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

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### ABSTRACT

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

### KEYWORDS

Khams Tibetan, copulative verb, existential verb, evidentiality, visual perception

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# *Multiple usages of the verb ‘snang’ in Gagatang Tibetan (Weixi, Yunnan)*

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## 1 Introduction<sup>1</sup>

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

Gagatang Tibetan belongs to the Melung subgroup (Suzuki and Tshering mTshomo 2009) of the Sems-kyi-nyila group of Khams Tibetan<sup>2</sup> and is spoken in Gagatang Sub-village, Pantiange Village, Weixi County, Diqing Prefecture, Yunnan, China.<sup>3</sup> Suzuki (2009b, 2011) reported other unique features of Gagatang, such as pharyngealisation and retroflexion of vowels due to the influence of *ra-btags*. Gagatang speakers, estimated at less than 1,000, mainly live in the three hamlets of Gaga, Shaoluo and Mulu. Most are bilingual in Tibetan and the Weixi dialect of Chinese. The use of Tibetan by the younger generation is growing increasingly infrequent and it is likely that Gagatang Tibetan will be endangered in the next generation.

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

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<sup>1</sup>An earlier version of this paper was presented at 43rd International Conference of Sino-Tibetan Languages and Linguistics (Lund, Sweden, 16-18 October 2010).

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<sup>2</sup>The dialectal classification in this paper follows Suzuki (2009a).

<sup>3</sup>Chinese name: 雲南省迪慶藏族自治州維西傈僳族自治縣攀天閣鄉嘎嘎塘村

## 2 Overview of *snang* in WrT and the modern dialects

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

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

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

### 2.1 *snang* as a predicative verb

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

Some dialects belonging to the Rongbrag group<sup>7</sup> of Khams Tibetan use *snang* as a copulative verb, but this usage is not typical (see the next subsection).

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

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<sup>4</sup>Shar Tibetan is mainly spoken in the northeastern area of Aba Prefecture, Sichuan.

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

<sup>6</sup>See Les Missionnaires Catholiques du Thibet (1899: 579) on the usage of *snang* in some dialects of Khams Tibetan. Zhang (1993: 1589) and Roerich (1985: 154-155) also describe its usage in Written Tibetan.

<sup>7</sup>Spoken in Danba County, Sichuan.

<sup>8</sup>Spoken in Yajiang, Litang, Batang, Mangkang, Zuogong and Chayu Counties, Sichuan and TAR.

<sup>9</sup>Spoken in Muli and Daocheng Counties, Sichuan.

<sup>10</sup>Spoken in Xiangcheng, Deirong and Xianggelila Counties, Sichuan and Yunnan.

<sup>11</sup>Spoken in Deirong and Deqin Counties, Sichuan and Yunnan.

<sup>12</sup>Spoken in Xianggelila and Weixi Counties, Yunnan. The Zhollam dialect is included.

<sup>13</sup>Based on my dialectal classification, Dongwang Tibetan belongs to the Chaphreng group.

Briefly speaking,<sup>14</sup> the differences of the usage as an existential verb are: most dialects of the Southern Route group use *snang* as an existential verb for a third person subject, including things and persons, whereas those of the sDerong-nJol group use it as an existential verb for non-human animate or inanimate third person subject. Shar Tibetan employs it in an existential third person as well as in possession.

## 2.2 *snang* as a verbal suffix

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

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

## 3 Description of *snang* in the Zhollam dialect

In the Zhollam dialect, *snang* is realised as /<sup>h</sup>ṅoŋ/ ([ṅoŋ<sup>55</sup>, ṅō<sup>55</sup>, ṅo:<sup>55</sup>]) and serves the following functions:

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

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

### 3.1 Copulative usage

As a copula, *snang* serves equational and/or identificational functions, while including the speaker's attitude regarding the predication. In the Zhollam dialect, two affirmative copulas *snang* /<sup>h</sup>ṅoŋ/ and *yin* /<sup>h</sup>ji/,<sup>15</sup> and the negative counterpart of the latter *min* /<sup>h</sup>mẽ/<sup>16</sup> are employed.

In the following, I will give examples of the affirmative usage:<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup>Detailed descriptions and a careful choice of the terminology for every dialect are still missing. The following remarks are based on preliminary observations. Thus no examples are provided here.

<sup>15</sup>This form is sometimes pronounced as [zɿ:<sup>24</sup>, z<sup>1</sup>i:<sup>24</sup>].

<sup>16</sup>This word might not be a direct descendant of W<sup>r</sup>T *min*, because a palatalisation of the initial is expected. Instead, a form like \**man* can be hypothesised (personal communication with Bettina Zeisler 2011). But I apply a typical form of W<sup>r</sup>ritten Tibetan here.

<sup>17</sup>I shall not provide a detailed gloss for each usage of *snang* in order to avoid a hasty generalisation, but I shall use CPV1 for *yin* and CPV2 for *snang*.

- (1)    ᶑᶓA-φ    ᶑpi:-φ        { ᶑjĩ/\*ᶑᆞᆟᆤ }  
 1-ABS    Tibetan-ABS    CPV1/\*CPV2  
 I am Tibetan.
- (2)    ᶑᶞᶞᶞᶞ-φ    ᶑpi:-φ        { ᶑjĩ/\*ᶑᆞᆟᆤ }  
 2-ABS        Tibetan-ABS    CPV1/\*CPV2  
 You are Tibetan.
- (3)    ᶑᶓA-φ-de    ᶑᶞᶞᶞᶞ:-φ    { ᶑjĩ / ᶑᆞᆟᆤ }  
 this-ABS-TOP    pig-ABS    CPV1/CPV2  
 This is a pig.

As shown in (1)-(3), /ᶑᆞᆟᆤ/ is only used in clauses with a 3rd person subject, as expected of a non-self-orientation,<sup>18</sup> cannot occur in clauses with 1st and 2nd person subjects. But there is a certain overlap with /ᶑjĩ/, which can also be used in clauses with a 3rd person subject as in (3). The semantic difference between two verbs is related to the speaker's attitude regarding the proposition. /ᶑjĩ/ is especially used for an expression in which the subject is directly related to speakers and hearers:

- (4)    a    ᶑᶞᶞᶞᶞ-φ    ᶑpi:-φ        ᶑᆞᆟᆤ  
           3-ABS    Tibetan-ABS    CPV2  
           S/He is Tibetan.
- b    ᶑᶞᶞᶞᶞ-φ    ᶑpi:-φ        ᶑjĩ  
           3-ABS    Tibetan-ABS    CPV1  
           S/He is Tibetan (so we are the same ethnic group).

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

The negative counterpart is **min** /ᶑmẽ/ for /ᶑjĩ/, and **mi(?) snang** /ᶑmi-ᆞᆟᆤ/ for /ᶑᆞᆟᆤ/.

- (5)    ᶑᶓA-φ    ᶑli: bi: mᶑ-φ    { ᶑmẽ/\*ᶑmi-ᆞᆟᆤ }  
 1-ABS    farmer-ABS    CPV1.NEG/\*NEG-CPV2  
 I am not a farmer.
- (6)    ᶑᶞᶞᶞᶞ-φ    ᶑpi:-φ        { ᶑmẽ/\*ᶑmi-ᆞᆟᆤ }  
 2-ABS        Tibetan-ABS    CPV1.NEG/\*NEG-CPV2  
 You are not Tibetan.
- (7)    ᶑᶞᶞᶞᶞ-φ    ᶑsẽ zᶞ mᶑ-φ    { ᶑmẽ/ᶑmi-ᆞᆟᆤ }  
 3-ABS        cook-ABS        CPV1.NEG/NEG-CPV2  
 S/He is not a cook.

<sup>18</sup>Tournadre & Sangda Dorje (2009) calls the concept of self-orientation/non-self-orientation, which I use in this paper, **égophorique / non-égophorique** (egophoric / non-egophoric).

/mẽ/ and /'mi-ŋoŋ/ again interchange as in (3) and (4) when the subject is a 3rd person:

- (8) a ʼma-ϕ-de ʼkʰɣ-kʰoŋ ʼmi-ŋoŋ ʰŋA-kʰoŋ ʼjĩ  
 this-ABS-TOP 3-GEN NEG-CPV2 1-GEN CPV1  
 This is not his/hers but mine.
- b ʼma-ϕ-de ʰŋA-kʰoŋ ʼjĩ ʼkʰɣ-kʰoŋ ʼmẽ  
 this-ABS-TOP 1-GEN CPV1 3-GEN CPV1.NEG  
 This is mine and not his/hers.

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

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

- (9) ʼtɕʰuʔ-ϕ ʼli su-ϕ ʼʔa-{jĩ / \*ŋoŋ}  
 2-ABS Lisu-ABS Q-CPV1/\*CPV2  
 Are you Lisu?
- (10) ʼma-ϕ-de ʼpʰa:-ϕ ʼʔa-{ʔjĩ / \*ŋoŋ}  
 this-ABS-TOP pig-ABS Q-ʔCPV1/\*CPV2  
 Is this a pig?

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

As shown in (9) and (10), the prefix /'ʔa/ cannot make an interrogative sentence with /-ŋoŋ/, but there is another way to form an interrogative phrase, namely to add a suffix /'jẽ/<sup>21</sup> (following /'jĩ/) or /'mẽ/<sup>22</sup> (following /-ŋoŋ/):

- (11) ʼtɕʰuʔ-ϕ ʼʂy: loŋ wa-ϕ ʼjĩ ʼjẽ  
 2-ABS person from Zhollam-ABS CPV1 Q  
 Are you from Zhollam?

<sup>19</sup>This analysis could imply an existence of the affirmative counterpart **yin snang**, however, it is not attested.

<sup>20</sup>The construction /'ʔa-ŋoŋ/ is possible when /-ŋoŋ/ is used as an existential verb. See 3.2.

<sup>21</sup>This form is pronounced not only as [jẽ<sup>24</sup>], but also as [je<sup>24</sup> fiã<sup>55</sup>].

<sup>22</sup>This form is pronounced not only as [mẽ<sup>24</sup>, mjẽ<sup>24</sup>], but also as [me<sup>24</sup> fiã<sup>55</sup>].

- (12)    ʼma-φ-de      ʼpʰa:-φ    ʼnɔŋ    ʼmẽ  
           this-ABS-TOP    pig-ABS    CPV2    Q  
           Is this a pig?

In sentence (11), /ʼnɔŋ/ can also be used, but the meaning changes a little. It serves to confirm the speaker's knowledge:

- (13)    ʼtɕʰuʔ-φ    ʼsɣ: lɔŋ wa-φ                      ʼnɔŋ    ʼmẽ  
           2-ABS        person from Zhollam-ABS    CPV2    Q  
           You are from Zhollam, aren't you?

The answer to questions (11) and (12) can be formed only with /ʼjĩ/ (negative /ʼmẽ/) and /ʼnɔŋ/ (negative /ʼmi-nɔŋ/) respectively. So as an answer to (13), /ʼjĩ/ must be used.

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

- (14)    ʼkʰɣ-φ    ʼkwɔ̃-φ    ʼnɔŋ  
           3-ABS    who-ABS    CPV2  
           Who is s/he?

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

- (15)    ʼŋA-φ    ʼkwɔ̃-φ    { \*ʼjĩ / ʼnɔŋ }  
           1-ABS    who-ABS    \*CPV1/CPV2  
           Who am I?

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

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

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

### 3.2 Existential usage

In its existential function, **snang** expresses both the existence of the subject and the speaker's intimate awareness of that existence. In the Zhollam dialect, two affirmative existential verbs **snang** /ʼnɔŋ/ and **yod** /ʰjũʔ/,<sup>23</sup> and the negative counterpart of the latter **med** /ʰɲeʔ/ are employed.

In the following one can find examples of /ʼnɔŋ/ and /ʰjũʔ/ in affirmative clauses:<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup>This form is sometimes pronounced as [zʰʔ<sup>231</sup>, zʰe:<sup>231</sup>, zʰi:<sup>231</sup>].

<sup>24</sup>For the reason mentioned in footnote 17, I shall use EXV1 for **yod** and EXV2 for **snang** as a gloss.

- (16) ḡṅA-ϕ ḡp<sup>h</sup>ɑ:-ϕ {^jũʔ/\*ṅṅṅ}  
 1-ABS pig-ABS EXV1/\*EXV2  
 I have a pig. (possessive)
- (17) ḡto: ḡp<sup>h</sup>ɑ:-ϕ {\*^jũʔ/ṅṅṅ}  
 there pig-ABS \*EXV1/EXV2  
 There is a pig. (existential)  
 (situation: introducing to the addressee the speaker's pigsty)
- (18) ḡṅA-de ḡṅṅ bA [ṣ<sup>h</sup>ũ-nṅ {\*^jũʔ/ṅṅṅ}  
 fish-TOP river-INE \*EXV1/EXV2  
 The fish is in the river. (locational)  
 (situation: answer to the question "where are there fish?")

The simple verb /<sup>^</sup>jũʔ/ occurs in clauses which contain 1st person possessors. The simple verb /ṅṅṅ/ occurs in locational clauses with 3rd person subjects, when the information can be visually confirmed by the speaker. Note that the latter verb is not used for a possessive phrase, only for an existential or locational phrase.

Clauses which express 3rd person possession, 1st person existence and all clauses with 2nd person subjects differ from the constructions presented above. Clauses with 3rd person possessors are expressed with /<sup>^</sup>jũʔ-ṅṅṅ/, i.e. /<sup>^</sup>jũʔ/ followed by the evidential suffix /ṅṅṅ/,<sup>25</sup> as:

- (19) ḡk<sup>h</sup>ʏ-ϕ ḡp<sup>h</sup>ɑ:-ϕ ^jũʔ-ṅṅṅ  
 1-ABS pig-ABS EXV1-EVD  
 S/He has a pig. (possessive)

The form /<sup>^</sup>jũʔ-ṅṅṅ/ is also used as an existential verb for the 3rd person, as:

- (20) ḡna kA ḡmṅ<sup>n</sup>do ḡṣṣṅ:-ϕ ^jũʔ-ṅṅṅ  
 here person one-ABS EXV1-EVD  
 Here is one person. (existential)  
 (situation: the speaker saw from a window a person in the room)

The existence of the 1st person is expressed by another verb **bzhugs** /ṣṣṅ:/, **bzhugs sdod** /ṣṣṅ: ḡ<sup>n</sup>de:/ or /ṣṣṅ: ḡ<sup>n</sup>duʔ/ 'stay' can be used instead of an existential verb.

- (21) ḡṅA-ϕ ḡtṣ<sup>h</sup>oṅ-ϕ ṣṣṅ:-dA-jĩ  
 1-ABS home-ABS stay-PRS-CPV  
 I am at home. (locational)  
 (situation: answer in the conversation with a telephone)

<sup>25</sup>It is possible that /ṅṅṅ/ in this usage is an elliptical form of the combination verb plus /ṅṅṅ/. The omitted word can be /<sup>^</sup>jũʔ/. In (17) /ṅṅṅ/ can alternate with /<sup>^</sup>jũʔ-ṅṅṅ/, which means that the speaker has just seen a pig there. Contrarily, /ṅṅṅ/ itself as an existential usage cannot take any suffixes.



The verbs /ʔso:/, /ʔso: <sup>hi</sup>de:/ and /ʔso: <sup>hi</sup>duʔ/ are used for a 3rd person if one hopes to emphasise the existence of an animate being, especially a human being, as:

- (22) ʔA BA-ϕ ʔtʰoŋ-{\phi/nɔ̃} {ʔso: <sup>hi</sup>duʔ/ʔso:-dA-jī}  
 daddy-ABS home-{ABS/INE} stay/stay-PRS-CPV  
 Daddy is home.

/ʔso: <sup>hi</sup>duʔ/ can be followed by /ŋoŋ/ as an evidential suffix. This will indicate the speaker's visual experience of the existence, as:

- (23) ʔA BA-ϕ ʔtʰoŋ-{\phi/nɔ̃} ʔso: <sup>hi</sup>duʔ-ŋoŋ  
 daddy-ABS home-{ABS/INE} stay-EVD  
 I have seen daddy in the house.

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

- (24) ʔtʰuʔ-ϕ ʔpʰa:-ϕ ʔjuʔ-ŋoŋ  
 2-ABS pig-ABS EXV1-EVD  
 You have a pig. (possessive)  
 (situation: the speaker knows this fact well)

- (25) ʔtʰuʔ-ϕ ʔtʰoŋ-{\phi/nɔ̃} ʔso: <sup>hi</sup>duʔ  
 2-ABS home-{ABS/INE} live  
 You are at home. (locational)  
 (situation: heard from the addressee this fact with a telephone)

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

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

- (26) ʔŋA-ϕ ʔpʰa:-ϕ {ʔneʔ-ŋoŋ/\*ʔma-ŋoŋ}  
 1-ABS pig-ABS EXV1.NEG-EVD/\*NEG-EXV2  
 I do not have a pig. (possessive)

- (27) ʔto: ʔpʰa:-ϕ {ʔneʔ-ŋoŋ/ʔma-ŋoŋ}  
 there pig-ABS EXV1.NEG-EVD/NEG-EXV2  
 There are no pigs. (existential)  
 (situation: the speaker looked at the pigsty and confirmed this fact)

<sup>26</sup>The negation verb form appears in elicitation, it is thus grammatically acceptable. Its form is /ʔma-ŋoŋ/.

The interrogative phrase can be formed by adding a prefix /ʔa/ or one of the suffixes /jẽ/ or /mẽ/. Note that /ʔa/ is usually employed in front of /nɔŋ/ or /juʔ-nɔŋ/, as:

- (28) ʔto: ʔpʰɑ:-φ ʔa-nɔŋ  
 there pig-ABS Q-EXV2  
 Is there a pig? (existential)  
 (situation: pointing a pigsty)
- (29) ʔtɕʰuʔ-φ ʔtɕʰi-φ ʔa-juʔ-nɔŋ  
 2-ABS house-ABS Q-EXV1-EVD  
 Do you have a house? (possessive)
- (30) ʔtɕʰuʔ-φ ʔpʰɑ:-φ ʔjuʔ jẽ  
 2-ABS pig-ABS EXV1 Q  
 Do you have a pig? (possessive)

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

If the interrogative suffix /mẽ/ is added to /juʔ-nɔŋ/ and /neʔ-nɔŋ/, the interrogative phrase reflects the speaker's attitude of having some doubt as to the truth of the statement, as:

- (31) ʔtɕʰuʔ-φ ʔpʰɑ:-φ ʔjuʔ-nɔŋ ʔmẽ  
 2-ABS pig-ABS EXV1-EVD Q  
 Do you really have a pig? (though you live in a city)

/juʔ/ and /neʔ/ can be followed by /jĩ/, which is identical with the copulative verb,<sup>27</sup> but is followed by a particle /fia/ (undetermined future) or /pa/ (determined future), as in:<sup>28</sup>

- (32) a ʔlɔ ʔmɔbje: ʔsə tɕẽ-φ ʔjuʔ-fia-jĩ  
 tomorrow time-ABS EXV1-FUT1-CPV  
 (I) have a (free) time tomorrow. (I think so.)
- b ʔlɔ ʔmɔbje: ʔsə tɕẽ-φ ʔjuʔ-pa-jĩ  
 tomorrow time-ABS EXV1-FUT2-CPV  
 (I) surely have a (free) time tomorrow.
- (33) ʔŋA-φ ʔpʰɑ:-φ ʔneʔ-fia-jĩ  
 1-ABS pig-ABS EXV1.NEG-FUT1-CPV  
 I do not have a pig. (And I am not going to keep one.)

The forms /fia-jĩ/ and /pa-jĩ/ can also follow most stative verbs, but nor /nɔŋ-fia-jĩ/ nor /nɔŋ-pa-jĩ/. Neither /fia-mẽ/ nor /pa-mẽ/ are attested.

Concerning the polysyllabic verb /ʂo: ʰde:/ or /ʂo: ʰduʔ/, the prefixes will be added to the second syllable<sup>29</sup> as:

<sup>27</sup>This /jĩ/ is one of the sentence final morphemes, which are pronounced without an independent tone.

<sup>28</sup>I shall not provide a detailed gloss for each particle and I shall use FUT1 for /fia/ and FUT2 for /pa/.

<sup>29</sup>Some verbs consisting of two syllables are marked on their second syllable with a prefix.

- (34) a  $\bar{\text{ʔ}}\text{A ba-}\phi$   $\bar{\text{t}}\text{c}^{\text{h}}\text{oŋ-}\phi$   $\acute{\text{ʂ}}\text{o: } \bar{\text{ʔ}}\text{a-}^{\text{h}}\text{du?}$   
 daddy-ABS home-ABS Q-live  
 Is daddy home?
- b  $\bar{\text{ʔ}}\text{A ba-}\phi$   $\bar{\text{t}}\text{c}^{\text{h}}\text{oŋ-}\phi$   $\acute{\text{ʂ}}\text{o: } \acute{\text{m}}\text{A-}^{\text{h}}\text{du?}$   
 daddy-ABS home-ABS NEG-live  
 Daddy is not home.

$/\acute{\text{ʂ}}\text{o: }^{\text{h}}\text{de:}/$  also can be followed by  $/\text{ŋ}\text{oŋ}/$  when expressing an evidential component.  
 The construction of the affirmative existential phrase can be concluded as follows:

- (35) a existential usage for 3rd persons:  $/\bar{\text{ŋ}}\text{oŋ}/$   
 $\bar{\text{t}}\text{s}^{\text{h}}\text{ə-}\phi$   $\bar{\text{ŋ}}\text{oŋ}$   
 dog-ABS EXV2  
 The dog is (here/in the kennel).
- b possessive usage for 1st person:  $/\hat{\text{j}}\text{u?}/$   
 $\bar{\text{t}}\text{s}^{\text{h}}\text{ə-}\phi$   $\hat{\text{j}}\text{u?}$   
 dog-ABS EXV1  
 (I) have a dog.
- c possessive usage for 2nd and 3rd persons, and existential usage, especially based on the speaker's visual experience:  $/\hat{\text{j}}\text{u?-}\text{ŋ}\text{oŋ}/$   
 $\bar{\text{t}}\text{s}^{\text{h}}\text{ə-}\phi$   $\hat{\text{j}}\text{u?-}\text{ŋ}\text{oŋ}$   
 dog-ABS EXV1-EVD  
 (i) (He) has a dog.  
 (ii) The dog is here (visual experience, e.g. I have just seen).
- d emphasis on the existence of an animate being:  $/\acute{\text{ʂ}}\text{o:}/$ ,  $/\acute{\text{ʂ}}\text{o: }^{\text{h}}\text{de:}/$   
 $\bar{\text{t}}\text{s}^{\text{h}}\text{ə-}\phi$   $\acute{\text{ʂ}}\text{o: }^{\text{h}}\text{de:}$   
 dog-ABS live  
 The dog is/lives (here/in the kennel).

To summarise the usage of  $/\bar{\text{ŋ}}\text{oŋ}/$  as an existential verb, we can point out the followings:

- $/\bar{\text{ŋ}}\text{oŋ}/$  is used only for the existence of non-human 3rd persons
- The behaviour of  $/\bar{\text{ŋ}}\text{oŋ}/$  in affirmative, negative and interrogative sentences is, different from the copulative usage, quite parallel to a main verb, but:
  - the negation form  $/\hat{\text{m}}\text{a-}\text{ŋ}\text{oŋ}/$ , while grammatically correct, rarely appears in the natural speech
  - it does not take any suffixes
- $/\bar{\text{ŋ}}\text{oŋ}/$  preceded by  $/\hat{\text{j}}\text{u?}/$  is not an existential verb, but a verbal suffix (see the next section)

### 3.3 Evidential usage

When **snang** is added to a main verb or an adjective in a clause, it serves an evidential function. Unlike in the preceding two usages, it has a neutral tone and cannot co-occur with the negation and interrogative prefixes, indicating that /-ŋɔŋ/ is a suffix of the verb. In the Zhollam dialect, there are two suffixes which are related to the evidential category: **snang** /-ŋɔŋ/ and **grag**<sup>30</sup> /-<sup>h</sup>ka<sup>ɿ</sup>, -<sup>h</sup>ka/.<sup>31</sup>

/-ŋɔŋ/ is used for an enunciation, the status of which is **visually** experienced by the speaker and has already been part of the speaker's knowledge. Note that all other sensory information is excluded and represented by /-<sup>h</sup>ka<sup>ɿ</sup>, -<sup>h</sup>ka/.

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

- (36)    ʃiŋ-φ        -<sup>h</sup>kẽ-mə-ŋɔŋ  
          field-ABS    dry-PFT-EVD  
          The field has become dry.  
          (situation: the speaker has seen the dry field)
- (37)    ʔa ma    -<sup>h</sup>pɔŋ-φ    ʔk<sup>h</sup>ɔŋ tɕa-φ    ʔma-<sup>h</sup>ta-ŋɔŋ  
          recently    tree-ABS    peach-ABS    NEG-bear-EVD  
          The tree did not bear peaches recently.  
          (situation: the speaker has seen the tree not bearing peaches)

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

- (38)    ʔfiə<sup>ɿ</sup>-ŋɔŋ  
          well-EVD  
          Alright./That's good.  
          (situation: the speaker has seen and confirmed that is good)
- (39)    -ʔa-<sup>h</sup>pja-ŋɔŋ  
          Q-good-EVD  
          Are you/Is it good?

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

- (40)    ʔ<sup>h</sup>pa<sup>ɿ</sup> ja:-φ    ʔdzA ʔdzɛ:    ʔjuʔ    ʔna    ʔsa    ʔma-t<sup>h</sup>e:-ŋɔŋ  
          dish-ABS    many                    EXV    thus    eat    NEG-can-EVD  
          There are so many dishes that (I) cannot completely eat (them).

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

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

This form is widely employed in Khams Tibetan dialects.

<sup>31</sup>In the speech of the elder generation, the pronunciations [ʔa, ʔa] are also attested.

- (41)    ʻcə WA-φ    ʻsA mA ʻsA mA nA xO    ʻtʰo:-φ    ʻsA-ŋəŋ  
mouse-ABS    stealthily                      crop-ABS    eat-EVD                      N.B.<sup>32</sup>  
The mouse eats crops stealthily.

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

- (42)    ʻlA mY-φ    ʻŋA-lə    ʻfi gA-fi gA-ŋəŋ  
PSN-ABS    I-DAT    love-RDP-EVD  
Lhamo (**lha mo**) seems to like me.

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

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

- (43)    ʻkʰy-dA-de    ʻce we cAw    ʻtʰaʻ:-ŋəŋ  
3-NML-ABL    school                      far-EVD  
The school is far from his (house).

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

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

- (44)    ʻŋA-φ    ʻhtu:-{kaʻ/\*ŋəŋ}  
I-ABS    hungry-EVD  
I am/feel hungry.
- (45) a    ʻmA    ʻsʰe ŋi-φ                      ʻhkē hto-kaʻ  
this    boiled meat-ABS    solid-EVD  
This boiled meat is tough.
- a    ʻmA    ʻsʰe ŋi-φ                      ʻhkē hto-ŋəŋ  
this    boiled meat-ABS    solid-EVD  
This boiled meat is tough.

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

- (46) a    ʻkoŋ tso-φ    ʻhtci:-ŋəŋ  
work-ABS    busy-EVD  
(I am) busy on the work. (as a general status)  
(situation: an enunciation how many the speaker's work exists)
- b    ʻkoŋ tso-φ    ʻhtci:-kaʻ  
work-ABS    busy-EVD  
(I am) busy on the work. (working now)  
(situation: the speaker feels this work makes him/her busy)

<sup>32</sup>The Zhollam dialect has an ergative construction, but the ergative marking is not obligatory.

Typically, (46a) appears in the answer to a question “how is your work?” whereas (46b) appears in that to a question “are you busy?” The former should be uttered in front of the desk of the speaker, and it implies a feeling of the speaker “you look, there are so many documents.”

When making a statement about the addressee, one can use neither /ŋɔŋ/ nor /<sup>h</sup>ka<sup>ʃ</sup>/, as in:

(47)    <sup>h</sup>tɕ<sup>h</sup>uʔ-φ    <sup>ʃ</sup>diɔ<sup>ʃ</sup>-pə-tshɪ:

2-ABS       tired-PFT-ACH

You are tired.

(an expression corresponding to Chinese **ni xinku le**)

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

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

#### 4 Conclusion and some remarks

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

##### 1. copulative usage

- /-ŋɔŋ/: non-self-oriented speech, i.e. the subject is normally a 3rd person
- /ʃji/: self-oriented speech, i.e. the subject is attracted in the speech

##### 2. existential usage

- /-ŋɔŋ/: existence of non-human 3rd person, based on a visual experience
- /<sup>h</sup>juʔ/: possession of all the persons of which 2nd and 3rd persons take a suffix /-ŋɔŋ/, and also existence of non-human 3rd person with the suffix

##### 3. evidential usage as a verbal suffix

- /-ŋɔŋ/: representing visual experience of information
- /-ka<sup>ʃ</sup>/: representing direct sensory experience except the visual experience

The usage as a copulative verb stem is unique to the Zhollam dialect,<sup>33</sup> it is not attested in other Tibetan dialects. From the viewpoint of the formation of the verbal phrase, we should

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<sup>33</sup>The usage in the Zhollam dialect is quite common to the Melung subgroup of the Sems-kyi-nyila group including the mThachu dialect and the Daan dialect.

note that the copulative /ṽṅoŋ/ and the existential /ṽṅoŋ/ are different, and that the latter behaves like a main verb, but the former behaves as a main verb only in an affirmative phrase.

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

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

#### ABBREVIATIONS

1 . . . . . 1st person	DAT . . . . . dative	NML . . . . . nominaliser
2 . . . . . 2nd person	EVD . . . . . evidential marker	PFT . . . . . perfect
3 . . . . . 3rd person	EXV . . . . . existential verb	PRS . . . . . present
ABL . . . . . ablative	FUT . . . . . future	PSN . . . . . person name
ABS . . . . . absolutive	GEN . . . . . genitive	Q . . . . . question marker
ACH . . . . . achievement	LOC . . . . . locative	RDP . . . . . reduplication
CPV . . . . . copulative verb	NEG . . . . . negative	TOP . . . . . topic marker

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<sup>34</sup>One should notice: lack of a form corresponding to WrT **red**, which is used as a copulative verb in the other surrounding dialects around the mThachu subgroup. This word, in fact, is used as a stative verb (adjective) 'be well/alright' pronounced /'fiə̃˥˥/ as shown in (38) (cf. Suzuki 2011: 483). In addition, the construction as **yod snag** is not attested in the surrounding dialects, in which **yod red** is used instead. Therefore **snang** seems to substitute the whole field of **red** employed in the other dialects. This fact might be a key for explaining the development of the usage of **snang** in the Zhollam dialect.

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**Appendix: Phonological system of Gagatang Tibetan**

vowels

normal	i	e	ɛ	a	ə	ɜ	ʌ	ɑ	ɔ	o	u	ɯ	ɵ	ɣ	ʏ	ɹ
pharyngealised		eˀ	ɛˀ	aˀ	əˀ	ɜˀ		ɑˀ	ɔˀ	oˀ						
retroflex					ə̣											

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

consonants

p <sup>h</sup>	t <sup>h</sup>			k <sup>h</sup>
p	t	ṭ		k ʔ
b	d	ḍ		g
	ts <sup>h</sup>	ṭs <sup>h</sup>	ṭɕ <sup>h</sup>	
	ts	ṭɕ	ṭɕ	
	dz	ḍẓ	ḍẓ	
	s <sup>h</sup>	ʂ <sup>h</sup>	ɕ <sup>h</sup>	x <sup>h</sup>
	s	ʂ	ɕ	x h
	z	ẓ	ʐ	ɣ fi
m	n		ɱ	ɲ
ṃ	ṇ		ɱ̣	ɲ̣
	l	ḷ		
	ḷ			
w			j	

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

tones

ˉ : high-level    ˊ : rising    ˋ : falling    ˆ : rising-falling/mid-level