Historical Development of the Tibetan Evidential *tuu*[1]

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INTRODUCTION

The term "evidential" refers to a linguistic unit that encodes the speaker's sources of knowledge, such as direct experience, hearsay, or inference. Evidentials hardly constitute a coherent linguistic category, as the forms often carry multiple functions. In many languages, they not only express epistemic meanings but also are obligatory tense/aspect markers. Furthermore, they are used as discourse markers with pragmatic extensions to surprise, irony, and compliments (Slobin & Aksu, 1982).

It is interesting to note that almost all evidentials that are obligatory markers in many languages have grammaticalized from lexical verbs. The inventory of lexical verbs that have developed into evidential markers consists of motion verbs, perception verbs, and verbs of speaking. This is not surprising, given the fact that these verbs are related to actions, and they are primary means by which speakers acquire knowledge. The verb 'see,' for example, has a tendency to become a marker of visual evidence. Likewise, the verb 'say' often develops into a hearsay evidential. For a fuller account, see Matlock, (1989).

Tibetan presents an interesting case of the grammaticalization of the verb *tuu*.[2] The Modern Spoken Tibetan *tuu* has grammaticalized from *ʼdug* meaning 'to sit, stay'; 'to have, possess,' whose earliest usages are attested in late Old Tibetan. In this paper, I discuss meaning shifts of this verb from Old Tibetan (ca. 650–950 A.D.), Classical Tibetan, to Modern Spoken Tibetan (central dialect). Based on the cognitive approach, I have attempted to explain the grammaticalization of *tuu* in terms of spatialization metaphor which seems to pervade Tibetan language and thought. Finally, I argue that evidentiality is a novel development in Modern Spoken Tibetan. As a grammaticalized feature found in several Tibeto-Burman languages, it can be a result of language contact, not a genetic feature derived from Proto-Tibeto-Burman.

The paper consists of three major sections. Section 1 gives an introduction to the existential verb system of which *tuu* is a main part. Section 2 discusses the historical development of this existential verb in comparison with other lexemes that have similar meanings. The path of semantic change of this verb from Old Tibetan to Modern Spoken Tibetan will be proposed. Section 3 demonstrates how *tuu* has come to be associated with evidentiality by means of spatialization metaphor.

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[1] An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 26th International Conference on Sino-Tibetan Languages and Linguistics which was held in September 1993 at the National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka.

[2] Modern Spoken Tibetan (Central and Lhasa dialects) has two phonemic tones: high tone, represented by a line above the first vowel, and low tone, represented by a line below the first vowel. The second identical vowel of the word is generally pronounced with falling tone. However, to facilitate tonal markings in this paper, the falling tone is not marked.

TIBETAN EXISTENTIAL VERBS

Students of Tibetan are often confused by the perplexing usage of existential verbs which not only express the concepts of existence, location, or possession but also function as markers of aspect and evidentiality. These verbs are: *tuu, yɔɔ ree*, and *yöö*. Most textbooks written by Western scholars (e.g., Goldstein & Nornang, 1978) and by native grammarians (e.g., Skalbzan 'Gyurmed, 1981) seem to agree that *tuu* and *yɔɔ ree* differ from *yöö* in terms of person agreement. *tuu* and *yɔɔ ree* are generally used with third person subjects, whereas *yöö* is used with first person.[3]

As evidential markers, *tuu* is used contrastively with *yɔɔ ree* in two dimensions: direct vs. indirect source of knowledge, and new vs. old knowledge. In the first dimension, *tuu* connotes the speaker's direct source of knowledge, whereas *yɔɔ ree* implies that the reported information is obtained via hearsay or inference, such as the speaker's knowledge of the population of monks in Tibet in 1994 from reading a newspaper or being told by recent travelers in Tibet.[4] In the second dimension, the use of *tuu* indicates that the speaker has just learned the information reported in the utterance, such as upon unexpectedly finding a $20 bill in his pocket. The use of *yɔɔ ree*, on the other hand, suggests that the information is not new. The speaker has learned about it a long time ago. That is, the knowledge has already been assimilated in the speaker's consciousness. Table 1 demonstrates both dimensions of the evidential usage of *tuu* and *yɔɔ ree* .

Table 1. *Two Dimensions of tuu and yɔɔ ree*

	Source of Knowledge		Type of Knowledge	
	Direct	Indirect	New	Old
tuu	√		√	
yɔɔ ree		√		√

yöö does not convey any evidential function. This is not surprising given the fact that the form is generally used with the first person subject. The speaker has no need to make an assertion of what he or she has personally experienced (Givón, 1982). More

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[3]This distinction, however, is an understatement, as it has been pointed out that *tuu* and *yɔɔ ree* can also occur with first person and *yöö* with third person.

[4]There is another set of evidentials in the perfective system of Modern Spoken Tibetan: *sōŋ, -pə ree*, and *shaa*. These verbs typically convey a three-way evidential distinction: direct (visual) experience, hearsay, and inference. It is beyond the scope of this paper to deal with these evidentials. For more information, see Hongladarom (1993) and DeLancey (1991).

will be said on evidential and discourse functions of *tụu* and *yɔɔ rẹe* in the next section. Given the periphrastic construction of *yɔɔ rẹe*, it is clear that the form is a new development in Modern Tibetan. *yɔɔ rẹe* consists of existential *yod* [*yọ̈ö*] + verbal noun suffix *-pa* [pə] + copula *rẹe*. Moreover, the form is not attested in Old Tibetan texts.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF *TUU*

Old Tibetan

In Old Tibetan (OT) there are at least three verbs that express the concept of existence: (1) *mchis*; (2) *yod* [yọ̈ö], and (3) *'dug* [tụu]. Jäschke (1881) defined *mchis* as an "elegant form of *yod* meaning 'to be, exist." Since most available materials in OT are concerned with the history of Tibetan kings, it is not surprising to find that *mchis* occurs more frequently than *yod* or *'dug*. *Dug* is attested in late OT with the meanings of 'to sit, to stay, to remain' as well as 'to have, possess.' The honorific counterpart of these three existential verbs is *gzhug*, another common verb in OT texts.

Because of the relatively low rate of the occurrences of *'dug* and *yod* in OT, it is hard to draw a conclusion as to whether these verbs and *mchis* were used contrastively. *Mchis* in Modern Tibetan (at least in the central dialect) has become obsolete, whereas *'dug* and *yod* have developed contrastive usages in terms of evidential meanings, and person agreement, as mentioned in Section 1.

Yod and *'dug* are found in both monoclausal (as finite verbs often attached by the sentential finite vowel /o/) and multiclausal constructions (as non-finite verbs followed by conjunctive suffixes). (1) demonstrates the existential usage of *yod* as appeared in OT; (2) and (3) are among earliest examples of *'dug*. The verb in (2) means 'to have' and in (3) 'to stay'.

(1)   <u>Old Tibetan Chronicle</u> (P1283:0598)
          de-'i   nub phyogs na, sde   bchu tsham yod-e,[5]
          that-GEN   west side   if country ten   about EXIST-CS[6]
          'In the western direction of that (place), there were about ten nations,'

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[5]Notes on the transliteration system: hyphens are used only in agglutinate constructions when free morphemes are attached by bound ones. Commas are used to represent clause boundaries as indicated by single *shad* in Tibetan written texts. Period mark sentential boundaries. Note that in OT aspirated and non-aspirated initial obstruents are often used interchangeably. For example, the word *phyogs* 'side, direction' has two orthographic variants: *phyogs* and *pyogs*. /'/ and /n°/ represent voiced glottal fricative and nasal velar respectively.

[6]Abbreviations used in this paper: COP copular; CS conjunctive suffix; ERG ergative; EXIST existential; GEN genitive; H honorific; IDS indefinite suffix; IPF imperfective; NEG negative; PF perfective; PN proper noun; Q interrogative suffix; QS quotative suffix; SFS sentence-final suffix; VN verbal noun suffix.

(2)   <u>Old Tibetan Chronicle</u> (P1287:0037)
           myi-'i   myig bya   myig ltar 'dug-pa   'og nas
           human-GEN   eye   bird eye like EXIST-VN   under from
           'gebs-pa   gchig 'dod-ces zer nas,
           cover up-VNS   one   want-QS   say from
           '(He) said, "I want the one having human eyes (whose eyelids)
           cover upwards like a bird's."'

(3)   <u>Old Tibetan Chronicle</u> (P1287:0159)
           ṅ'i srinmo-zhigkyaṅ , zinporje'iga na 'dug   mod-kyi̇̀,
           I-GEN daughter-IDS-also, PN   in EXIST indeed-though
           khyed zer-ba   bzhin bya'o-zhes bkarstsal 'dus-te,
           you   say-VN   like   do-SFS-QS   say   (H)
           '(The king) said, "Though indeed one of my daughters is staying at
           Zinporje'iga, I will do as you said,"'

Classical Tibetan

The difference between *'dug* and *yod* in Classical Tibetan (CT) is not clear. Chang and Chang (1984) argue that *yod* is used in a subordinate clause when followed by a conjunctive suffix, such as *-ste*. This could have been a modern usage of the form because in CT examples of *'dug* in multiclausal constructions are attested, as in (4).

(4)   <u>The Story of Yugpacan the Brahman</u> (Jäschke, 1972, p. 92)
           yul-zhig na bramse   dbyugpacan-zhes bya-ba-zhig 'dug-ste,...
           place-IDS in brahman   PN   -QS   do-VN-IDS EXIST-CS
           'In a certain place there being a brahman called 'Dbyugpacan,...'

'Dug in (4) carries an existential function and is followed by the conjunctive suffix *-ste*. In Modern Tibetan, *yod* will be preferred in this construction.

(5)   <u>The Story of Yugpacan the Brahman</u> (Jäschke, 1972, p. 95)
           dedag   rgyalpo-'i   rkaṅpa la mgobo-s   phyag'tshal-te,
           they   king-GEN   foot   at head-ERG   prostrate-CS
           phyogs gcig-tu   'dug-go.
           side   one-toward   sit-SFS
           'They prostrated themselves with their head at the king's feet and sat
           down in one direction.'

(5) illustrates that *'dug* still retains its original meaning in CT, which is, in this case, 'to sit.' *'Dug* in Modern Tibetan is no longer used as a lexical item meaning to sit or to stay. That is, it has lost its lexical meanings and is used only as an existential verb marking evidentiality. In modern usage, the verb *sdod* [töö] will be employed to denote the meaning of to sit or to stay.

Modern Tibetan

In Modern Tibetan (MT), we found new occurrences of the existential *yɔɔ rẹe*. The verb is used in contrast with *tụu* in many respects described below.

As evidentials: *tụu* is used to encode new knowledge; *yɔɔ rẹe* indicates old knowledge (DeLancey, 1991). The terms new and old here refer to the status of knowledge. New knowledge is the type of knowledge that the speaker has just acquired via his or her personal experience. Thus the knowledge has yet to assimilate in his or her consciousness. Old knowledge, on the other hand, refers to the type of knowledge that the speaker acquired a long time ago; thus it has been assimilated in the speaker's consciousness.

As pragmatic markers: *tụu* is often used to indicate surprise. Therefore, it is not strange to find that *tụu* is common in dream narratives. Chang and Chang (1984) view the pragmatic distinction between *tụu* and *yɔɔ rẹe* as conveying degrees of certainty. To them, *tụu* is used to convey direct evidence; therefore, it implies the speaker's higher degree of certainty. On the contrary, *yɔɔ rẹe*, which conveys indirect source of knowledge, indicates the speaker's low degree of certainty. However, numerous examples demonstrate that the certainty hierarchy between these verbs does not always hold true. In many instances, *yɔɔ rẹe*, despite conveying indirect experience, can be interpreted as indicating the speaker's high degree of certainty. Often, we find that both verbs are employed simply to contrast with each other. If the speaker uses *tụu* in his utterance, the hearer may retort by using the other form. For example:

(6) [1] Tashi: koomoo ɲii tēe a   Give me two rupees.

    [2] Kusang: ŋạ la mịntụu   I don't have.

    [3] Tashi: yɔɔ rẹe   You have.

    [4] Kusang: yɔɔ marẹe   I don't have.

    [5] Tashi: yɔɔ rẹe ŋɛe mịk thūŋ cụŋ You have. I saw.

                           (Hongladarom, 1993, p. 179)

In this conversation, we see that the existential *tụu* and *yɔɔ rẹe* are not used to convey evidentiality. Instead, they become linguistic tools for the two speakers to win the argument. When Tashi asked Kusang to give him some money and she said that she did not have any using the negative form of *tụu*, Tashi retorted that she had some by choosing *yɔɔ rẹe*, which in this case seems to indicate the speaker's high degree of certainty.

As discourse markers: *tụu* indicates foregrounded knowledge, introducing a narrative action, whereas *yɔɔ rẹe* conveys backgrounded information, setting up a durative and spatial frame of discourse.

The contrast between *tụu* and *yɔɔ rẹe* is summarized in Figure 1 in which *tụu* is associated with such functions as marking direct experience, indicating foregrounded

information, and reporting a specific event. On the other hand, *yɔɔ reę* is used to mark indirect knowledge obtained through hearsay, establish a story frame by providing backgrounded information, and convey the speaker's old, general knowledge. The fuzzy boundary where the two circles overlap illustrates that the range of usage of *tųu* and *yɔɔ reę* is not restricted to the functions specified to the right and left of each circle. Like the usages of many linguistic symbols, the choices of *tųu* and *yɔɔ reę* with regard to these functions are indeterminate.

Discourse Functions
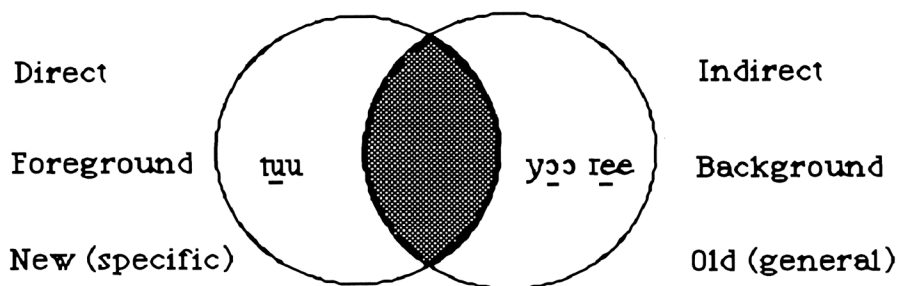
Figure 1. Discourse Functions of **tųu** and **yɔɔ reę**

Examples (7) to (9) illustrate different functions of *tųu* in Modern Spoken Tibetan.

(7) phǫö lə   yāa   maŋpo   tųu
     Tibet in   yak   many   EXIST
     'There are many yaks in Tibet.'

(8) încii kēe   shetạa shîŋ-ki   tųu-ka
     English language   a lot   know-PF   EXIST-Q
     '(She) knows English a lot, right?'

(9) phǫo-pa lə menta yɔɔ   ma-re-wa,
     Tibet-VN to gun   EXIST NEG-COP-Q
     menta kaŋka kyami   phɔ̃ɔ-pə ree.
     gun   all   Chinese seize-PF COP
     əni tapto shųu-ki   tųu-sa.   phǫö-pɛɛ... tapto
     well stone throw-IMP EXIST-QS   Tibetan-ERG stone
     tentso shųu-ki   tųu-sa
     those throw-IMP   exist-Q
     'Tibetans did not have guns, did they? The Chinese seized all the guns (I was told). Well, then they say they (Tibetans) were throwing stones (at the Chinese)...They say Tibetans were throwing those stones.'

The speaker of (7) not only reports the statement that there are many yaks in Tibet but also indicates, through the choice of the existential *tuu*, that the statement is part of her or his newly acquired knowledge.[7] The speaker of (8) uses *tuu* (in the tag question form *tuuka*) to convey her surprise at what she found out at the moment of speaking, namely that the referred person knew English. Also, *tuuka*, translated here as 'right?' (sometimes it is more suitable to translate it as 'you know'), is used to direct the hearer's attention to the statement. Interestingly, *tuu* in the tag question form has no evidential meaning, and the distinction with *yɔɔ rewa* (tag question form of *yɔɔ ree*) is not at all clear. In (9) *tuu* appears in the quotative form, followed by the hearsay suffix -*sa*. *tuusa* is preferred in this context to *yɔɔ reesa* (i.e., *yɔɔ ree*) perhaps because the reported statement describes a narrative action. That is, *tuu* is used here as a foregrounding device.

Table 2. *Direction of Change of* **tuu**

STAGE I	STAGE II	STAGE III
'stay, sit'	> 'be, have'	> (a) temporal auxiliary verb
		> (b) copula (occurring with attributive adjectives)
		> (c) evidential marker > pragmatic/discourse contrast

So far we have seen that *tuu* has become a complex verb with various pragmatic and discourse functions. The verb has a wider scope ranging from propositional to epistemic or indexical. Based on the prediction of unidirectionality of change (Traugott & Heine, 1991), we may conclude the direction of grammaticalization of *tuu* as in Table 2. Stages I, II, and III do not necessarily correlate with OT, CT, and MT respectively. The functions developed in Stage II are still retained in MT. Table 2 does not show the relationship between tense and evidential meanings (note the different development patterns of a and c). Though it has been demonstrated that evidentials, especially those marking inference arise from perfects,[8] at the moment I am reluctant to make a claim that the temporal usage of *tuu* precedes its development as an evidential.

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[7]Many native speakers did not deny the function of *tuu* as a linguistic coding of new knowledge. But their first reactions to the question about this verb tended to be that the verb encodes visual experience.

[8]Examples of evidentials that have correlations with perfects: the Turkish indirect experiential -*mis* (cf. Slobin & Aksu, 1982), and the inferential *tɔl* in Newari. (cf. Genetti, 1986).

SPATIALIZATION METAPHOR AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF
TUU

Many linguists agree that metaphor plays an important role in the grammaticalization of evidentials (Matlock, 1989; Willett, 1988). In particular, Matlock convincingly argues that the metaphor KNOWING IS SEEING is the basis of the development of evidentials that arise from verbs of visual perception. As we have seen, evidentials in Tibetan are problematic because they are not grammaticalized from perception verbs but from existential verbs. Instead of using this conceptual metaphor, I want to argue that the evidential development of the Tibetan *tuu* can be explained by looking at a kind of spatialization metaphor which seems to permeate Tibetan culture.

The spatial contrast I want to focus my attention on is the distinction between remote and immediate which is basic to human perception and is a basis of many grammatical structures in natural languages, such as deixis and person agreement (i.e. first versus non-first person). This spatial contrast can be mapped onto the evidential contrast, in our case, the distinction between *yɔɔ rẹe* and *tuu* (old versus new knowledge), as illustrated in Figure 2. Old knowledge is inactive in our memory; it is not yet activated at the moment of speaking. Therefore, it is remote in consciousness. On the other hand, new knowledge is vivid, immediate, and active in consciousness.
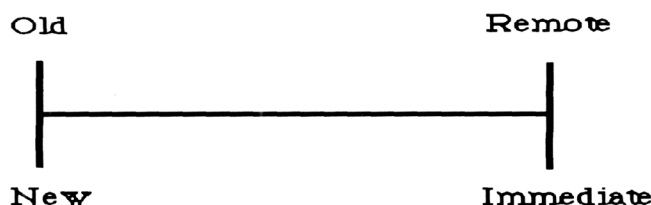

Figure 2. Mapping of old/new knowledge and spatial contrast.

To look at the development of evidentials from this spatialization metaphor is advantageous because it is not arbitrary or an ad-hoc rule. The Tibetans are aware of this spatial contrast, whose metaphorical extension covers such notions as *bdag* 'self' and *gzhan* 'other.' The self/other distinction is a basis of the Tibetan way of thinking including the way they conceive of grammar. For example, Tibetan Buddhists call themselves *naŋpa* 'insiders' and non-Buddhists *chỉipa* 'outsiders.' Moreover, honorific marking in Tibetan clearly demonstrates the underlying deictic perception (Beckwith, 1992). Importantly, Tibetan grammarians have used this spatial distinction to explain the difference between transitive and intransitive clauses. Transitive clauses are utterances that make a distinction between self and other (self refers to an agent in ergative case; other is indicated by an object in absolute case), whereas intransitive clauses are utterances that do not make the distinction.[9] Figure 3 illustrates the relationship between the spatial contrast remote/immediate and the indigenous distinction self/other.

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[9]See Tillman's (1989) for the study of *bdag* and *gzhan* in indigenous grammatical texts.

self   **immediate**

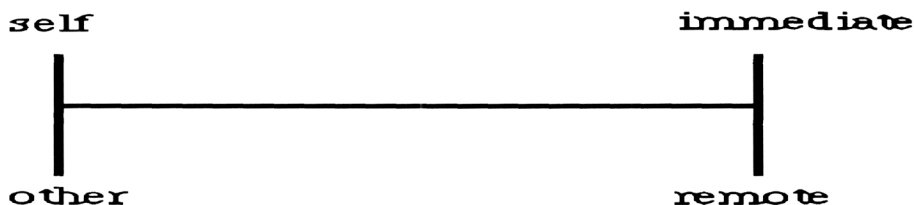**other**   **remote**

Figure 3. Mapping of self/other distinction and spatial contrast.

We have seen that both evidential contrasts and the self/other distinction have metaphorical relationship with the spatial contrast, remote and immediate. As Lakoff and Johnson (1980) point out, orientational metaphors have crucial impacts on various linguistic concepts based on different experiential grounds. However, more work needs to be done in Tibetan and other languages before we can make any concluding statements about the relationship between spatialization metaphor and evidential development.

CONCLUSION

Let me summarize the main points concerning the development of *tuu*. The verb is attested in late Old Tibetan with the meanings of 'to sit, stay' and 'to have, possess.' The verb has already exhibited a tendency to become an existential verb, thus contrasting with the older existential *yod* [yöö]. This tendency is clearly seen in Classical Tibetan where more occurrences of *tuu* are found in existential constructions with the meaning of 'there is, there are.' When we investigate the usage of this verb in Modern Spoken Tibetan, we see that a number of interesting developments emerge. First, the verb contrasts with *yöö* in terms of person agreement. Generally it is used with third person subjects, whereas the latter is used with first person or in third person constructions which are speaker-oriented. Second, another existential verb appears. This new verb, *yɔɔ ree*, is also generally used with third person subjects; therefore, it enters into a paradigmatic contrast with *tuu*. Apart from being existentials in third person constructions, both linguistic forms are used as tense-aspect as well as evidential markers. Using the insight from research on metaphor based on the cognitive approach, I offer an account for the emergence of evidentiality in *tuu* and *yɔɔ ree*. I do not discuss tense-aspect functions of these existentials in this paper, for the temporal system in Tibetan is another important topic which deserves studying in its own right. My goal in this paper is simply to demonstrate the path of change of *tuu*, how the form has come to be associated with grammatical meanings over time.

Finally, I want to draw our attention to the implications we can make from the historical development and the paths of semantic change of the Tibetan *tuu*. It is interesting to note that of all Southeast Asian (SEA) languages, evidentiality seems to be a salient feature in Tibeto-Burman languages alone. Most SEA languages have lexical verbs or adverbs that can be used to report evidential functions. For example, Thai employs an optional serial verb construction *dâi yin maa wâa* (lit. get-hear-come-

say, with *wâa* grammaticalized as a complementizer) to indicate the hearsay source of the reported statement. The verb *yùu* 'to stay' has developed (progressive) aspectual function but does not indicate evidentiality.

Strikingly, Newari, a Tibeto-Burman language geographically near Tibetan, exhibits a grammaticalization pattern of evidential morphemes in a similar manner to Tibetan. The verbs *con* 'to stay, remain' and *tɔl* 'to keep, put' developed evidential functions similar to the Tibetan *ṭ̣uu* and *shāa* (Genetti, 1986). Both Newari *con* and Tibetan *ṭ̣uu* are existential verbs that have developed evidential meanings. *tɔl* and *shạa* are versatile verbs. They still retain independent lexical meanings and are additionally used to mark perfect and inference. Genetti (1986) notes that though these morphemes are not cognates (judging from their phonological make-ups), we may speculate that their independent developments are mutually influenced. In comparison with Tibetan, it will be interesting to investigate the role of spatialization metaphor on the development of existential verbs in Newari.

Is it possible that the grammaticalization of evidentials in Tibetan and Newari reflect language contact between these two languages? If it is so we may wonder how far this diffusion goes. Upon examining documents in Old Tibetan, we see that *ṭ̣uu* (and other verbs) have not developed evidential meanings until much later. Data on Newari also demonstrate that this feature is grammaticalized, interestingly, from existential verbs. In this way, we may conclude that evidentiality is not a genetic feature in Proto-Tibeto-Burman. However, the question of areal significance still awaits our studies of evidential developments in other Tibeto-Burman languages.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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