

Quand les paroles ne suivent pas l'ORDRE de la LANGUE:

the case of 'evidentiality' in Ladakhi

(a Tibetic language of northwestern-most India)

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1. Why – La LANGUE and the problem of rule-centrism

Linguistic analysis typically concerns the systematicity of syntactic rules and paradigmatic relations, particularly of the 'better known', 'greater' languages, typically of Europe.

Typological descriptions of the remaining bulk of languages likewise tend to aim at the systematicity behind individual parameters, with a major focus on comparability.

Both approaches target the abstract potentiality of *la langue*, idealised linguistic *champs élysées*, rather than the actual usage under pragmatic restrictions in the swampy playground of *les paroles*. The definitions thus achieved can be applied only with difficulties to individual 'lesser known' 'minority languages'.

2. Where and what – Ladakhi



The Ladakhi language (or *ladakse skat* in the dialect of Leh) is spoken in the northwestern-most corner of India, formerly part of the State of Jammu & Kashmir, since October 2019, a Union Territory ruled by the Central Government.

The Tibetic dialects spoken within Ladakh fall into three larger groups: 1. Balti-Purikpa, 2. Shamskat, 3. Kenhat. The main divide is between the first two groups and the third one, the former differentiating between agents and possessors, the latter not. The Balti-Purikpa group further shows a much less developed 'evidential' or 'egophoric' or 'epistemic' system.

3. Where from: Evidentiality & Egophoricity

3.1 Evidentiality

In the crosslinguistic discussion evidentiality is defined as the (grammatical) marking of *information source*. From the point of information technology, there can be only two sources: a) the information belongs to the sender, that is, the sender is the source, and b) the information is external to the sender, that is, it

comes from a different source. For humans we may say information is a) personal and b) reported.

However, evidentiality is often described as differentiating between a) direct knowledge or sense perceptions and b) indirect knowledge or hearsay *and* inferences.

3.2 Egophoricity

Egophoricity, as the term has come to be appropriated, refers to the special if not equal treatment of the speaker in statements and the addressee in (information-seeking) questions versus all other persons: 1 vs. 2+3 / Q: 2 vs. 1+3

At its very broadest, *egophoricity* is a general phenomenon of linguistically flagging the personal knowledge, experience, or involvement of a conscious self; [...]. More narrowly, **egophoricity is the grammaticalised encoding of the personal or privileged knowledge or involvement** of a potential speaker (the primary knower) in a represented event or situation. [...] Most **typically**, a marker that is egophoric is **found with first person subjects in declarative sentences and with second person subjects in interrogative sentences**. (San Roque, Floyd, Norcliffe 2017: 2)

The more original approach by Tournadre applies to grammatical markers that specifically refer to (or even index, Agha 1993) the 'ego' or epistemic origo or main speech-act participant (msap) in whatever syntactic or semantic role:

1. markers of active involvement: *yin* (vs. 'factual' *red*), *yod* (vs. experiential *hdug*); 2. marker of receptive, endocentric involvement: *byun* (vs. exocentric *soñ*); 3. marker of singular experience: *myoñ*; 4. marker of endophatic experience: *hdug*.

All four markers can be used in these functions only when one talks about oneself – as actor, as recipient or goal, as having made a particular experience (e.g. of having been in a certain place or having tasted a particular dish), or of feeling pain or emotions (and accordingly for the addressee in questions).

This distinction crosscuts the evidential functions of these marker, privileged access (*yin* and *yod*), immediate perception (*hdug*, *rag*), perception of past events directed towards the origo (*byun*), perception of past events not directed towards the origo (*soñ*), 'factual' or 'neutral' (*red*).

Taken together, the Tibetic 'egophoric'-'evidential' systems differentiate between fully assimilated personal experiences **within one's territory of information** (TOI; for this term cf. Kamio 1997), versus numerically limited sense perceptions versus inferences and assumptions versus (attributable) second-hand knowledge – *and* versus shared/ shareable knowledge and/ or pragmatic hedging.

4. How – the Ladakhi unsystematic 'system'

The so-called 'evidential' markers and the (more) epistemic markers used in Ladakhi have a *prototypical* usage, as known from the standard descriptions of Tibetic 'evidential' systems, but also various *non-standard, marked* usages.

Table 1 Ladakhi ‘evidentials’ – schematic

MSAP +ctr self-evident assertive (X)	OTHER ±ctr, MSAP –ctr (=OTHER)		‘neutral’/ shared/°able
	experiential		
	visual (Y)	non-visual(Z)	
<i>yin / yod</i>	<i>hdug (/ snañ)</i>	<i>rag</i>	GRD+ <i>yin</i> / GEM

MSAP = Main Speech Act Participant: speaker in statements, addressee in questions, only controlled actions. OTHER = all others. GRD = gerund; GEM = generalised evaluative marker.

Table 2 Prototypical system of Ladakhi ‘evidentials’

domain	MSAP +ctr self-evident assertive (X)	OTHER ±ctr, MSAP –ctr (=OTHER)		“neutral”/ shared/°-able
		experiential		
		visual (Y)	non-vis.(Z)	
future	<i>yin</i>	—		GRD + <i>yin</i>
past/ anterior	<i>yin</i>	stem II (.PA) + ø (<i>soñ, (byuñ)</i>)		
copula identity	<i>yin</i>	—		GEM
copula attribute	<i>yin / yod</i>	<i>hdug/ snañ</i>	<i>rag</i>	GEM
existential	<i>yod</i>	<i>hdug/ snañ</i>	<i>rag</i>	(PRF + GEM)
present/simult.	<i>yod</i>	<i>hdug/ snañ</i>	<i>rag</i>	—
habitual/gener.	<i>yod</i>	<i>hdug/ snañ</i>	<i>rag</i>	NLS+GEM/GRD+ <i>yin</i>
perfect/result.	<i>yin / yod</i>	<i>hdug/ snañ</i>	<i>rag</i>	GEM
all verbal domains	OTHER (& MSAP)			
	evaluative markers		second hand	
	<i>yin / yod / stem + EM, SEM</i>		<i>lo, zer, mol</i>	

EM = evaluative markers for inferences, probabilities, mental distance; GEM = generalised evaluative/ epistemic marker with pragmatic functions; SEM = specialised evaluative marker for inferences from non-visual input

Table 3 Non-Prototypical use: Ladakhi ‘evidentials’

Domain	<i>yin / yod</i>		<i>hdug (/ snañ)</i>	
identification	MSAP	OTHER	—	—
future	MSAP	OTHER	—	—
past/ anterior	MSAP	OTHER	—	—
attributive	MSAP	OTHER	OTHER	
existential	MSAP	OTHER	OTHER	MSAP
present/ simultaneous	MSAP	OTHER	OTHER	
perfect/ resultative	MSAP	OTHER	OTHER	MSAP
prospective	MSAP	OTHER	OTHER	MSAP
All domains			other markers	
evaluative markers			OTHER	MSAP
quotation markers			OTHER	

4.1 Summing up: the definitions do not hold what they promise

X = ‘egophoric’ and ‘non-experiential’:

copula and auxiliary *yin*, existential and auxiliary linking verb *yod*

Y = ‘experiential’ or immediate ‘visual observation’, existential verb *hdug*

Z = ‘experiential’ or immediate ‘non-visual observation’ verb *rag*

4.2 Some examples

A. Within one’s TOI, one may choose Y instead of X according to one’s spontaneous evaluation of the situation and perhaps also one’s actual mood

- (1) a. Repeated personal experience, Leh bazaar
 BZ: *mar jod-a le?* – Shopkeeper: *duk, duk.*
 butter exist(X)-QM hon – exist(Y) exist(Y)
 BZ: ‘Do you have butter? <X: I expect you to know, I take you to be responsible.>
 – Shopkeeper: ‘Yes, there is. <Y: But why do you call upon my responsibility?>’

- b. Repeated personal experience, same shop & shopkeeper
 BZ: *mar dug-a le?* – Shopkeeper: *jot, jot.*
 butter exist(Y)-QM hon – exist(X) exist(X)
 BZ: ‘Do you by chance have butter? <Y: I’m just asking, not claiming your responsibility>’ – Shopkeeper: ‘Yes, of course we have butter. <X: No need to be shy. I know well, it’s my shop after all.>’ – *da capo al infinito* ...

B. Z (‘non-visual’) can only be used when vision is ruled out: e.g., if a dog is visible, Y (‘visual’) has to be used when talking about its barking same for a cat purring; if one has seen the labourers at work before one enters a room, and if in that room one suddenly hears a loud noise, one complains about the noise with the visual marker.

- (2) a. Domkharpa (FD 2012)
bila-s mane ton-en-(n)uk. / *ton-en-(n)ak.*
 cat-ERG mane utter-CONT-Y=PRS utter-CONT-Z=PRS
 ‘The cat is murmuring *mane* [prayers] = is purring (Y: as I ‘see’: the cat is in view / Z: as I *only* hear: the cat is out of view).’

- b. Sharapa (FD 2016)
taksa pila mane tōn-duk. / *tōn-a-rak.*
 now cat prayer utter-Y=PRS utter-NLS-Z=PRS
 ‘The cat is purring now.’ (According to the blind speaker: Y: “The cat is close enough that I can feel or touch her.” / Z: The cat is behind, out of reach, or outside the room.)

C. Y (‘other’) cannot be used when observer or observed leave the observation space in which the observer was somehow involved; X (‘self’) is then used.

- (3) Ciktanpa (FD 2016)
naniñ ŋa khañma+(;) lep-tsana,
 last.year I home+ALL arrive-when
ŋatfi zanzos tshañma-s phjak be+(;)n-jotsuk.
 we.excl.GEN family all-ERG prayer do+CNT-Y=IPRF
dañ ŋa khañma-na biñ-mana, khorñ ŋu-in-jot-pin.
 yesterday I home-ABL go.out-NLS& they cry-CNT-X-RM=IPRF
 ‘Last year, when I arrived home, all family members were just praying (Y: New visual observation, includes end of situation). Yesterday, when I left home, they were crying.’ (X: Speaker left the observation space; does not know how situation comes to an end.) Purikpa *jotsuk* is a regular counterpart of past-tense Y *duk-pin*.

Similar examples have been obtained from all dialects, the ongoing activity upon departure is regularly presented with the continuative imperfect V-*en-jot-pin* (X).

- (4) a. Lehpa (2014, about guests who had left the other day)
khon trekking-LOC *son-ste-jot. ...*
 they trekking-LOC go.PA-CP-X=PRF
khon-e dzola bor-te-duk.
 they-ERG/GEN bag put-CP-Y=PRF
 ‘They went trekking. (X: The persons left the observation space) [...] They left their bags [in the room over there].’ (Y: The speaker does not want to take responsibility for the bags. The bags are out of view, yet still accessible.) – Getting used to the situation may change the implicit evaluation:
- b. Lehpa (2014, about the same absent guests, ten days later)
kh+e dzola bor-te-jot.
 s/he+GEN/ERG bag put-CP-X=PRF
 ‘S/he has left/ left his/her bag(s) [in the room over there].’ (The speaker may have made up with her responsibility or simply got used to it by repeatedly talking about it.)
- D. Both Y and Z (‘immediate sense perceptions’) may express inferences, based on perceptive input and/ or world knowledge.
- (5) a. Tagmacikpa (FD 2019)
derin danmo dak. / *duk.*
 today cold be(Z) be(Y)
 ‘Today I (subjectively) feel (Z) cold [independent of the weather]. / Today it is (X: visibly) cold (implied: as I can see the clouds).’ (With respect to the second alternative, the informant comments that without the clouds one would not be able to see that it is cold; the temperature is merely inferred, based on visual input.)
- b. Shachukulpa (FD 2016)
tuu tanmu duk. fia zer-na, kho_ "da-ruk.
 child cold be(Y) why say-CD s/he tremble-Y=PRS
 ‘The child is/ has cold. That is, s/he is shivering.’ (Y: The speaker can only infer that the child has cold, upon observing his/her behaviour or looks.) – Cf. Plungian 2010: “speakers cannot have equally reliable information about the physiological state of another person as they may have about their own state. They may only draw conclusion on this state on the basis of some indirect signs.”
- (6) a. Ciktanpa (FD 2017)
di-a armi kemp-tfik dak.
 this-ALL army camp-LQ exist(Z)
 ‘Here is an army camp (Z: as I can ‘hear’ [the dogs]).’ (In Ciktan, people do not hold dogs, but dogs are fed at army camps, so upon hearing the dogs, one can infer that there is a camp.)
- b. Tiritpa (FD 2002)
dan tshanphet-naphala tsha-ze
 yesterday night.middle-from.onwards chan-INSTR
na tsho+ts-ak.
 I talk.nonsense+LB+Z=PRF
 ‘Yesterday, from the middle of the night onwards, I must have been talking nonsense because of [too much] *chan* (the local beer).’ (Z: The speaker is trying to put together what happened the night before, after s/he passed out. S/he may have some distant memory of his/her words or s/he may have also heard some remarks from the other people. However, there is no audible result.)
- E. Y (‘visual’) can be used by some speakers for a non-visual sensation in case of more intensive/ definitive input. Inversely, Z may be used for a superficial visual perception.
- (7) a. Kharnakpa (FD 2018)
na+(i) wanda-nan peni du? / ta?
 I+AES pocket-PPOS money have(Y) have(Z)
 ‘I have [some] money in my pocket (Y: touching the money when groping inside the pocket, which is a bit more sure than / Z: only feeling from outside).’
- b. Faðumpa (FD 2019)
han! pene khur-de-mi-ndu? / khur-de-me-ra?
 intj money carry-LB-NG-Y=PRF carry-LB-NG-Z=PRF
 ‘Oh my, I don’t have/ didn’t take money with me.’ (X: when looking more carefully into the purse or when the situation is exceptional or surprising, because it is against one’s habits. / Z: when groping without looking, but also when looking into the purse somewhat superficially.)
- F. X (‘self’) is used for other persons or items in one’s TOI.
- (8) Gya-Mirupa (FD 2013)
pala-a petse hot.
 cow-AES calf have(X)
 ‘The cow is with a calf.’ (X: The cow belongs to the MSAP, who already knows or is responsible.)
- G. X (‘non-experiential’) may be based on repeated sensory input, so that an item outside one’s TOI becomes part of one’s TOI.
- (9) a. Khardongpa (FD 2016)
tiri jul-a me rgatp+ek jot.
 Tiri village-ALL grandfather old-LQ exist(X)
 ‘There is an old grandfather in the Tiri village.’ (X: The informant comments: “I am not a Tiri person, but I go there quite often.” The speaker treats the old man as his personal acquaintance=>TOI.)
- H. X (‘self’) indicates one’s personal involvement in environments that objectively do not belong to one’s TOI.
- (10) a. Lingshetpa (FD 2016)
skara gonpa+(i)
 Skara monastery-ALL
*guru rimpoche+(i) sku *(zan-se)-duk.*
 Guru Rimpoche+GEN hon.statue hon.erec-CP-Y=PRF
 ‘In the Skara monastery, there is a statue of Guru Rimpoche (Padma Sambhava).’ (Y: The speaker, not related to the monastery, as he is from a different, far-off village, was not involved in setting up the statue.)
- b. Lingshetpa (FD 2016)
*skara gonpa+(i) kargjut sethin *(zan-se)-jot.*
 Skara monastery-ALL Bkah.brgyud lineage hon.erec-CP-X=PRF
 ‘In the Skara monastery, there is the Bkah.brgyud lineage.’ (X: The speaker, not related, was involved as painter.)
- I. X (‘self/ own’) does not occur when the one does not have the authority to represent a situation as personal, namely in the case of shared or shareable knowledge. In that case, epistemic markers must be used.

- (11) Lehpa dialog-type
neraŋ-e jul-a tʃi joŋ-a-nok?
 hon.you-GEN country-ALL what come-NLS+GEM=DPG
nas joŋ-anog-a? to joŋ-a-nog-a? –
 barley come-NLS.GEM-QM wheat come-NLS+GEM=DPG-QM
ŋaʃi jul-a nas-aŋ joŋ-a-nok,
 we.excl.GEN country-ALL barley-FM come-NLS+GEM=DPG
to-aŋ joŋ-anok. inaŋ ɖas joŋ-a-ma-nok.
 wheat-FM come-NLS+GEM=DPG but rice come-NLS-NG+GEM=DPG
 ‘What [kind of crops] are (**generally**) growing (lit. coming) in your country? Do you (**generally**) have (lit. does come) barley? Do you (**generally**) have wheat? – In our country we (**generally**) have barley as well as wheat. But we (**generally**) don’t grow rice.’

J. X (‘own’) is not used, when one rejects any closer identification with the situation, even if this objectively belongs to one’s TOI, as in the case of habits of one’s family members.

- (12) Shachukulpa (FD 2016)
ŋe aba-le zaktan tʃho sil-uk. / sil-at.
 I-GEN father-hon every.day religion read-Y=PRS read-X=PRS
 ‘My father reads religious texts every day.’
 (Y indicates mere observation; the speaker does not consider him/herself a religious person or doesn’t care about the father’s habit. /
 X indicates that the speaker knows well, does the same thing, or cares about the father’s habit.)

- (13) Ciktanpa (FD 2017)
mamani-tsana julpa-s zan maŋmo khjoŋ-ma+t.
 mamani-when villager-ERG food much bring-NLS+X=HAB
dutsek zan khjoŋ-en-duk ki mi-sak ɖaŋ-se,
 this.much food bring-CNT-Y=PRS that people-PL be.full-LB
torobalaŋ-sag-a taŋ-ma-rgos-en-duk,
 cattle.cow-PL-ALL give-NLS-need-CNT-Y=PRS
ɖʒap ki zan qamti [qimati] in.
 when that food precious be(X)
mamani-tsana rgos-p+i zan-tʃi fi(ŋ)-na, tʃhik duk.
 mamani-when need-NLS+GEN food-LQ take.out-CD ok be(Y)
 ‘At the mamani festival people (always) bring a lot of food (X: habit in one’s TOI). [But] they (always) bring so much food that everybody is full, and one (always) has to give [the rest] to the cattle (Y: critical stance or distanced view of the habit), even though the food is precious (X: objective fact). It would be better (Y: personal view), if one takes out only as much food as needed (lit. if [one] takes out the needed food, it is ok) at the mamani festival.’

X is used neutrally for a well-known habit. / Y is used for a critical or distanced view of the habit. Here the speaker opposes the fact that so much precious food is thrown away. In the second part, X is used for an objective fact (food IS precious), <while Y indicates a more subjective evaluation and wish.>

K. X (‘self’) is avoided for one’s own activities, when the addressee has been involved, since X would indicate that one knows better.

- (14) a. Gya-Mirupa (FD 2019)
*daŋ oyo ŋek+e alu tōn. / *tōn-pen.*
 yesterday we.incl both+ERG potato extract.Y/Z(PST) *extract-X=PST
 ‘Yesterday, we both (you and me) took out the potatoes [from the field].’

- b. corresponding counterpart exclusive plural
*daŋ ŋaʃa ŋek+e alu tōn-pen. / *tōn.*
 yesterday we.excl both+ERG potato extract-X=PST *extract.Y/Z(PST)
 ‘Yesterday, we both (but not you) took out the potatoes [from the field].’

L. In contrastive constructions, the markers depend on one’s *attitude towards the contrastee*, hence the inversion of standard and contrastee can lead to a *different marker*, although the knowledge type concerning each element and the abstract relation of difference between the two members remains exactly the same. (Word order does not play a role, nor the presence of the inverted counterpart)

- (15) a. Sharapa (FD 2017)
 contrastee standard
ɕar+e gonpa lē lākaŋ som+esaŋ tʃhuŋ-a-zik fot.
 ɕara+GEN monastery Leh temple new+CNTR small-NLS-LQ be(X)
 ‘The ɕara monastery is small in contrast to (> *is smaller than*) the New Temple of Leh.’ (X: The speaker talks about the monastery of her village, with which she feels related.)

- b. Sharapa (FD 2017)
 contrastee standard
lē lākaŋ soma ŋaz+e gonp+esaŋ tʃhe-a-zik duk.
 Leh temple new we.excl+GEN monastery+CNTR big-NLS-LQ be(Y)
 ‘The New Temple of Leh is large in contrast (> *is larger than*) our monastery.’ (Y: The speaker **does not feel related with** the New Temple of Leh and/or **has experienced this building only briefly**.)

- (16) Tagmacigpa (FD 2019)
 standard contrastee
domkhar-i gonpa-basaŋ tagmatfig-i gonpa tʃuŋ-ba in.
 Domkhar-GEN monastery-CNTR Tagmacik-GEN monastery be.old-NLS be(X)
 standard contrastee
tagmatfig-i gonpa-basaŋ domkhar-i gonpa soma intsok.
 Tagmacik-GEN monastery-CNTR Domkhar-GEN monastery new be(GEM)
 ‘The monastery of Tagmacik [X: that is, ours,] is older than the monastery of Domkhar. The monastery of Domkhar [GEM: that is, theirs,] is newer than the monastery of Tagmacik.’ (Domkhar is just across the river, and most people of both villages have relatives on the respective other side.)

M. A speaker’s subjective stance may also be reflected in quotations. Not only can a subjective evaluation be added to, or subtracted from, the reported situation, the reportative marker itself can convey an evaluative overtone.

- (17) Faɖumpa (FD 2019)
a tugu-hun-e khiz+e khampa+(i)
 over.there child-PL-ERG fam.you.excl+GEN house-ALL
*hunma hu-tʃe ɕzer-a-ra? / zer-du? / *lo*
 theft steal-GRD=PFUT &say-NLS-Z=PRS say-Y=PRS *QOM
 ‘Those youngsters over there are saying that they will steal from (lit. in) your house.’ (Z indicates that one has nothing to do with the youngsters; one may or may not have observed them from close by. / Y indicates that the speaker takes interest in what they youngsters are saying or might have been involved, such as having participated in the discussion or planning. In the latter case, the quote marker *lo* could also be used. Both forms also indicate that the speaker was not addressed, since in this case the quote marker *lo* would be used.)

- (18) Tagmacikpa (2019)
 «lo sumŋu-isŋonla leho-s-aŋ ifu-iskorla pata ʔfos-pin» lo.
 year 30-PPOS LEHO-ERG-FM bird-PPOS knowledge do.PA-RM(X) QOM
 «de-tsana mi-ŋun-la ifu-i zak gana ʔtsi-et?»
 that-when people-PL-ALL bird-GEN day how celebrate-X=PRS
 ifu-i phantoks-iskorla pata min-duk sam» lo.
 bird-GEN benefit-PPOS knowledge NG-have(Y) think QOM
 «inan sŋonm-e mi-ŋun-la pata maŋbo ʔot-e-intsok» lo.
 but early+GEN person-PL-ALL knowledge much have-LB-GEM=PRF QOM
 «naran ʔakpo in, khor-a ses-a-met-sok»
 I.self strong be(X) they-AES know-NLS-NG.EX-INF/DST
 sam-[r]go+[a-men] zer-en-(n)ak-pin. otsok-fik lo.
 think-need+GRD-NG.X=GFUT say-CNT-Z-RM=IPRF that.like-LQ say
 ‘[He] said «30 years ago [we from] LEHO have also promoted knowledge about the birds.» [He] said «at that time I thought ‘how could [one] ever celebrate a bird’s day for the people, [as they] have no knowledge about the birds.» [He] said «but if one looks [more] closely, the people of the past had great wisdom (as I found out).» [He] said something along the lines (say+Z) «one should not think: ‘I am the best, they don’t know anything»» [He] said something like this.’ (According to the informant, say+Z may indicate that one is somewhat less sure, that one is just remembering, that one didn’t understand the words clearly, or that one didn’t pay enough attention. But one may also show one’s distance in the case of repeated “good advice”. This seems to be the main motivation in this case, because the *verbum dicendi* appears only in connection with a moral appeal.)

N. X may be used to indicate indignation or sarcasms.

- (19) Teyapa (FD 2013)
 ʔtos-aŋ! tsamfik kha rdaŋ-et!
 look.IMP-DIR how.much mouth open.wide-X=PRS
 ‘Look, how [you] are! [s/he] is yawning!’ (X: The speaker shows his/her indignation.)
- (20) Shachukulpa (FD 2016)
 eʔi p̄era t̄a-at. ŋa:(i) ts̄olosa p̄aplon ma-fion!!
 elder.sister speech give-X=PRS I.AES anus.place put.down.time NG-come
 ‘[Right now,] the elder sister is [calmly] talking [on her phone] (X: showing anger), and I [even] have no time to shit!!’ (Working together on the fields, but one person shuns the work.)
- (21) Lingshetpa (FD 2016)
 kber de kbi! ʔhugu dziks-ek, / dziks-et, thon-ma-thon?!
 take.way.IMP that dog child fear-Y=PRS fear-X=PRS see-NG-see
 ‘Take that dog away! Don’t you see (lit. You did not see at all) that the child is afraid?!’ ([Could be said about an unrelated child, seen crying; Y would be used neutrally,] assuming authority with X makes it more urgent.)

O. In a few dialects, X is used for shared observations (in other dialects other strategies are used to avoid the visual marker)

- (22) Domkhar (FD 2014)
 ar-ekana lanpoŋhe ʔh-et, d-o-a!
 over.there+PPOS:ABL elephant go+X=PRS that+DF-LOC
 ‘Wow, [look] at that, over there, there is an elephant walking!’ (Both speaker and addressee are looking, and the speaker is aware of this; if the speaker thinks s/he alone is looking and if s/he wants to draw the attention of the addressee to the situation, h̄dug would be used, only Shamskat dialects, for similar examples in Baltipa, cf. Jones 2009.)

P. The use of X depends on various pragmatic and social factors:

- (23) Faɖumpa (2019)
 kbo ʔit maŋpo t̄a-a-ʔot.
 s/he sleep much give-NLS-X=PRS
 ‘S/he sleeps a lot.’
 (This may be said about somebody one knows very well, already for a long time. It could be one’s brother, one’s best friend, people from one’s village; less likely the neighbours in Leh, but this depends: if they are close, if one often meets them at certain occasions in town and if one recognises them as neighbours and then starts visiting each other, then X can be used. – This also depends on whom one tells the situation. If the relationship to the person talked about is closer than to the addressee, X may be used; if one talks to one’s family members, then the relationship to the neighbours is weaker, and X cannot be used.)

Imagine further the following context: speaker S visits his/her sibling, addressee A, who has been absent from the family for, say, five years, and shows some photographs of the family to A.

When S expects that the persons in the photographs will be recognised immediately, s/he will likely choose the plain copula X *yin*.

If S assumes that A may have difficulties to recognise any family member (e.g., parents showing unexpected signs of age, younger siblings having grown up, or even the speaker wearing something very fashionable, a new hair stile, new glasses, etc.), S may choose the GEM *inok* or *intsok* to ease the knowledge asymmetry.

However, S may choose X *yin*, when s/he disregards the knowledge gap, focuses only on his/her own knowledge or demonstrates his/her pride about the fashionable look, or also emphasising that s/he took the shot. The choice of X may thus depend on S’s personal attitude towards A.

This can be seen as a question of respect or as a question of compassion, and in other situations also as a question of politeness.

- (24) a. Tagmacikpa (Shamskat, Western Shamma, field data 2019)
 d-u ŋati ama in / intsok.
 this-DF we.incl.GEN mother be(X) be(GEM)
 ‘This is our mother (X: as you surely recognise – or if not, I don’t care / GEM: as you might not recognise at once).’ (X: signals that A may immediately recognise the represented person or that S does not care about whether A can do so. / GEM: signals that it is a new photo and A might have difficulties to recognise the person [and S cares about filling the knowledge gap].)
- b. Tagmacikpa (Shamskat, Western Shamma, field data 2019)
 ʔtos-aŋ! d-u ŋa in. / intsok, ŋa stapfan mi-ndug-a?!
 look.IMP-DM this-DF I be(X) be(GEM) I fashionable NG-be.VIS-QM
 ‘Look! This is me, am I not fashionable?!’ (X: indicates that S feels very proud and expects A to recognise him/her easily. / GEM: indicates that S thinks s/he is difficult to recognise.)