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Compound adjectives with suffixes in Tibetan : Their source and properties

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ABSTRACT

In Tibetan sequences of $N_R + ADJ_R + SUF$ can be analysed as $N_R + (ADJ_R + SUF)$ phrases or as $[(N_R + ADJ_R) + SUF]_{ADJ}$ (compound adjectives with derivational suffixes); these two constructions are greatly different in semantics and syntax. This paper adopts generative lexicon theory to analyse such structures. As phrase structures, $ADJ_R + SUF$ is the modifier of N_R . But semantically, N_R seems to be the attribute value of $ADJ_R + SUF$, which highlights the property of $ADJ_R + SUF$ in some aspect. Therefore, this semantic condition generates an implicit exocentric construction. And through metonymic expressions, the latter is lexicalized from the former, which realizes the transformation of syntactic structures.

KEYWORDS

Tibetan, compound adjectives with derivational suffixes, exocentric construction, lexicalization

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Compound adjectives with suffixes in Tibetan: Their source and properties

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1 Constructional homonymy of modification-center phrases and compound adjectives

There are two possible grammatical analyses of a sequence NR+ADJR+SUF in Tibetan (R stands for ROOT): (a) NR+(ADJR+SUF) phrases, and (b) (NR+ADJR)+SUF (compound adjectives with derivational suffixes). ནག་པོ་ *nag-po* (ADJ ‘black’) in clause 1 is the modifier of the head word མཚོ་རྟེན་ *mchod-rten* (N ‘stūpa’), which is a normal modifying construction in Tibetan (Shi DX, 2010). གཏོང་པོད་ *gtong phod* (N ‘generosity’) in clause 2 is also the head word of the post-head adjective ཆེན་པོ་ *chen-po* (ADJ ‘big’) in form, but it does not form a phrase in structure, and cannot be explained as ‘have great generosity’. Constructions of the latter type are named as compound adjectives with derivational suffixes in this paper, which are compounds of nouns and the following attributive adjectives.

1. དེའི་ སྐང་ལ་ མཚོ་རྟེན་ ནག་པོ་ གཅིག་ བརྒྱུབ་ པ་རེད།
 devi sgang-la mchod-rten nag-po gcig brgyab pa-red.
 this-GEN above-LOC stūpa_(N) black_(ADJ) one do ASP
 There is also a black stūpa standing above. (verb predicate clause, Cf. Jiang 2005 for ASP)¹
2. ང་ཚོ་ ཁོ་ཆེན་རྫོང་ གི་ རྫོང་དཔོན་ གཏོང་པོད་ ཆེན་པོ་ འདུག།
 nga-tsho khro-chen-rdzong-gi rdzong-dpon gtong-phod chen-po vdug.
 1.PL khro-chen-rdzong-GEN rdzong-dpon generosity great ASP
 The rdzong-dpon (magistrate) of our khro-chen-rdzong (county) is generous. (adjective predicate clause, CF. Jiang & Hu 2005)

There may be another kind of structure that looks like head-modifier phrase. སྐུ་གཟུགས་ *sku gzugs* (N ‘body’, honorific) in clause 3 seems to serve as the subject, and བདེ་མོ་ *bde mo* (ADJ ‘comfortable’) as the adjective predicate.

¹ Following the widespread convention of Tibetan studies, we use a hyphen to transliterate a word internal *tsheg* in Tibetan examples. In the glosses a hyphen indicates morpheme boundaries. Thus, the number of hyphens in transliteration and glossing often differ.

3. རྒྱེད་རང་སྤྱི་གཟུགས་བདེ་པོ་མི་འདྲག་གས།
 khyed-rang sku-gzugs bde-po mi vdug gas.
 You-self HON-body comfortable NEG ASP INT
 Don't you (body) feel well?

The phenomenon of clause 3 is a little complicated and will be discussed later. Clause 1 and 2 reflect that the NP+AP phrases have the same structure with the homomorphous compound adjectives with derivational suffixes on the surface layer, which are N_R+ADJ_R . However, they are clearly not linguistic units at the same level; the former is a head-modifier syntactic relation, while the latter is not a syntactic relation, but a lexicalized compound. Some cases listed below will be observed.

[$N_R+(ADJ_R+SUF)$]_{PHRA-STRU} phrases

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| 4. རྟ་ <i>rta</i> (N. horse) དཀར་ <i>dkar</i> (ADJ. white) | white horse |
| 5. གླུ་དབངས་ <i>glu dbyangs</i> (N. voice) ལྷན་པོ་ <i>snyan po</i> (ADJ. melodious) | beautiful song |
| 6. ལྷོ་མོ་ <i>zhwa mo</i> (N. hat) རྫོང་ལྷོ་ <i>sgor sgor</i> (ADJ. round) | round hat |
| 7. སྒོག་རེ་ <i>sgrog rtse</i> (N. table) གུ་བཞི་གུ་རྒྱུང་ <i>gru bzhi gru rkyang</i> (ADJ. square) | square table |

[$(N_R+ADJ_R)+SUF$]_{ADJ} (compound adjectives with derivational suffixes)

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| 8. ཐག་ <i>thag</i> (N. distance) རིང་པོ་ <i>ring po</i> (ADJ. long) | (distance) far |
| 9. རྩ་ <i>ngo</i> (N. face) བརྟན་པོ་ <i>brtan po</i> (ADJ. steady) | (face) steady/firm |
| 10. གཟུགས་པོ་ <i>gzugs po</i> (N. body) གཙང་པོ་ <i>gcong po</i> (ADJ. weak) | (body) weak |
| 11. བྱང་བཞིན་ <i>byad bzhin</i> (N. cheek) བཟང་པོ་ <i>bzang po</i> (ADJ. wonderful) | (face) good-looking |

The adjectives in example 4-7 do not seem to be specific; they can be gestalt derivatives (Jiang 2006), gestalt reduplicatives (5) or tetrasyllabic forms (7). If the head word is monosyllabic, the adjective post-head modifier could also be a monosyllabic root, as in རྟ་དཀར་ *rta dkar* 'white horse'. The structures in example 8-11 can also be analyzed as two parts; the noun morphemes are not particularly limited, but the adjective morphemes seem to be confined to gestalt derivatives with the affix *-po*, and are generally adjectives of property. What's more, compound adjectives with derivational suffixes are exocentric constructions, and the meaning of the whole cannot be directly derived from the meaning of the parts. Compared with the surface construction of homomorphic phrases, how does this kind of construction come into being? Why do they not conform to the cognitive rule, or the grammatical meaning of a head-modifier construction? This may show that there are other factors which cause the meaning of head-modifier construction restricting and guiding them to split from the homomorphic phrases and generate a different cognitive meaning.

This class of adjectives is a special phenomenon of word formation in Tibetan, and this paper attempts to elaborate its property, structure, feature and source in a cognitive perspective.

2 Constructional property of compound derivational adjectives

Why is the term 'compound adjectives with derivational suffixes' used in this paper? This needs to be analyzed in terms of the overall function and internal construction. The basic formation of adjectives in Tibetan is $ROOT_{(ADJ/V)}+SUF$, i.e. a monosyllabic adjective/verbal root + adjective suffix, which are called derivational adjectives, for instance, ཆ་པོ་ *tsha po* 'hot', གང་མོ་ *grang mo* 'cold', ཆེན་པོ་ *chen po* 'big', བཤོར་པོ་ *bshor po* 'generous', བཀྲེན་པོ་ *bkren po* 'stingy'. Adjectives may also be composed of reduplicated roots, for example, ཆུང་ཆུང་ *chung chung* 'small', རྩ་རྩ་ *nar nar* 'banded', འཕྱོར་འཕྱོར་ *ukhyor ukhyor*

‘swaying’, ལུག་ལུག་ *lhug lhug* ‘loosely’ (Long 2005). These two types account for at least 90% of adjectives (excluding tetrasyllables). Are the compound adjectives a recent development in Tibetan? We argue here that the answer is yes.

There are also a number of trisyllabic adjectives (including derivational suffixes) in Tibetan, such as སྙིང་རྗེ་པོ་ *snying rje po* ‘adorable’,² whose internal structure is generally not analyzed, that is, the root of multisyllabic adjective is unanalyzable. In fact, the original meaning of སྙིང་ *snying* is ‘heart’ from the analysis of etymology, and the root is prone to mean ‘heart, consciousness, courage etc.’ through metaphor, for instance, སྙིང་དཀར་ *snying dkar* ‘kind-hearted’, སྙིང་ཚུང་ *snying chung* ‘cowardly’, སྙིང་འཆུ་ *snying vchu* ‘moved’. As an independent word རྗེ་ *rje* is a verb, with an original meaning of ‘exchange’, and its semantic combination with *snying* is not literally possible (‘exchange hearts’), hence it can only be metonymy (‘exchange feelings, feel for others’): སྙིང་རྗེ་ *snying rje* ‘benevolence, sympathy’, forms a compound noun. If other verbs are added, it can form compound verbs: སྙིང་རྗེ་སྐྱེ་ *snying rje skye* ‘generate compassion’, སྙིང་རྗེ་ལྟ་ *snying rje lta* ‘pity, show consideration for’, or modified by adjectives, numerals etc.: སྙིང་རྗེ་གསུམ་ *snying rje gsum* ‘three mercies’ (Buddhist term), སྙིང་རྗེ་ཆེན་པོ་ *snying rje chen po* ‘humane, infinitely merciful’. The action of the verb morpheme རྗེ་ *rje* weakens, its meaning gradually bleaches, and it can reduplicate like an affix: སྙིང་རྗེ་རྗེ་ *snying rje rje* ‘very pitiful’. In this sense, སྙིང་རྗེ་རྗེ་ *snying rje rje* is derived from a noun plus adjectival suffix, as are the alternative forms སྙིང་རྗེ་མ་ *snying rje mo* and སྙིང་རྗེ་བ་ *snying rje ba* ‘pitiful’, which are very clearly typical trisyllabic adjectives.

The root analysis of trisyllabic adjective is not identical, སྙིང་རྗེ་པོ་ *snying rje po* is analyzed as: [[[snying] “heart” N [rje] “exchange” V] “mercy” N po] ‘compassionate’ ADJ. The root is a verb-object construction which constitutes a noun, and it constitutes an adjective after the suffix is added. Another case is རྒྱུ་མཚན་པོ་ *khyad mtshar po* ‘weird’, which is analyzed as [[khyad mtshar] “rarity” N po]ADJ according to the analysis above, རྒྱུ་ *khyad* ‘difference’ is a noun, མཚན་ *mtshar* ‘oddity’ is a noun, and this noun-noun construction is already lexicalized, whose metonymic meaning is ‘strange, miraculous’. Therefore, this word can be understood as an adjective constructed with a disyllabic noun and a suffix. If another kind of analysis is applied, i.e. [[khyad] “difference” N [mtshar po] “distinctive” ADJ] ADJ, it means ‘obvious difference’, which is not the actual meaning.

To analyze གྲ་རྒྱལ་པོ་ *gra rgyas po* ‘abundant’ as a monosyllabic noun+disyllabic derivational adjective, i.e. [[gra] “awn” N [rgyas po] “flourish, detailed” ADJ]ADJ is obviously semantically inappropriate. Consequently, the more reasonable analysis is [[gra rgyas] “abundance” N po] ADJ, i.e. a disyllabic noun+adjective suffix; the metonymic meaning ‘abundant’ comes from noun+adjective head-modifier construction [[gra] “awn” N [rgyas] “multiple” ADJ]. A similar analysis is available for གྲ་བཟླ་པོ་ *gra vgrig po* ‘considerate, elaborate’, which is constructed from the disyllabic noun [gra vgrig] “completeness” and suffix. ཞིབ་ཤེགས་པོ་ *zhib tshags po* ‘careful’ can also be analyzed as a disyllabic noun and suffix: [[zhib] “meticulousness” N [tshags] “compactness” N] “thoroughness” N po] ‘careful’.

The root སྤ་ *sla* has two meanings: ‘diluted’ and ‘easy’. The word སྤ་པོ་ *sla po* is used to express the meaning ‘diluted’ in Lhasa Tibetan and སྤ་མོ་ *sla mo* also means ‘diluted’ in Amdo Tibetan. Probably

² This word means ‘lovely, beautiful’ in Lhasa Tibetan, which should be the extension of its original meaning ‘pitying, compassionate’, and its meaning is transferred a little. Dge bshes chos kyi grags pa (1957) only includes other words composed of the root སྙིང་ *snying rje* (without the suffix *po*), and the meaning is mostly ‘mercy’, which implies the meaning of this word in Lhasa Tibetan is developed from extension. Most other dialects express ‘beautiful’ with མཛེས་པོ་ *mdzes po*, e.g. Hua et al. (1993). And the honorific form of ‘soul’ is ཐུགས་ *thugs*, which has a parallel form of grouping words with བེས་ *sems* or སྙིང་ *snying*, such as ཐུགས་རྗེ་ *thugs rje* ‘mercy, compassion’, but it does not generate the meaning of ‘beauty’.

for this reason, the semantic position is occupied by ལྷ་པོ་ *sla po* which means ‘diluted’ in the lexicon, thus another form of disyllabic adjective which means ‘easy’ is derived: ལས་ལྷ་པོ་ *las sla po*. Logically, this word should be analyzed as: [[las “thing” N sla “easy” ADJ] “easy thing” N po]ADJ ‘easy’, in which ལས་ལྷ་ *las sla* is a compound noun, and it constitutes an adjective after the suffix is added. A similar adjective is བག་ཐོད་པོ་ *bag brod po*, analyzed as [[bag “interest” N brod “interest and charm” N]N po] ‘full of interest and charm’, whose root is a juxtaposed noun, and other examples are འདྲ་ཆགས་པོ་ *vdra chags po* ‘decent, elegant’ and ཁུ་སྤྲོ་པོ་ *khu sim po* ‘silent’.

In the examples given above, trisyllabic adjectives are formed with a structure [[ROOT+ROOT]N po]ADJ, i.e. disyllabic noun+suffix. As a matter of fact, the disyllabic word therein can also belong to other parts of speech categories, for instance, the internal structure of ཡང་དག་པ་ *yang dag pa* ‘rightful’ seems a little special: ཡང་ *yang* is an adverb which means ‘again’, དག་ *dag* is an adjective which means ‘correct, pure’, and ཡང་དག་ *yang dag* ‘correct’ is still an adjective, which constitutes the trisyllabic adjective ཡང་དག་པ་ [[yang dag] “correct” ADJ pa]ADJ after the affix is added. Another example is སྙུག་བློ་པོ་ *skyug bro po* ‘disgusting, repugnant’, analyzed as [[[skyug] “vomit” V [bro] “feel” V] “feel like vomiting” VP po], the root of which is analyzed as an object-verb construction or a serial verb construction, and it is an adjective consisting of a disyllabic verb and an affix.

Another class of adjective seems apparently constructed with a monosyllable (R_{mono-}) or polysyllable (R_{di-}) and a suffix (R_{mono-}+SUF). For example, ཐུགས་བདེ་པོ་ *thugs bde po* ‘reassuring’, the noun ཐུགས་ *thugs* refers to ‘brain/heart/meaning’, which means ‘thought’, and the adjective བདེ་པོ་ *bde po* means ‘comfortable’. Together ཐུགས་ *thugs* and བདེ་པོ་ *bde po* constitute a compound adjective which is transferred to ‘at ease’ or ‘relieved’. Similar adjectives are ཁ་གསང་པོ་ *kha gsang po* ‘talkative’ and སྐད་གསང་པོ་ *skad gsang po* ‘stentorian’.

The analysis of quadrisyllabic words is basically similar, e.g. སྐད་ཆ་གསང་པོ་ *skad cha gsang po* ‘lucid-spoken’ is also formed by the noun སྐད་ཆ་ *skad cha* ‘utterance’ and the post-head adjective modifier གསང་པོ་ *gsang po* ‘sonorous’, and it means ‘blunt words’ if interpreted as head-modifier phrase. From the lexical analysis, affixes do not assume the meaning, and roots can synthesize compound words independently, such as ཐུགས་བདེ་ *thugs bde* ‘peace of mind’ and སྐད་གསང་ *skad gsang* ‘voice’, that is, the lexical structure should still be [[[ROOT_{mono-}]+[ROOT]_{mono-}]+SUF], i.e. a trisyllabic adjective constructed with disyllabic compound word and affix.³ As for the quadrisyllabic form, due to the prosodic constraint of a disyllable foot, it should be a disyllabic word with disyllabic modifier in principle, but the basic formation of Tibetan adjectives is a monosyllabic root with a suffix, i.e. a derivational form, therefore it may be directly added with a disyllabic adjective+suffix, however, it is still best analyzed as [[[ROOT_{di-}]+[ROOT]_{mono-}]+SUF] (Zhang 2009). The combination of the root part innovates in the framework of the monosyllabic adjective prototype, but the addition of the adjective suffix eventually coincides with the form and appearance of the prototype, thus this new type of adjectives is named compound adjectives with derivational suffixes.

³ Zhang (2009) distinguishes such trisyllabic form into “(root+root)+affix” and “root+(root+affix)” in “word formation 8-(4)”; an example of the former is མགོ་འཁོར་པོ་ *ngo vkhor po* ‘fascinating’ and the latter ཁ་བདེ་པོ་ *kha bde po* ‘talkative’ (well-spoken, eloquent) or སྙུག་མཐུགས་པོ་ *srog mkhregs po* ‘sturdy and durable’. However, he does not explain what the basis for this distinction is. We suspect that this distinction probably reflects the availability of the nominal component in daily spoken language, i.e. མགོ་འཁོར་ *ngo vkhor* ‘fascination, addiction’ exists, but *ཁ་བདེ་ **kha bde*, *སྙུག་མཐུགས་ **srog mkhregs* do not. However, we believe the grammatical analysis should be consistent, concise, and reasonable.

There are two syntactic uses of Tibetan adjectives, one is the post-head modifier of a noun, or the restricted pre-head modifier of a noun, the other is used as a predicate, usually with evidential copulas and other clause final auxiliaries (such as modal particles) like a verb. This paper tries to compare the syntactic structures of prototypical adjectives with derivational suffixes to compound adjectives with derivational suffixes.

12. དེ་ཉིན་ དབང་ཆེན་ གྱིས་ ཞགས་པ་ རིང་པོ་ ཞིག་ བྱེད།
de-nyin dbang-chen-gyis zhags-pa ring-po zhig khyer.
that day dbang-chen-AG rope long one take
That day dbang-chen took a long rope. (action with a derivational adjective as attributive)
13. ང་ཚོར་ ཏུས་ཚོད་ རིང་པོ་ མེད།
nga-tsho-r dus-tshod ring-po med.
1-PL-POS time long V-NEG
We do not have much time. (possessive clause with a derivational adjective as attributive)
14. ལུང་པ་ འདིའི་ ཟུག་ ཐག་ རིང་པོ་ ཡོག་མ་རེད།
lung-pa vdivi sbug thag-ring-po yog-ma-red.
place this-GEN valley (distance)deep ASP-NEG
This valley is not deep. (adjective predicate clause with a compound adjective as predicate)
15. ངའི་ བསྐྱེད་ ས་ འདི་ ནས་ ཐག་རིང་པོ་ རང་ མ་རེད།
ngavi bsdad-sa vdi nas thag-ring-po rang ma-red.
I-GEN live-place this ABL (distance)far very ASP-NEG
My place is not too far from here. (adjective predicate clause with a compound adjective as predicate)

The adjective རིང་པོ་ *ring po* in clause 12 is the post-head modifier of the noun ཞགས་པ་ *zhags pa* ‘rope’, which is the common form. Clause 13 is an possessive clause: རིང་པོ་ *ring po* is the post-head modifier of ཏུས་ཚོད་ *dus tshod* ‘time’, the verb མེད་ *med* requires the subject to be marker as possessive; the grammatical constituents are very clear. There can be two interpretations of clause 14, and the difficulty of explaining it as an existential clause is: what is the function of *thag*? For instance, འོག་འཇུག་ *vog vjug*_(shirt) གི་ *gi*_(GEN) ཕུ་བྱང་ *phu-thung*_(sleeve) རིང་པོ་ *ring po*_(long) ཡོག་མ་རེད་ *yog red*_(ASP) ‘the sleeves of the shirt are long’, the adjective རིང་པོ་ *ring po* directly serves as predicate at the end of the clause. Similarly, ཐག་རིང་པོ་ཡོག་མ་རེད་ *thag ring po yog ma red* in 14 is better explained as a predicate of an adjective in the clause than as an existential clause. In this explanation, the word ཐག་ *thag* serves as an attribute value of *ring po*, and converts to a constituent morpheme in the adjective ཐག་རིང་པོ་ *thag ring po*. In clause 15, རེད་ *red* is used at the end of the predicate clause; although རེད་ *red* is not a typical marker of a gestalt adjective predicate clause,⁴ its original meaning is derived from an evidential copular verb. Two more examples are (Garrett 2001):

16. དེའི་ རྒྱ་མཚན་ ནི་ ཏ་ཅང་ གསལ་པོ་ རེད།
devi rgyu-mtshan ni ha-cang gsal-po red.
This-GEN reason TOP very clear ASP

⁴ Adjective predicate clauses in Tibetan are generally divided into two categories: (1) gestalt adjectives with predicate markers, most commonly ཡོད་ *yod*, འདུག་ *vdug*, ཡོག་མེད་ *yog red*, but also རེད་ *red*, རྩུང་ *byung* etc.; (2) root adjectives with predicate markers གི་རེད་ *-gi red*, གི་འདུག་ *-gi vdug*, པ་རེད་ *-pa red*, ཐག་ *shag*, རེད་ *red*, འདུག་ *vdug* etc., of which there are differences among various dialects, and the written language. Predicate adjective clauses in Tibetan gradually developed in modern times, and this process is not yet complete (cf. Garrett 2001).

The reason is very clear. (adjective predicate clause with a derivational adjective as predicate, with the aspect mark *red*)

17. ལྷ་ས་འི་ར་མོ་ཆེ་གཙུག་ལག་ཁང་ཡའི་ལོ་རྒྱུས་རིང་པོ་བྱེན་ཡོག་རེད།
 lha-savi ra-mo-che gtsug-lag-khang yavi lo-rgyus ring-po phyin yog-red.
 Lhasa-GEN Ramoche Temple also history long walk(hold) ASP
 Ramoche Temple in Lhasa also experienced a long history. (adjective predicate clause with a more complicated adjective predicate)

3 Generation mechanism of compound adjectives with derivational suffixes

Statically, the internal construction of compound adjectives with derivational suffixes is embodied as a head-modifier construction ($N_R + ADJ_R$), which is the typical head-modifier noun phrase in Tibetan, but how does this sort of noun phrases convert into adjectives? Such phrases as ལྷ་ས་པ་རིང་པོ་ *zhags pa ring po* ‘long rope’, དུས་ཚོད་རིང་པོ་ *dus tshod ring po* ‘long time’ and ཟུག་ཐག་རིང་པོ་ *sbug thag ring po* ‘valley’ discussed in last section imply people’s cognitive process. According to Generative Lexicon Theory, the meaning of an item itself is generally stable, but the combination of items together leads to integrated meanings and conceptions. The integration is a mental process, what kind of extended meanings can the combination of items generate? Which semantic elements are involved in the integration? The qualia construction of Generative Lexicon Theory has great explanatory power for NP+AP and AP+NP,⁵ which will be illustrated below (Song 2011, 2014).

Pustejovsky gives ‘long record’ as an example of AP+NP. According to the definition of the Oxford Dictionary, *record* is ‘a thin round piece of plastic on which music, etc. is recorded’ (Pustejovsky 1995, 2013). Obviously, *long* is not the property of *record*, and this phrase appears to be a semantic mismatch of modified relationship. Hence, in accordance with the generative semantic mechanism, the head-modifier construction requires the type of modifiers should be consistent with the modified objects; otherwise the meaning will be reanalyzed through a type of coercion, and the semantic match will be achieved by means of metonymy, semantic expansion and narrowing, or transformation of the concept domain. As for this specific example, on the basis of qualia construction rules, *record* is man-made, and there may be multiple interpretations when modified by adjectives. The word *record* has two arguments: material entity (mediator) and information; it denotes ‘something long’ if the former can be modified by ‘*long*’, and denotes ‘long playing time (or recording time)’ if the latter is modified. It is clear that this phrase can only choose the latter interpretation, suggesting that the combination gives rise to the cognitive domain of nouns transferred from things to incidents, from space to time, which also means the reduction, generalization and even disappearance of the original meaning of *record*. And this is a type of coercion (Zhang et al. 2009).

⁵ According to Pustejovsky (1995, 2013), a qualia construction is a set of relational systems for describing the meanings of lexical items. Based on the success of describing verb arguments, the author also puts forward that judging the meaning from the noun qualia construction is as effective as judging the verb meaning from the argument type of the verb. On the specific research, he divides the qualia construction into four roles, which are formal role, constitutive role, relic role and agentive role. The formal role distinguishes the object from surrounding things, including the number, shape, dimension, color, and position etc. of the object; the constitutive role introduces the relationship between the object and its constituents or components, including material, weight, parts and constituents etc.; the telic role introduces the function of an object or person, for example, the function of beer is drinking; the agentive role introduces the formation of the object, for instance, the agentive role of ‘passenger and defendant’ is the riding activity or suing activity.

The adjective རིང་པོ་ *ring po* indicating space, time and length property in Tibetan has something special about its meaning, i.e. insensitivity to spatial length; therefore, it tends to modify nouns of spatial length through forming phrases of space length, and this kind of usage already existed in old Tibetan. The original meaning of རྒྱང་ *rgyang* in clause 18 is ‘location, space’, and later extended the meaning of ‘distance, remote’. In the era of the *Sba Bzhed*,⁶ this word containing the meaning of distance could be modified by རིང་བ་/པོ་ *ring ba/po* to indicate distance; However, in clause 19, it is difficult for རིང་པོ་ *ring po* to directly modify a geographic name which does not contain the meaning of distance, therefore, ཐག་ *thag* ‘distance’ needs to be added semantically to help express the meaning.

18. འུ་རིང་ རྒྱང་ རིང་བ་ ར་ སོང།
 vu-ring rgyang ring-ba ra song
 vu-ring place distant ALA go
 Vu-ring went to a faraway place. (*Sba Bzhed*)(sba gsal snang 1990)
19. སྲས་ མི་མངའ་ བས་ ཕ་མེད་ གི་ འགོ་ཡུལ་ ཐག་རིང་།
 sras mi-mngav bas pha-ming gi vgro-yul thag-ring,
 son NEG-have because father and brother GEN vgro-yul distance far
 Because (Princess vgro) has no son, and her family is far away ... (*Sba Bzhed*)

In principle ཐག་ *thag* might be derived from ཐག་པ་ *thag pa* ‘cordage (long thing)’, implying the property of length. But in the phrase ཐག་རིང་པོ་ *thag ring po* ‘(distance) far’, the isolated root meaning has transformed from concrete to abstract, and semantic generalization appears, i.e. it can only represent measurable things. Along with the consolidation of daily usage, the meaning of such phrases gradually solidifies, for instance, the analogy to ཐག་ཉེ་པོ་ *thag nye po* ‘(distance) near’. In the further structure of modification, e.g. ལམ་ *lam* “road” ཐག་ *thag* “distance” རིང་པོ་ *ring po* “far” (long way), which is inevitable to be directly reflected as ‘long way’ from ‘far (distance) road’ semantically, and the ‘distance’ concept is internalized as the property of ‘far’. At this time ཐག་རིང་པོ་ *thag ring po* modifies the head noun as a whole. The lexicalization of the phrase is realized, and the exocentric construction of lexical analysis is formed.

Zhang Guoxian argues that the adjectivization of Chinese nouns is stimulated by the syntactic position of the attribute: the syntactic position of the attribute lays the syntactic basis of activating the salience and solidification of qualitative meaning of nouns (Zhang 2006). This explanation also sheds light on the fact that compound adjectives with derivational suffixes in Tibetan are influenced not only by the head-modifier construction, but also by the structure of adjective predicate clause. Clause 3 above is the most typical case, in which བདེ་མོ་ *bde mo* (ADJ ‘comfortable’) describes people’s feeling. But it is necessary to specify the experience part of this feeling, that is, སྐ་གཟུགས་ *sku gzugs* (N ‘body, honorific’) is the constitutive role of people, and the head-modifier structure complements the missing argument of the adjective semantically,⁷ which makes the expression

⁶ *Sba Bzhed* is a famous Tibetan historical document, which may have been written before the 12th century.

⁷ This feature is similar to “adjectives with arguments” proposed by Liu (2005): “arguments here refer to the nouns which also need to appear to make the argument structures of adjectives integrated other than the subjective attributes”, and discussed the object argument in Chinese and the mandatory argument in English etc. It is not impossible to regard compound adjectives with derivational suffixes in Tibetan as adjectives with arguments, but the situation is more complicated, and also involves metaphor/metonymy, lexicalization, adjectivalization etc. This paper is a starting point, which we hope will initiate further research.

logically more reasonable. And སྐུ་གཟུགས་བདེ་མོ་ *sku gzugs bde mo* ‘(body) comfortable’ serves as an adjective predicate as a whole (Liu 2005).

20. ཁོང་ཚོ་ སྤོང་ས་ ཐག་རིང་པོ་ ཡོད་ ཅང་།
 khong-tsho sdod-sa thag-ring-po yod tsang ...
 they-PL(GEN) live-place far ASP therefore...
 Their place is distant, therefore... (adjective predicate)
21. མི་དམངས་ སྐྱུ་མཁའ་ འདི་ རྣམ་ ཐག་ཉེ་པོ་ རེད་།
 mi-dmangs sman-khang vdi nas thag-nye-po red.
 people hospital here ABL near ASP
 It is close from here to the People’s Hospital. (adjective predicate)
22. གཅུང་པོ་ འདི་ རྣམ་ ཡུལ་ ཚང་ཁྱུ་བར་ རྒྱང་ ཐག་རིང་པོ་ མེད་།
 gcung-po.vdi nas yul tshang-kravu-ba-r rgyang thag-ring-po med.
 brother this ABL place tshang-kravu-ALA distance far NEG-ASP
 Brother, this place is not far from tshang-kravu(place name). (existential clause with a compound derivational adjective as post-head modifier)

In summary, as can be seen, English realizes the relationship of modifiers and central words through type coercion and selection (Pustejovsky 2013), while Tibetan takes another route: it synchronically can be regarded as inserting the consistent central word by type selection, then after the transformation from noun to adjective (adjectivization), modifying the central word through type selection again (Goldstein et al. 1991)⁸. Please refer to Figure 1.

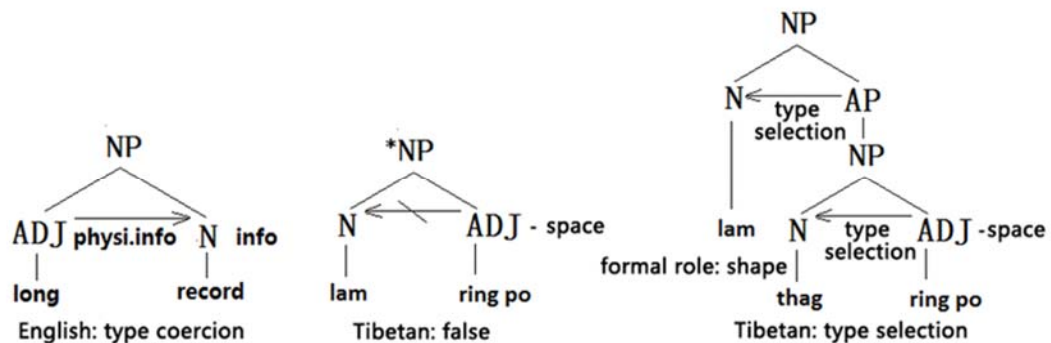


Figure 1

4 Semantic types of compound adjectives with derivational suffixes

The combination of nouns like ཐག་ *thag* and adjectives like རིང་པོ་ *ring po* supplements certain properties of adjectives, which reflects that adjectives can complete their required properties with the help of (or through forcing) nouns; this is mainly embodied in the formal quale role, including orientation, size, shape and dimension etc, for instance, ཉན་མས་ *nyams* ‘feeling, attitude, idea, state’; གོང་ *gong* ‘value, price’; གོ་ *go* ‘apprehensiveness’; སྒྱུ་བས་ *stobs* ‘strength, momentum’; བག་ *bag* ‘nature’; སྤུས་ *spus* ‘quality’; སྐྱུ་ *srog* ‘life, lifetime’; གཞི་ *gzhi* ‘foundation, noumenon’; རྒྱུ་ *khungs* ‘basis, proof’; གཏིང་ *gting*

⁸ Goldstein et al (1991) suggests that such form is a way of adjectivization of Tibetan nouns, and nouns could convert to adjectives by means of adding adjective modifiers, which are called derived adjectives. However, they do not theoretically elaborate the structure and the reason for the conversion.

‘depth’; ཐབས་ *thabs* ‘method, means’; སྐད་ *skad* ‘voice’; ཚིག་ *tshig* ‘discourse’. Clause 23 typically reflects such function of attribute value associated with roles.

23. དེ་ནས་ དངོས་གུབ་ རྩོམ་ ཉམས་ཆེན་པོ་ས་ ཏུ་ས་།
 de-nas dngos-grub skyo nyams-chen-po-s ngus song.
 then dngos-grub sad feeling-very-LY cry ASP
 Then Dngos-grub cried sadly. (*nyams chen po* ‘arrogant’)

Tibetan-Chinese Dictionary by Zhang collects ཉམས་ཆེན་པོ་ *nyams chen po*, which means ‘arrogant’ (Zhang 1985), and the usage in this example seems more like the prototype. ཆེན་པོ་ *chen po* ‘great/big’ itself does not have the property indicating emotional color, and cannot modify རྩོམ་ *skyo* ‘sad’ directly, for this reason it first constitutes ཉམས་ཆེན་པོ་ *nyams chen po* to be associated with emotional color and the degree, then converts into adjective through semantic generalization and other methods, and realizes the emotional evaluation of རྩོམ་ *skyo*. More instances are as following:

ཐབས་ <i>thabs</i> (method)མ་མཐུན་པོ་ <i>mkhas po</i> (proficient) ‘(method) clever’	ཚིག་ <i>tshig</i> (word)མ་ཕྱེགས་པོ་ <i>mkhregs po</i> (hard) ‘(utterance) rude’
ཚིག་ <i>tshig</i> (word)འཇེད་པོ་ <i>vtsheng po</i> (lame) ‘(talking) wordy’	གོང་ <i>gong</i> (value)ཁེ་པོ་ <i>khe po</i> (cheap) ‘(price) cheap’
གོ་ <i>go</i> (apprehensiveness)བདེ་པོ་ <i>bde po</i> (healthy) ‘straightforward’	སྐད་ <i>skad</i> (voice)གསང་པོ་ <i>gsang po</i> (resonant) ‘(voice) resonant’
བག་ <i>bag</i> (nature)དྲོག་པོ་ <i>dog po</i> (narrow) ‘(disposition) narrow’	བག་ <i>bag</i> (nature)ཡངས་པོ་ <i>yangs po</i> (broad) ‘unperturbedly’
ཁྱུང་ <i>khung</i> (base)མཐུག་པོ་ <i>mtshug po</i> (thick) ‘durable’	གཞི་ <i>gzhi</i> (foundation)མཐུན་པོ་ <i>mtshun po</i> (consistent) ‘(essence) similar’
སྟོབས་ <i>stobs</i> (strength)ཞན་པོ་ <i>zhan po</i> (weak) ‘(strength) weak’	གྲ་ <i>gu</i> (area)ཡངས་པོ་ <i>yangs po</i> (vast) ‘(area) vast’
རྒྱ་ <i>rgya</i> (area)ཡངས་པོ་ <i>yangs po</i> (vast) ‘(scope) broad’	གཏིང་ <i>gting</i> (depth)ལྡིང་པོ་ <i>ljid po</i> (heavy) ‘(behave) deep’
སྟོབས་ <i>srog</i> (life)མ་ཕྱེགས་པོ་ <i>mkhregs po</i> (hard) ‘strong and durable’	ཉམས་ <i>nyams</i> (concept)དམའ་པོ་ <i>dmau po</i> (low) ‘embarrassing’
སྤྲུལ་ <i>spus</i> (quality)དཔག་པོ་ <i>dag po</i> (pure) ‘good texture’	གཤམ་ <i>gal</i> (key)ཆེན་པོ་ <i>chen po</i> ‘important’
དབང་ <i>dbang</i> (power)ཆེན་པོ་ <i>chen po</i> ‘powerful’	དམ་པ་ <i>ham pa</i> (greed)ཆེན་པོ་ <i>chen po</i> ‘greedy’
རྩལ་ <i>rtsal</i> (skill)ཆེན་པོ་ <i>chen po</i> ‘skilled’	སྐད་ <i>skad</i> (voice)ཡག་པོ་ <i>yag po</i> ‘good voice’
ལཔ་རྒྱུ་བཟན་པོ་ <i>lab rjes btsan po</i> ‘keep promise’	བྱེད་བཞིན་བཤང་པོ་ <i>byed bzhin bzang po</i> ‘good-looking’
ཐག་རིང་པོ་ <i>thag ring po</i> ‘distant’	གཏིང་ ཁྲ་མོ་ <i>gting zab mo</i> ‘deep’
རྒྱུ་གུ་ཚུ་ <i>nyog gra tsha po</i> ‘troublesome’	སེར་སྣ་ཚུ་ <i>ser sna tsha po</i> ‘stingy’

Another category of compound adjectives with derivational suffixes are nouns of body parts, for instance,⁹ body, heart, head, face, eye, ear, nose, mouth, throat, hand, foot, vein, buttocks, stomach, etc., as illustrated by the following (Zhou et al. 2003):

1: heart, soul, and mind: སྙིང་ *snying* ‘heart > soul, thought (metonymy)’, སེམས་ *sems* ‘soul’, ཐུགས་ *thugs* ‘chest > mind (metonymy)’, མགོ་ *mgo* ‘head > thought (metonymy)’:

སྙིང་ཆེན་པོ་ *snying tshim pod* ‘delightful’, ཐུགས་བདེ་པོ་ *thugs bde po* ‘secure’, སྙིང་སྟོབས་དཔག་པོ་ *snying stobs drag po* ‘intrepid’, ཐུགས་རྒྱ་རིང་པོ་ *thugs rgyu ring po* ‘good-tempered’, སེམས་གཡེང་པོ་ *sems g-yeng po* ‘absent-minded’, མགོ་འཕྲོང་པོ་ *mgo ukhor po* ‘fancinating’, སེམས་བརྟན་པོ་ *sems brtan po* ‘strong-willed’, མགོ་མ་ཕྱེགས་པོ་ *mgo mkhregs po* ‘stubborn’, སེམས་ལཔགས་སྤྲུལ་པོ་ *sems lpags srab po* ‘tender-hearted’, མགོ་ཚད་ཁག་པོ་ *mgo tshod khag po* ‘difficult to comprehend’.

2: five sense organs: mouth (ཁ་ *kha*) > words (metonymy), tongue (ལུ་ *lce*) > speech (metonymy), ear (རྩ་ *rna*) > audition (metonymy), nose (སྣ་ *sna*) > smell (metonymy), eye (མིག་ *mig*) > vision (metonymy), face (གདོང་/གདོང་ཁ་ *gdong/gdong kha*) > feelings (metonymy):

⁹ Zhou & Xie (2003) notices such phenomenon as “subordinate compound words”, but there is no further elaboration.

ཁ་ན་པོ་ *kha nyan po* ‘obedient’, ཁ་རྒྱལ་པོ་ *kha rgyugs po* ‘fluent’, ཁ་ལྷིད་པོ་ *kha ljid po* ‘taciturn’, ཁ་སངས་པོ་ *kha sangs po* ‘talkative’, ཁ་འབའ་པོ་ *kha vbal po* ‘talkative’, ཁ་སྐྱེངས་པོ་ *kha skyengs po* ‘shy’, ཁ་གྲེར་པོ་ *kha gzer po* ‘sarcastic’, ཁ་སྤ་པོ་ *kha sla po* ‘gluttonous’, ལེ་བདེ་པོ་ *lce bde po* ‘glib’, མིག་སྤོང་པ་ *mig sbom pa* ‘generous’, ལེ་ཅག་བདེ་པོ་ *lce cag bde po* ‘glib’, མིག་རྩ་པོ་ *mig rno po* ‘sharp-eyed’, རྩ་བ་སྤོང་པོ་ *rna ba srab po* ‘credulous’, སྤྲ་ཁྱུག་སངས་པོ་ *sna khug sangs po* ‘sharp-nosed’, གདོང་དམར་པོ་ *gdong dmar po* ‘ablush’, གདོང་བརྟན་པོ་ *gdong brtan po* ‘trustworthy’, གདོང་ཐགས་སྤ་པོ་ *gdong lpags sra po* ‘easily bashful’.

3: limbs: ལག་པ་ *lag pa* ‘(hand) > hand movements (metonymy)’, རྩུབ་ *rkub* ‘(buttocks) > hip movements (metonymy)’:

ལག་པ་བརྟན་པོ་ *lag pa bkren po* ‘stingy’, ལག་པ་ཤོགས་པོ་ *lag pa shogs po* ‘generous’, ལག་པ་གྲེར་པོ་ *lag pa gzer po* ‘physically violent’, ལག་པ་དམ་པོ་ *lag pa dam po* ‘greedy’, རྩུབ་ལྷིད་པོ་ *rkub ljid po* ‘inactive’, རྩུབ་ཡང་པོ་ *rkub yang po* ‘diligent’;

4: body (གཟུགས་པོ་ *gzugs po*) > physical condition (metonymy), flesh (ག་ *sha*), viscera: རྩུ་མ་ *rgyu ma* (intestine):

གཟུགས་པོ་གཙོང་པོ་ *gzugs po gcong po* ‘(body) weak after sick for a long time’, གཟུགས་པོ་རིང་པོ་ *gzugs po ring po* ‘(height) tall’, གཟུགས་པོ་གཉི་པོ་ *gzugs po gte po* ‘(height) short’, གཟུགས་པོ་སྦྱོ་པོ་ *gzugs po skyo po* ‘(body) weak’, གཟུགས་པོ་མཐོ་པོ་ *gzugs po mtho po* ‘(belly) big’, གཟུགས་པོ་ཐང་པོ་ *gzugs po thang po* ‘(body) healthy’, གཟུགས་པོ་ཡག་པོ་ *gzugs po yag po* ‘(body) fit’, གཟུགས་པོ་ཞན་པོ་ *gzugs po zhan po* ‘(body) unfit’, རྩུ་མ་ *rgyu ma* (intestine) རིང་པོ་ *ring po* ‘patient’.

As can be seen from the examples above, in addition to the words originally expressing abstract conceptions such as རེ་མས་ *sems* ‘mind’ etc., metonymy occurs in most words of body parts, especially the facial area, e.g. ཁ་ *kha* ‘words’ as a metonymy of ‘mouth’, མིག་ *mig* ‘vision’ as a metonymy of ‘eye’. For example:

24. ཁྱེད་ཁ་ རྩ་པོ་ ཤོད་ མི་ དགོས།
 khyod kha snyan-po shod mi dgos.
 you mouth nice say.V> NEG need
 Do not say fine words. (snyan po = snyan mo)

25. ཚོང་པ་ ག་ རྩུགས་པ་ དེ།
 tshong-pa sha rgyags-pa de
 merchant flesh fat that
 that fat merchant

The discussion above has classified the main types of compound adjectives with derivational suffixes. Some of these are highly productive in modern Tibetan, and generate a fair number of new words, for example, ཆེན་པོ་ *chen po* ‘big’¹⁰, ཆེན་པོ་ *tsha po* ‘hot’¹¹, བདེ་པོ་ *bde po* ‘pleasant, comfortable’¹², དྲོ་པོ་ *dod po* ‘distinctive, revealing’ etc. There are a few forms which can be structurally analyzed by different methods, such as the forms constructed with དྲོ་པོ་ *dod po* ‘be good/be apt to’ and བྱང་ལང་(ས་)པོ་ *byang lang(s) po* ‘be liable to do’, which will be discussed in another paper due to limited space.

¹⁰ Sometimes it can be used interchangeably with ཆེན་མོ་ *chen mo*, but the latter is often used when indicating proper nouns, e.g. སློབ་གནས་ཆེན་མོ་ *slob grwa chen mo* ‘university, college’.

¹¹ This is an adjective expressing degree, and it might be a word with derogatory sense.

¹² This root is also used as a noun, which means ‘happiness, peace’.

5 Conclusion

Compared with other compound adjectives with derivational suffixes, ལྷོང་རྩེ་ *snying rje po* discussed in the second section can be called an old polysyllabic adjective, which is unproductive, and probably originates from the process of lexicalization. Other compound adjectives with derivational suffixes can also be divided into old and new types. Adjectives like ཐག་རིང་པོ་ *thag ring po* ‘distant’ and གཏིང་རིང་པོ་ *gting ring po* ‘deep’ may have originally constituted noun-adjective phrases, and converted into adjectives through reanalysis and lexicalization. The synchronic feature of these adjectives is that they are used as adjectives freely, and are included in the dictionary. Other new ones might be constituted through lexical analogy, and respectively presented as phrases and adjectives in different contexts, for instance, རྩ་གྲག་པོ་ *ngo dkar po* ‘white face/cheerful’, རྩ་ནག་པོ་ *ngo nag po* ‘black face/sullen’, རྩ་མཚན་པོ་ *ngo mtshar po* ‘a fair face/good-looking’. However, because of the semantic constraints of combination, some can only be understood through metaphor or metonymy, e.g. རྩ་བརྟན་པོ་ *ngo brtan po* is generally interpreted as ‘steady, firm’, from the metonymy of its original meaning ‘reliable face’.

To sum up, compound adjectives with derivational suffixes express a trait or property, therein the adjective morphemic meaning provides the property and nature that the trait needs, and the noun morphemic meaning provides the source, scope, shape, dimension, color, material, location etc., that is the qualia description of meaning. Compound adjectives with derivational suffixes are productive, and they are either trisyllabic or quadrisyllabic; their syntactic functions are that they are used as attribute, predicate, adverbial or complement, which are basically consistent with the syntactic functions of conventional disyllabic adjectives with derivational suffixes.

ABBREVIATIONS

ABL	ablative case	-LY	adverbial mark
ADJ	adjective	N	noun
ADJ _R	adjective root	NEG	negative
AG	agentive case	NMZ	nominalization marker
ALA	allative case	NP	noun phrase
AP	adjective phrase	N _R	noun root
ASP	aspect	-PL	plural mark
GEN	genitive case	POS	possessive case
HON	honorific	TOP	topic mark
INT	interrogative mark	V	verb
LOC	locative case		

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