"Flexibility" of personal and neutral forms in Denjongke

Workshop on Ego-Evidentiality and the right(s) to know (better)

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1. Introduction

Left map: Sikkim (India) and surrounding regions — Nepal, Chumbi (China), Ha (Bhutan), West Bengal (India). Labeled locations: Kangchendzönga, Lachen, Lachung, Mangan, Gangtok, Gyalshing, Namchi, Darjeeling.

Right map: INDIA — Location of State of Sikkim. Labeled: China, Nepal, SIKKIM, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Bay of Bengal.

Denjongke, Drenjongke, Dränjongke (pan-Tibetan)
Lhoke (typical endonym)
Sikkim Bhutia (exonym)
Sikkimese (Ethnologue, anglo-centric)
ISO 639-3 **sip**

1. Introduction

Examples in this presentation along with numbering are from:

Yliniemi, Juha. **2021**. A descriptive grammar of Denjongke [HL Archive 10]. *Himalayan Linguistics*. http://dx.doi.org/10.5070/H920146466

-->   This is an updated version of 2019 dissertation (and is preferably cited instead of the dissertation that is also found on the internet)

1. Introduction

Denjongke copulas, source of evidential distinctions

		Personal		Sensorial	Neutral		Apparentive
					Ordinary		
		decl.	interr.		decl.	interr.	
EQ	PRS	*í:/mḕ:* ཨིན་/མན་	*ná/mèna* ག་/མན་ན	*(índuʔ)* (ཨིན་འདུག)	*bɛʔ/mèmbɛʔ* རེད་/མན་རེད་	*bo/mèmbo* པོ་/མན་པོ་	*ɖe:/re:* འདུང་
	PST						
EX (pos./neg.)		*jòʔ/mèʔ* ཡོད་/མེད་		*duʔ/mìnduʔ* འདུག/མིན་འདུག	*(jèbbɛʔ/mèbbɛʔ)* (ཡོད་བ་རེད་/མེད་བ་རེད་)		

The term **personal** is similar to the term **egophoric** applied to related languages, while the term **neutral** is similar to **"factual"** in related languages.

1. Introduction: terminology

Personal:

- Is associated with 1) old, existing knowledge, 2) spatiotemporal foregrounding (here and now) and 3) emotional involvement.

Neutral:

- In contrast to personal, does not imply integrated knowledge, spatiotemporal foregrounding or emotional involvement and, hence, can be used for backgrounding those associations.
- In contrast to sensorial, does not imply sensoriality

Cf. DeLancey (2018) on "factual" in Tibetic:

[t]he Factual verb endings are the only forms in the system which **neither assert nor imply anything about the source of information**…Emphasizing the use of this form to express "generally known facts" is thus misleading…Factual category…simply **disregards the question of evidence**.

1. Introduction: terminology

"Flexibility" of personal and neutral forms in Denjongke

"Flexibility" here refers to the ability of
- **personal forms** (which might be expected to be strongly associated with 1st person actors/subjects) to occur with **2nd/3rd person** actors/subjects.
- **neutral (and sensorial) forms** (which might be expected to be strongly associated with 2nd/3rd person actors/subjects) to occur **with 1st person** actors/subjects.

Comparison with other Tibetic languages will show the uniformity or diversity of the category that has been labelled egophoric/personal.

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2. Personal forms with 2nd/3rd person actors/subjects

Denjongke past personal form *-po ĩ́:* has a wider distribution than the cognate intentional egophoric *pa-yin* in Standard Tibetan, which can only be used with a 1st person subject (Tournadre 2008: 296).

(9.6) དུ་ཅེ(ག)་ གུ་ཆག་ ལབ་པོ་ ཨིན་གོ་ ཨིན་ག།།

t'atɕi?   k'utɕa? làp-o   ĩ́:=ɕo   iŋ-ga.
a.bit.earlier 2PL   say-2INF   EQU.PER=AT   EQU.PER-PQ
'You (pl.) just said (so), didn't you.' (KL BLA 12)

The speaker heard himself (just recently) and therefore knows well.

(9.8) ཨ་རྒྱུ་ གཉེར་གིས་ བཏང་པོ་ ཨིན།

ágja   karma=gi **tã́:-bo**   ĩ́:.
elder.brother PN=AGT   send-2INF   EQU.PER
'Brother Karma sent (this).' (Richhi 8)

Knows very well because of personal involvement of delivering the letter.

(9.7) དུ་པོའི་ རྒྱུ་མཚན་ ཁོ་གིས་ དཀྲ་ ཅིག་ཀུ་ ཧ་གོ་པོ་ ཨིན།

ŋù-wø: gjumtsʰẽ́: kʰu=gi   tɕiku **hako-wo**   ĩ́:.
weep-2INF.GEN   reason   3SGM=AGT   only know-2INF   EQU.PER
'Only he knew the reason of (her) weeping.' (Richhi 170)

Omniscient writer of the novel.

2. Personal forms with 2nd/3rd person actors/subjects

(9.9) སློབ་དཔོན་ བཤད་གྲྭ་ལོ་, བཤད་གྲྭ་ ནང་ཁ་ སློབ་དཔོན་ གནང་ཁགན་ ཨིན་པོ།

lópõ̃:	ɕɛ́:ɖa=lo,		ɕɛ́:ɖa	nàŋɛa	lópøn
teacher	Buddhist.institute=DAT		Buddhist.institute	inside	teacher

náŋ-kʰɛ̃: ĩ́:=ɕo.

do.HON-NMLZ EQU.PER.=AT

'The teacher has a teacher's tenure at the Shedra-institute, within Shedra-institute.' (KL phone call)

Knows well / makes an identification.

(9.10) མཚོ་ ཉམས་ཏོ་ ཨིན་སེ།

tsʰo	**ɲàm-to**	ĩ́:=s.
lake	weaken-IPFV	EQU.PER=QUO

'The lake is getting weaker, (he) said' (DB day trip)

The guard of the lake knows what he is talking about.

(9.11) ནད་པོ་ གལུས་ གལུས་ བྱས་ཏེ་ དྲན་པོ་ ཟིན་གད་ ཨིན།

nɛ̀:po	k'aly?	k'aly?	p'ja-ti	t'ɛmbo	**sìn-ɕɛ**	ĩ́:.
patient	slow	slow	do-NF	consciousness	catch-INF	EQU.PER

'The patient will slowly, slowly regain consciousness.' (Richhi 14)

Authoritative words of the doctor who is supposed to know.

(9.12) གཏམ་ འདིའི་ སྐོར་ལོ་ གར་མ་གིས་ ལེབ་ཏི་ མནོ་བསམ་ བཏང་གད་ ཨིན།

tam	di:		korlo	karma=gi	lèpti	nó:sam	**tã̀:-ɕɛ**	ĩ́:.
talk	this.GEN		about	PN=AGT	very.much	though	send-INF	EQU.PER

'Karma thinks a lot about that thing.' (Richhi 36)

Omniscient narrator

2. Personal forms with 2nd/3rd person actors/subjects

(7.14) ཁུའི་གི་ བ་ཉིག་ འདི་ ལེབ་ཐི་ མ་ལག་ ཡོད།

kʰu=i=gi	*baik=di*	*lèpti*	*màla?*	***jò?.***
3SGM=GEN=GEN	bike(Eng.)=DEMPH	very	fast	EX.PER

'His motorbike is very fast.' (NB e)

→ Speaker knows about the bike's capacity for some reason or another (no riding on the bike necessitated)

(7.15) ནུབ་ འབྲས་ལྗོངས་ཀྱི་ ཙོམ་ བྲ་རེ་ སྨན་ཁང་ན་ སྨན་པོ་ གར་མ་ ཡོད།

nùp	*ɖendzoŋ=gi*	*sòmbarɛ*	*méŋkʰã:=na*	*mémpo*	*karma*	***jò?.***
west	Sikkim=GEN	TPN	hospital=LOC	doctor	PN	EX.PER

'It is in West Sikkim's Sombare hospital that doctor Karma is.' (Richhi 161)

→ Omniscient narrator's personal knowledge

(7.19) a) ངར་མ་ ཡོད་ག?

ŋám	***jò:-ka?***
sugar	EX.PER-PQ

'Is there sugar?'

→ The speaker deems the addressee as someone who knows well (and doesn't, for instance, have to look around to find the answer).

3. Neutral forms with 1st person actor/subject

"How did you get that wound?"

(9.17)   ང་འགྱེལ་པོ་ཐད།

   ŋà ɖiː-bo   bɛʔ.

   1SG fall-2INF EQU.NE

   'I fell.' (KN e)

The use of the neutral auxiliary *bɛʔ* backgrounds the event itself and focuses the addressee's attention on the consequences of the event.

Context: Speaker is telling the birth order of her siblings

(9.18)   ཨོ་ན་ལས་ ང་ སྐྱེ་པོ་ ཐད།

   ónalɛ ŋà ki-u   bɛʔ.

   then 1SG be.born-2INF EQU.NE

   'Then I was born.' (PED life story)

Spatiotemporal backgrounding (there and then), possibly lack of control

3. Neutral forms with 1st person actor/subject

Irrealis/imaginary situation

The speaker of (9.19) asked in a telephone conversation, jokingly, the addressee to put a hefty sum of money on his account. After having been pried as to what he would do with the money, the speaker spontaneously answered:

(9.19) ང་འགྱུ་དོ་ སྱད་, ཐག་རིང་ སྐོར་ འབག་ཏེ་

ŋà **gju-do bɛʔ,** tʰa:riŋ, kor bak-ti.
1SG go-IPFV EQU.NE far.away tour carry-NF
'I'm going, far away, roaming around.' (KN phone call 2)

Is auxiliary choice a marker of irony (that the speaker is not actually going to do what he says)?

Example (9.20) is a build-up sentence for a linguistic example, sketching an irrealis situation:

(9.20) སྱན་རྒྱས་ལོ་ པ་ཕེ་ དྲི་བ་ ང་ དྲི་ཡད་ སྱད།

ḷeŋgɛ:=lo pʰatɛ ʈ'iwa ŋà ʈ'i-ɛɛ bɛʔ.
PRN.HON=DAT thither question 1SG ask-INF EQU.NE
'(Let's imagine) I'll ask you a question.' (KN e)

3. Neutral forms with 1st person actor/subject

Example (9.21) reports the words of Siddhartha Gautama, who after seeing a dead person realizes that the same fate awaits him, not necessarily in the near future but at some indefinite point.

(9.21)　　ད་ང་ཕུནེ་ (Nep.) ཤེ་གང་ རེད།

t'a　ŋà　puni　　ɕí-ɛɛ　　bɛʔ.
now　1SG　too(Nep.)　die-INF　EQU.NE
'Now, I too will die (one day).' (TB story of Buddha)

Theoretical understanding (neutral) vs. immediate projected fate (personal)

4. Contrastive examples of personal and neutral

As illustrated in the following examples, the speakers may focus on different aspects the personal copulas/auxiliaries:

      1) old, existing knowledge,

      2) spatiotemporal foregrounding (here and now)

      3) emotional involvement.

4. Contrastive examples of personal and neutral

Consultant KN:

Necessarily old knowledge (the person is an earlier acquaintance)

Could be said when seeing the referent for the first time

Consultant PT:

ཁུ་ རྒྱགས་ནམ་ ཨིན།

kʰu   gja:nam   í:.
3SGM   fat   EQU.PER

'He is (a) fat (one).'

Referent present

ཁུ་ རྒྱགས་ནམ་ རད།

kʰu   gja:nam   bɛʔ.
3SGM   fat   EQU.NE

'He is fat.'

Referent absent

See Yliniemi (2021) examples (7.3), (7.4.) and (7.49)

Focus on integration on knowledge

Focus on spatiotemporal foregrounding and backgrounding

4. Contrastive examples of personal and neutral

(7.50) a) ཁོང་ ཕྱི་རྒྱལ་པོ་ ཨིན།

$k^h\tilde{o}$: $t\varepsilon^h ig\varepsilon{:}bo$ *í:.*
3SG.HON   foreigner   EQU.PER
'He's a foreigner.' (referent present)

b) ཁོང་ ཕྱི་རྒྱལ་པོ་ རེད།

$k^h\tilde{o}$: $t\varepsilon^h ig\varepsilon{:}bo$ **bɛʔ.**
3SG.HON   foreigner   EQU.NE
'He's a foreigner.' (referent in photo)

(7.51) a) འདི་ ཁོང་གི་ ཁྱིམ་ ཨིན།

di $k^h o\eta{=}gi$ $k^h im$ *í:.*
this   3SG.HON=GEN   house   EQU.PER
'This is his house.' (owner present)

b) འདི་ ཁོང་གི་ ཁྱིམ་ རེད།

di $k^h o\eta{=}gi$ $k^h im$ **bɛʔ.**
this   3SG.HON=GEN   house   EQU.NE
'This is his house.' (owner absent)

YR:

$k^h\tilde{o}$: *ámdʑi í:* ⟶ Referent alive
$k^h\tilde{o}$: *ámdʑi bɛʔ* ⟶ Referent dead
'*he is a doctor*'

Cf. Chang & Chang (1984:609) on Lhasa Tibetan:
A boy says about his dead father
tʰa tì ŋɛ: pápá rè:
'Now, this is my father'.
Chang & Chang see the choice of *rè:* as copula to
indicate "emotional distance".

4. Contrastive examples of personal and neutral

(9.53) a) ཚག་ཙེ་སྟེང་གི་དཀར་ཡོལ་འདི་ང་གིས་གཅག་ཀོ་བྱད།

         *tɕoktsi tɛŋ=gi   kajø:=di   ŋá:=gi   **tɕak-o   bɛʔ.***
         table   top=GEN   cup=DEMPH   1SG=AGT   break-2INF EQU.NE
         'It was I who broke the cup that was on the table (long time ago).' (KT e)

       b) ཚག་ཙེ་སྟེན་གི་དཀར་ཡོལ་འདི་ང་གིས་གཅག་ཀོ་ཨེན།

         *tɕoktsi tɛŋ=gi   kajø:=di   ŋá:=gi   **tɕak-o   í:.***
         table   top=GEN   cup=DEMPH   1SG=AGT   break-2INF EQU.NE
         'It was I who broke the cup that was on the table (just now).' (KT e)

4. Contrastive examples of personal and neutral

(7.95) ཁུ་ ཐོན་ལས་ ངའི་ གྲོགས་ཀྱུ་ ཨིན་པོ་ ཨིན།

      kʰu   *ɲénlɛ*   *ɲè:*   *ʈʼoku*   **_ím-bo_**   **_í:._**

      3SGM   before   1SG.GEN   friend   EQU-2INF   EQU.PER

      'He was my friend before.' (KT e)

(7.96) ཁུ་ ཐོན་ལས་ ངའི་ གྲོགས་ཀྱུ་ ཨིན་པོ་ བད།

      kʰu   *ɲénlɛ*   *ɲè:*   *ʈʼoku*   **_ím-bo_**   **_bɛʔ._**

      3SGM   before   1SG.GEN   friend   EQU-2INF   EQU.NE

      'He was my friend before.' (KT e)

KT: In (7.95) the speaker expresses that (s)he is **presently experiencing sadness** about a broken relationship whereas (7.96) shares information with no emotional overtones.

YR: Using (7.95) the speaker is expected to continue by giving the reason for **emotional involvement**. The same is not true of the neutral statement (7.96). According to YR (7.95) could also be said on the basis of the referent being **present** at the time of speech.

4. Contrastive examples of personal and neutral

Context: illustrating when one would use the personal past form *ím-bo í:* instead of the neutral form *ím-bo bɛʔ*

(7.99) མི་ འདི་ སྔོན་མ་ ཨམ་རྗེ་ ཨིན་པོ་ ཨིན།

mí=di	*ɲéma*	*ámdʑi*	*ím-bo*	*í:.*
man= DEMPH	before	doctor	EQU-2INF	EQU.PER

'Earlier this man was a doctor,

ད་ སྟོ་ཏོ་ འཁོར་ལོ་ སྐྱལ་མཁན་ ཐོན་ཚགས་ཀེ་སོ།

t'ato=to	*kʰorlo*	*ky:-kʰɛ̃:*	*tʰøn-tsʰakɛ=ɕo.*
now=CEMPH	wheel	drive- NMLZ	become-PFV.APH=AT

but now he has become a driver! (I'm confused)' (KN e)

⟶ Emotional involvement (here: confusion)

4. Contrastive examples of personal and neutral

གལ་སྲིད་ ང་ ཟས་ མན་ཟ་ན་ ང་(ལོ་) གྱོད་བ་ ལྟོགས་ཤད་ ཨིན།

*k'ɛsiʔ ŋà sàm màn-za-nɛ ŋà(=lo) k'jøp toː-ɕɛ **ǐː/bɛʔ***

if   1SG food NEG-eat-COND   1SG(=DAT) stomach be.hungry-INF EQU.PER/EQU.NE

'If I do not eat, I will be hungry.' (Example from Yliniemi [in press])

KN: when using the personal *ǐː* above **the speaker as if already knows about the coming hunger at the time of speaking** (spatiotemporal foregrounding, here and know). Using the neutral *bɛʔ*, on the other hand, suggests that **the speaker will become aware of the hunger only in the future** (spatiotemporal backgrounding, there and then).

(9.52)   ཨོ་འདིའི་ ཁ་ཤས་ མན་ན་ ང་གིས་ ནོར་འཁྲུལ་ཏོ་ བྱས་ ཡོད་ཤད་ སྲད།

*ódiː   k'atɛ   mèn-nɛ   ŋáː=gi   nòrʈʰyː=to   **p'ja***

that.GEN speaking.manner NEG.EQU-COND   1SG=AGT   mistake=CEMPH   do

jòː-ɛɛ   bɛʔ.

EX-INF   EQU.NE

'If he does not have speaking manners, I will have made a mistake.' (Nga'i 'gan 13)

4. Contrastive examples of personal and neutral

(7.42) a)   སྐྱན་རྒྱས་ ག་ བོ?

       ḷeŋgɛʔ   *ka*   *bo?*

        PRN.HON   what   EQU.NE.Q

        'Who are you?'

   b) ང་ ཨམ་རྗེ་ ཨིན།

        ŋà   *ámdʑi*   *í:.*

        1SG   doctor   EQU.PER

        'I'm a doctor.'

(7.43) a) སྐྱན་རྒྱས་ གན་ བྱས་ཨཡན་ བོ?

        ḷeŋgɛʔ   *kʼan*   *pʼja-kʰen*   *bo?*

        PRN.HON   what   do-NMLZ   EQU.NE.Q

        'What do you do (for living)?'

   b) ང་ ཨམ་རྗེ་ སྦད།

        ŋà   *ámdʑi*   **bɛʔ.**

        1SG   doctor   EQU.NE

        'I'm a doctor.' (TB)

This implies that *í:* is more concerned with the **act of identifying** itself, as if performing a type of speech act of identifying, whereas *bɛʔ* takes some distance from identifying and so suggests focusing on the **implications of this identification** (e.g. activities of a doctor). These are, however, **not fixed rules**; in another instance, the same consultant gave the sentence *ŋà ámdʑi bɛʔ* as an answer to the question in (7.42).

4. Contrastive examples of personal and neutral

(7.44) ང་ཚག་ སློབ་ཕྲུག་ ཨིན།

ŋàtɕaʔ	lòptʰuʔ	íː.
1PL	student	EQU.PER

'We are students.' (NB e)

(7.45) ང་ཚག་ སློབ་ཕྲུག་ ཪྐྱད་ང་ཚག་ འདེམ་ བྱས་ མི་ལེགས།

ŋàtɕaʔ	lòptʰuʔ	**bɛʔ**.	ŋàtɕaʔ	dɛm	pʼja	mì-leʔ.
1PL	student	EQU.NE	1PL	such	do	NEG-be.good

'We are students.   We mustn't do like that.' (NB e)

Cf. **Yukawa's** (2017:193-194) comment on **Lhasa Tibetan** *ʼŋa ˋlabtuu ree* 'I am a student'.
It "tells the listener that he is s student, thus must study harder." Copula *yin* would be used for simple reporting that the speaker is a student. When using *ree*, "the meaning of the sentence subsumes a **nuance of obligation** associated with being a student."

4. Contrastive examples of personal and neutral

(7.46) ང་ སློབ་ཕྲུག་ མེད།

ŋà   lópt^huʔ   *mὲ̀*.
1SG   student   NEG.EQU.PER
'I am not a student.' (YR e)

(7.47) a) ཆོད་ འདི་ སློག་ཆེ།

tɕ^høʔ   di   ɖok-tɕ^h(i).
2SG.L   this   read-IMP.FRN
'You, read this!'

b) ང་ སློབ་ཕྲུག་ མན་སྲད་ ང་ དབྱིན་ཇི་ སློག་ མི་ཤེས།

ŋà   lópt^huʔ   *mὲ̀m-bɛʔ*.   ŋà   índzi   ɖok   mì-ɕeː.
1SG   student   NEG-EQU.NE   I   English   read   NEG-know
'I'm not a student. I can't read English.' (YR e)

4. Contrastive example of personal and neutral

Personal existential *jòʔ* vs. neutral *jɛ̀bbɛʔ*

(7.92)   Bill Gates ལོ་ དངུལ་ གཉསབ་ ཡོདབ་ཟྦྷད།
          bil   *gɛits=lo*   *ɲý:*   *kɛ:p*   *jɛ̀bbɛʔ.*
          Bill   Gates=LOC   money   a.lot   EX.NE
          'Bill Gates has a lot of money (as I simply state or as is generally known).' (KT e)

(7.16)   Bill Gates ལོ་ དངུལ་ གཉསཔོ་ ཡོད།
          bil   *gɛits=lo*   *ɲý:*   *kɛ:p*   *jòʔ* .
          Bill   Gates=LOC   money   a.lot   EX.PER
          'Bill Gates has a lot of money (as I have come to know personally either because Gates is close to me metaphorically [i.e. a friend] or close to me literally [i.e. present now]).' (KT e)

5. Effect of shared knowledge and established knowledge

*Contrast of sensorial **duʔ** and neutral **bɛʔ** is sensitive to whether knowledge is shared*

(7.53)   a)   འདི་ གོས་ལག་ཚུ་ རྫོག་ག་ སྦད།།

          di   *k'ola=tsu*   *ʈ'ika*   ***bɛʔ*.**

          this   clothing=PL   dirty   EQU.NE

          'These clothes are dirty.'

    b)   འདི་ གོས་ལག་ཚུ་ རྫོག་ག་ འདུག།

          di   *k'ola=tsu*   *ʈ'ika*   ***duʔ*.**

          this   clothing=PL   dirty   EX.SEN

          'These clothes are dirty (I see).'

5. Effect of shared knowledge and established knowledge

Neutral existential *jèbbɛʔ* vs. personal *jòʔ* :
sensitivity to whether the knowledge is already established or not

Context of use of the neutral form: The speaker takes it for granted that there is a monastery (where is father is the overseer), i.e. that piece of information is taken as already established. Now the speaker is explaining the location of the monastery and ends by saying:

(7.90) ཚོ་ན་ དགོན་པོ་ གཅིག་ ཡོད་བ་སྲེད།

óna	*gjømpo=tɕiʔ*	*jèbbɛʔ.*
there	monastery=INDF	EX.NE

'There's a monastery there.' (KN e)

If the existence of the monastery would be information that first needs to be established or information that is contested, the speaker would be more likely to emphasize their personal knowledge by using *jòʔ* .

⟶ Cf. example glossed 'we are students'.

Summary: Short answers to the questions of the workshop from Denjongke perspective

- What are the various motivations for using the 'egophoric' marker(s) for a person other than the epistemic *origo*.

  1) old, existing knowledge, 2) spatiotemporal foregrounding (here and now) and 3) emotional involvement.

- What are the various motivations for using any other than the 'egophoric' markers for the epistemic origo, and are there differences between the three types of epistemic origo?

  Neutral forms disassociate the proposition from claims of 1) integrated knowledge, 2) spatiotemporal foregrounding, and 3) emotional involvement.

- How common, predictable, or even regular are such 'deviations' from, or 'transgressions' of, the underlying paradigm?

  They are part of the system. I would not call them deviations.

- Are the speakers merely 'playing' with the system, 'manipulating' it for their subjective needs or is exactly this subjectivity or the speaker's attitude towards the communicated content and towards the addressee part of, or underlying, the grammaticalised system?

  The latter seems more true (for Denjongke).

- Which role does the so-called factual marker of the Tibetic languages play with respect to the question of a speaker's attitudes and/ or rights. Does it, as often has been stated, present the respective information in a way that the addressee simply has to accept it, that is, in quite an authoritative manner? Or could its usage, by contrast, be described as a strategy for downgrading one's authority?

  I prefer to use the term "neutral" instead of "factual" or "assertive" for Denjongke.

- How helpful is the notion of territory of information for explaining at least part of the observable flexibility.

  Not addressed in this presentation.

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Appendix 1. Terminological clarification: Why "neutral" instead of "factual"?

The term "neutral" underlines the **interdependence** of the evidential forms. Neutral *bɛʔ* is best described apophatically as not expressing the categories personal (like *í:* or *jɤ̀ʔ*) or sensorial (like *duʔ*). In Lhasa Tibetan, the apophatic nature of "factual" is suggested by Oisel (2017: 96, emphasis original):

> "The factual signals that the speaker states a specific or common fact **without indicating the source and the access to information**."

In the same vein, DeLancey (2018) states that in Tibetic languages

Neutral in D. used for
imaginary realities

> [t]he Factual verb endings are the only forms in the system which **neither assert nor imply anything about the source of information**…Emphasizing the use of this form to express "generally known facts" is thus misleading…Factual category…simply **disregards the question of evidence**. (DeLancey 2018)

In the context of Denjongke, saying anything more than "neutral" (or some equivalent) seems too particular. For instance, calling the category "factual" (instead of "neutral") seems to mistakenly imply that the speaker wants to emphasize the factuality of the statement. The label "factual" may also mistakenly suggest that the other forms (personal and sensorial) present propositions that the speaker considers less factual than propositions marked by personal and sensorial categories.

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Appendix 2. Unlike Common Tibetan (and many other Tibetic languages) Denjongke verbal system does not mark intentionality

Common Tibetan

a. བལྟས་པ་ཡིན།

   tā'-payin

   look-EGO.PFV

   'I looked.' (Tournadre & Dorje 2003: 141)

b. མཐོང་བྱུང་།

   thōng-cung

   see-EGO.PFV.RCP

   'I saw.' (Tournadre & Dorje 2003: 141)

c. *མཐོང་པ་ཡིན།

   *thōng-payin

   see-EGO.PFV

   intended meaning: 'I saw.'

Denjongke

a. ལྟ་པོ་ཨིན།

   ta-u   *ĩ́*   (*ta-bo* > *ta-u*)

   look–NMLZ EQU.PER

   '(I) looked.'

b. མཐོང་པོ་ཨིན།

   tʰōː-po   *ĩ́*

   see–NMLZ   EQU.PER

   '(I) saw.'

Appendix 2. Unlike Common Tibetan (and many other Tibetic languages) Denjongke verbal system does not mark intentionality

Denjongke

(26) གལ་སྲིད་ ང་ ཟམ་ མན་ཟ་ནེ་ ང་(ལོ་) གྱུདཔ་ ལྟོགས་ཁད་ ཨིན།

k'ɛːsiʔ ŋà sàm màn-za-nɛ ŋà(=lo) k'jøp toː-ɕɛ ĩ́/bɛʔ

if 1SG food NEG-eat–COND 1SG(=DAT) stomach be.hungry-INF EQU.PER/EQU.NE

'If I do not eat, I will be hungry.'

Common Tibetan

(27) a. ... ལྟོགས་ཀྱི་ཡིན།

*tō'-kiyin

be.hungry-EGO.FUT

Intended meaning: '...I will be hungry.' (Tournadre p.c.)

b. ... ལྟོགས་ཀྱི་རེད།

tō'-kire'

be.hungry-FAC.FUT

'...I will be hungry.' (Tournadre p.c.)