] usually take responsibility for statements based on our own evidence, while we cannot do this for information we receive from others” (Kittilä 2019: 1274). The kind of ‘responsibility’ Kittilä refers to is the ‘responsibility’ of having and thus asserting personal knowledge. The authority I am talking about is the right to talk about the reported situation as being directly involved either as responsible instigator or as actor. One cannot be responsible for generic facts, such as the shape of the earth or its orbit around the sun. Neither can one be responsible for what usually grows in one’s country; one could only be responsible for what grows on one’s own field.

To give one example, my late Ladakhi host would regularly ask me what kind of cereals grow in my home country. In doing so, he would always use a non-‘egophoric’, non-experiential form, which could be seen as another Ladakhi counterpart of *red*. And I, despite being expected to know quite well about our agricultural products, was not expected to use the ‘egophoric’ markers (Zeisler 2023: 120f., ex. 215). Even if I had been an agrarian expert, in explaining and thus sharing out general (and generally knowledgeable) facts, I should not have used these markers, as neither these facts nor the knowledge of these facts were my personal belonging or responsibility.³⁸

Kittilä is well aware that there are two types of ‘general knowledge’, namely *generic* knowledge, such as knowledge about scientifically established facts (for which no speaker can claim responsibility), and settled knowledge about facts and situations established through personal experience (p. 1283) – or through personal involvement or responsibility. The difference between these two types of ‘general knowledge’ is reflected in the use of *red* and *yod.red* for generic facts in contrast to the use of the ‘egophoric’ markers *yin* and *yod* for personal facts. Kittilä thus remarks that ‘egophoric’ markers or “ego-evidentials rather typically code general knowledge if they exist

³⁸ In another instance, one of my Ladakhi informants explicitly explained that, if anybody were to use the ‘egophoric’ copula *yin* when stating that the world is round, a generic statement par excellence, this would sound as if the speaker made the world him- or herself. A person who went or sailed etc. around the world would perhaps be licensed to use the ‘egophoric’ copula, indicating with its use that s/he personally measured the globe and thus knows it well, but still it would be more polite not to use the ‘egophoric’ copula (Zeisler 2023: 104, ex. 179).

in a language” (p. 1293). It is perhaps this crosslinguistically licensed perspective that leads Zemp (2017; 2018) to treat Purik *yod* as ‘factual’ marker in contrast to ‘evidential’ *hdug*.³⁹

If not anything else, then the divergent application of the term ‘factual’ within the field of Tibeto-linguistics and the field of crosslinguistic studies would definitely point to the problematic status of the term.⁴⁰ Tribur (2019), on her part, lists both an “egophoric factual” and an “allophoric factual”, for certain perfect and habitual constructions. This makes the term ‘factual’ even more problematic. Agha (1993), on his part, describes both *yin* and *red* as ‘factual’, in contrast to ‘evidential’ *yod* (!) and *hdug* (whatever he wants to implicate with this distinction). Oisel further introduces the notion of an ‘epistemic factual’ for a probability marker (Oisel 2017: 97), although he also describes the ordinary ‘factual’ as an expression of certainty (Oisel 2017: 92). Karma Tshering & van Driem (2019), finally, use the term ‘factual’ in the sense of realis, covering the two copulas *iy* and *ime* and their auxiliary use for the present tense, the progressive, the preterite, and the gnomic present. By such usage, the term ‘factual’ is devoid of any meaning and has lost any descriptive power.

I should think that, when languages treat the two types of ‘factual’ or ‘general knowledge’ differently, it is not very helpful to use the same label for both types. At the same time, the label ‘factual’ to discriminate the first type (generic or shared knowledge) from the second (personal experience) is easily misleading, and it does not cover the inferential and assumptive usages of *red* and *yod.red* in the Tibetic languages in individual, non-generic situations, even less so the non-factual, irrealis usages. What seems to be clear and uncontested, however, is that in most Tibetic languages, *yin* and *yod* indicate a speaker’s highest epistemic personal authority.⁴¹ Accordingly, *red* and *yod.red* point at a comparatively lower degree of the speaker’s epistemic authority.

6 Conclusion

While I would not like to give a definition without own fieldwork on the topic in any of the languages where *red* and *yod.red* or their regional counterparts are used, I would very much doubt that the use of *red*, not to speak of *yod.red*, is ‘evidentially neutral’. This, however, may be a matter of what we understand by ‘evidentiality’ in the Tibetic languages, cf. also the above discussion with the four scenarios represented by Figure 1 to Figure 4.

However, if the ‘factual’ markers were ‘evidentially neutral’ in the narrow sense of cross-linguistic evidentiality, as much as the ‘egophoric’ markers are ‘evidentially neutral’ in the narrow sense of crosslinguistic evidentiality, then *red* and *yod.red* must be marked for something else, and the whole system must be about something else, at least about more than ‘pure’ ‘evidentiality’. Historically, the copula *yin*, as well as the existential *yod* are the unmarked forms, which is also

³⁹ Possibly by similar reasoning, the term ‘factual’ has been used for the ego-centred category in Foe (Rule 1977: 71) and, in the form of ‘personal-factual’, in Oksapmin (Loughnane 2009: 248f., 254f.; both authors cited after Keinänen 2021: 572, 573, Table 11).

⁴⁰ One may ask, though, which usage is divergent, that of Zemp, which falls back on the crosslinguistic terminology, or that of DeLancey and others for *red* and *yod.red*.

⁴¹ As Aikhenvald (2018: 29) summarises the relevant research, “[t]he use of evidentials is linked to the speaker’s ‘epistemic authority’, rights of access to knowledge and hence power”. Corresponding notions can be found underlying the concept of ‘territories of information’ (Kamio 1997 and more recently Heritage 2012), and the concepts of ‘mutual knowledge’ (Hintz & Hintz 2014/2017) and ‘engagement’ (Bergqvist & Kittilä 2020). See also the work of Grzech (2016).

corroborated by the fact that only they can appear in all sorts of non-finite combinations. *red* (or any of its regional counterparts) as a newcomer must thus have a specific positive function in the system in opposition to *yin*, just as *hdug* has a positive function in opposition to *yod*.

I should further think that the ‘egophoric’ and ‘evidential’ systems of the Tibetic languages are not solely indicating ‘evidentiality’, that is, sources and access channels of knowledge, but *also*, and possibly prominently, the pragmatically conditioned attitude of the speaker as being fully committed (because of being personally involved) or not so committed (because of not being involved or not having exclusive personal knowledge) – in the communicative situation.

Quite apparently, *red* and *yod.red* are the preferred choice for any situation, past, present, or future, to which one does not feel particularly related and which is also not exclusively claimable as personally observed by oneself, and that means, which does not belong to one’s territory of information. This is not a particularly new idea. Haller (2000a: 75f.) describes the different functions of the two copulas of the Shigatse dialect as follows:

Mit *jĩ* und *piè* bringt der Sprecher gewöhnlich zum Ausdruck, ob der Satzgegenstand des Sachverhalts im Sinne der alten Information seinem Einfluß unterliegt oder nicht. (With *jĩ* and *piè*, the speaker usually indicates that the situation described by the proposition, corresponding to the notion of old information, underwent the influence of the speaker or not.)

This is as much as saying that the two copulas indicate whether the situation described signals the speaker’s involvement and/ or responsibility or its belonging to the speaker’s personal sphere or territory of information or not.

The pragmatic need of hedging in the sense that the situation described does not belong to the speaker’s territory of information holds particularly for generic knowledge, i.e., knowledge that is, or at least could be, known by the addressee and the speech community. It also holds for traditional stories and legends. In all these cases, no speaker has epistemic authority over any addressee.

Therefore, I should tentatively suggest that it might be useful to see *red* and *yod.red* (and functionally similar markers) as markers of relatively strong non-commitment or hedging – certainly not with respect of certainty or truth values, but in the sense that one distances oneself from the fact or situation as not being particularly involved or responsible or as not having observed the situation personally. One might thus describe *red* and *yod.red* as markers of epistemically downgraded depersonalised knowledge, indicating various degrees of non-involvement and non-commitment.

The above-cited statement by Mushin (cf. p. 10 above) describes the factual stance as a presentation in terms of objectivity, that is, a lack of a subjective perspective, combined with authoritative claims of truth, certainty, and unchallengeability. This is the way, we speakers of the Standard European languages usually present facts.

However, there may be, and in fact there are, other cultures or socio-linguistic conditions where such apodictic stance is simply not acceptable. In such cultures or societies, a different strategy is necessary. In order to present a fact as devoid of subjective perspectives, one may positively signal that the fact does not belong to one’s personal territory of information, and that, therefore, one cannot vouch for it. While indicating that one lacks epistemic authority (or involvement in, and responsibility for, the fact) one may draw upon expressions that signal non-commitment, indirectness, and even uncertainty.

When such formally hedged representation is the norm, the presentation of situations from a subjective perspective, particularly from the self-involved perspective, has something extra, a kind of emphasis of one's subjectiveness, which the presentation of facts lacks, e.g., the notion of causation and responsibility or the notion of possessiveness that was mentioned above p. 40. Cf. also Takeuchi (1990/ 2015: 403), who states that

yin, shows that the speaker sees the situation or the people therein as belonging to him[/her] or under his[/her] will; [s/]he sees it as being what could be called "internal." Whereas, *red* indicates "that the speaker sees the situation as being independent of him [or her]; [s/]he sees it as being "external."

In this sense, the 'factual' markers of the Tibetic languages appear in *some* contexts as 'neutral' in opposition and contrast to the 'egophoric' markers. However, this apparent 'neutrality' is merely derived through the strategy of downgrading one's epistemic stance, that is, of partly epistemic, partly pragmatic and subjective hedging, which thus seems to be the primary function of the markers.

I should further dare to predict that as soon as the so-called 'factual' markers had become the standard expression for real facts, including the *origo*-centred perspective, the speakers of most Tibetic languages would adopt another epistemic marker or a set of such markers to express their non-committed, non-involved, distanced stance.

ABBREVIATIONS AND CONVENTIONS

Some authors have only given a transliteration of an idealised written form. In my unified rendering, their “ng” [ŋ] will be rendered as ‘ñ’, “ny” [ɲ] as ‘ñ’, “zh” [ʒ] or [ʒ] as ‘ž’, “sh” [ʃ] or [ʃ] as ‘š’, and the apostrophe for the voiced laryngeal [ɣ] or [ɦ] as ‘h’. Syllables that form a compound will be segmented by a dot, not by an equal sign. Names that have been rendered phonetically in the transliteration will be given their correct form (e.g. *Bsod.nams* instead of “Sonam”).

x=y	x ‘equals’ or ‘sums up as’ y, indicates the function of a combination of morphemes	IMPERS	‘impersonal’ in Agha’s sense
_y	y marked as clitic	IND	‘indirect’
-	segmentable morpheme boundary	INDF	indefinite
.	implied function; non-segmentable morpheme boundary; separation of compound elements	INF	inference, inferential
AES	aesthete (experiencer subject)	IPFV	‘imperfective’ (or non-past)
ALL	allative	LOC	locative
ALLO	‘allophoric’ in Tribur’s sense	LQ	limiting quantifier: ‘a’, ‘some’
ANEGO	anti-‘egophoric’ (unspecified counterpart of ‘egophoric’)	NEVID	‘non-evidential’ in Haller’s sense
CC	clause chaining	NG	negation
CD	conditional	NLS	nominaliser
COP	copula (equative)	NTR	‘neutral’
CTEXP	counterexpectation	NVOL	non-volitional in Haller’s sense
DAT	dative	PERS	‘personal’ in Agha’s sense
DEM	demonstrative	PFV	‘perfective’ (or anterior/ past)
DF	definite	PL	plural
DIR	direct (=sensory)	PPOS	postposition
DST	distance marker (Ladakhi)	PRF	perfect
EGO	‘egophoric’	PROB	probability
EMPH	emphatic	PROG	progressive
ERG	ergative	PRS	present
EX	existential	PST	past
FACT	‘factual’	QM	(sentence) question marker
FOC	(contrastive) focus marker	QT	question tag
FUT	future	QUOT	quotation
FX	‘factual’ in Tribur’s sense	RHEM	highlighting rhematic accent particle
GEM	generalised evaluative marker (as used for Ladakhi)	RM	remoteness marker (for Ladakhi; shifts events further into the past; signals active involvement of origo; may signal acute memory of unrelated events)
GEN	genitive	SCK	self-centred knowledge (~‘egophoric’)
hon	honorific	SENS	sensory (=testimonial)
IMP	imperative	STR	highlighting stress particle
		TEST	testimonial (=sensory)
		TOP	topic marker

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⁴² The volume counts as published in 2017, but it is explicitly stated “Available online 20 August 2014”.

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