

# Chocangaca equative copulas and their evidential meanings

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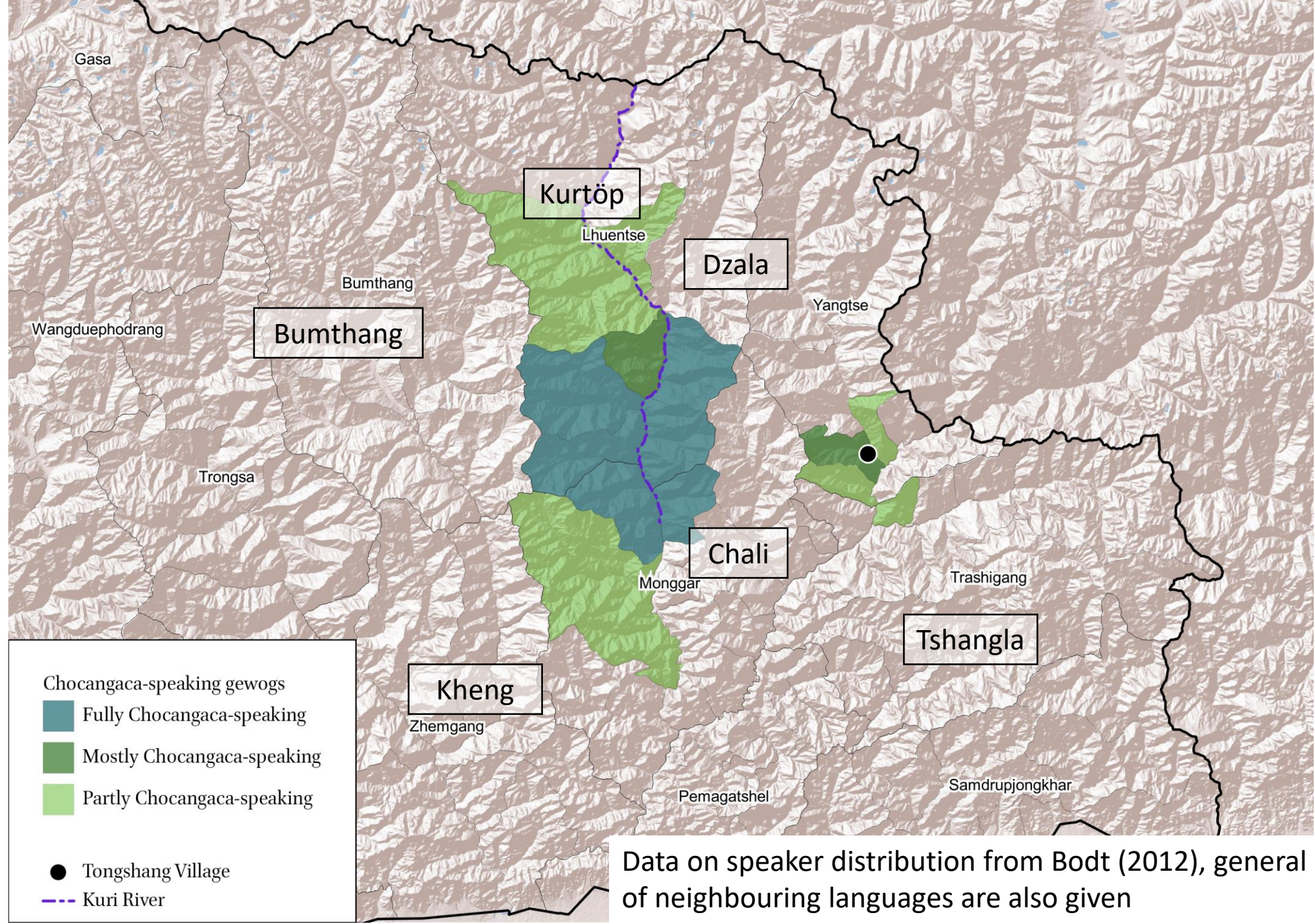


THE UNIVERSITY OF  
SYDNEY

# Introduction

1. Introduction to Chocangaca
2. Brief typological overview of speaker-authority Tibetic languages
3. Data collection
4. Chocangaca equative copulas
5. Formal similarities to geographically distant varieties





Data on speaker distribution from Bodt (2012), general locations of neighbouring languages are also given



# 1. Introduction to Chocangaca

- Spoken in Central and Eastern Bhutan
  - Primary area along the Kuri River in Lhüntse and Monggar
  - Secondary area further east in Trashiyangtse
    - Data here from speakers originating in this secondary area

# 1. Introduction to Chocangaca

- Tibetic
  - Heavy influence from Dzongkha (prestige language, lingua franca)
    - Potentially more so in this project as consultants have grown up in Dzongkha-speaking areas
    - Definitely present in vocabulary, less clear how much grammatical influence
  - Also some influence from East Bodish languages
    - E.g., FUT –*mala*, maybe from Bumthap (Hyslop 2014)
- Name from *choca* (2.PL) + *ngaca* (1.PL)
  - Also called Chocangacakha, Kurtöp (≠ East Bodish Kurtöp)

# 1. Introduction to Chocangaca

- Phonologically conservative cf Dzongkha

- OT tr, kr > t, pr unchanged

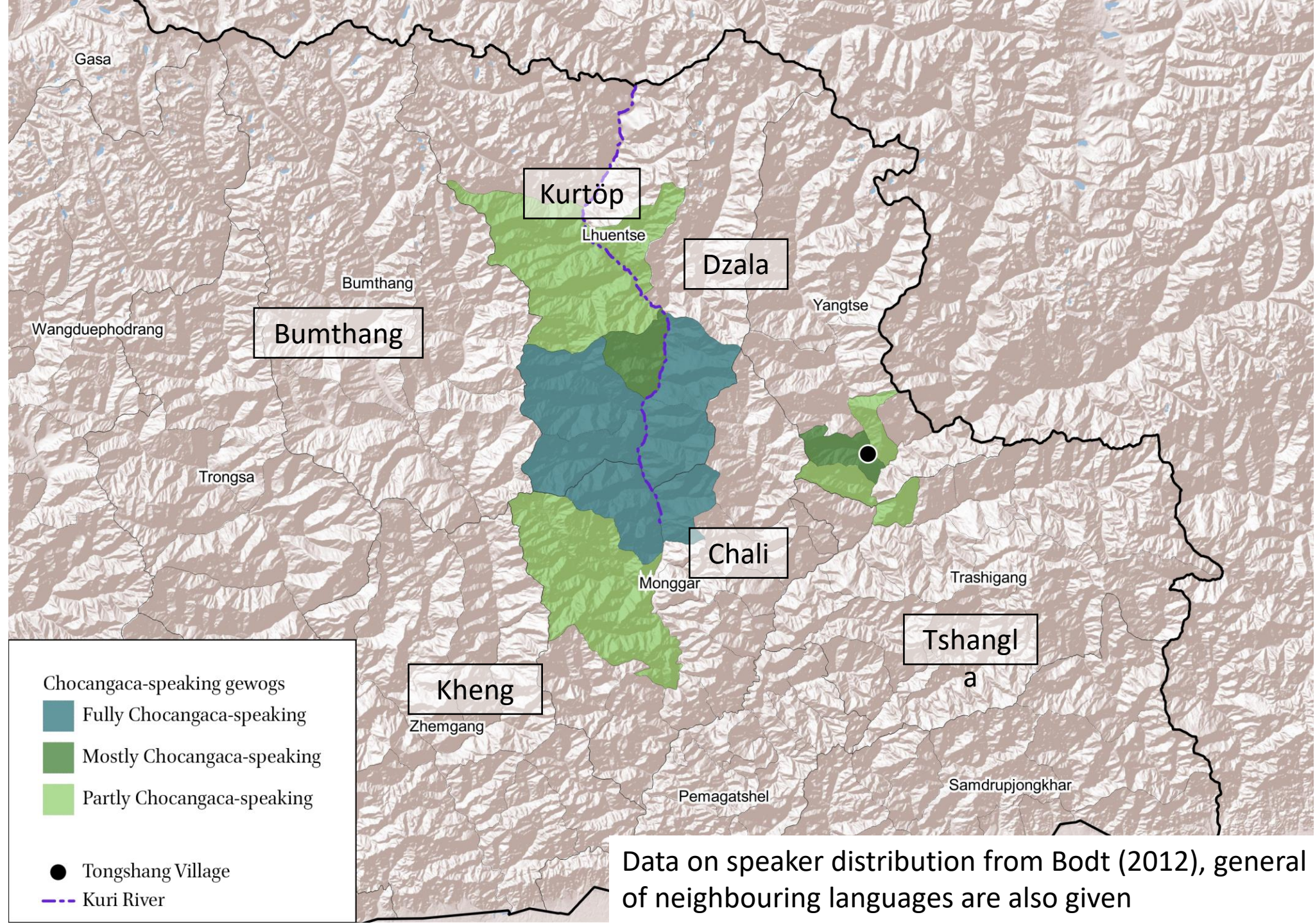
Historical Place of Articulation	Classical Tibetan	Chocangaca	Gloss
Bilabial	dpral.wa	/prewa/	forehead
Alveolar	drug	/du/	six
Velar	ḥkhrud	/tʰu/	wash

- Diphthongs preserved (1.SG-GEN *nga-i* not *ngä*)

- Tonal system fully contrastive in syllables with sonorant onsets

- High tone following historical complex clusters, similar to Dzongkha, Kurtöp (Hyslop 2009), but in neither case identical
- Contrastive also following many obstruents, with voicing distinctions lost everywhere but intervocalically
- Both cases of tonogenesis potentially under influence from Dzongkha?







## 2. Epistemic contrasts in Tibetic languages

- 2-way or 3-way distinctions widespread
  - Particularly equative copulas often have 2-way (reflex of OT yin and some other)

Language	High Auth	Low Auth	Source
Chocangaca	yin	yincok	
Lhasa Tibetan	yin	red	DeLancey 2017
Dzongkha	‘ing	‘ime*	Tshering and van Driem 2019
Denjongke	yin	be	Yliniemi 2021
Lamjung Yolmo	yimba	yindo**	Gawne 2013
Zhollam Tibetan	‘jĩ	ṽṽṽṽ	Suzuki 2017
Purik	in	in-suk	Zemp 2018

\* A different analysis by Hyslop and Tshering (2017) gives these forms, as well as two additional, ‘inferential’ and ‘speculative’ respectively

\*\* Also a third form that is less commonly used

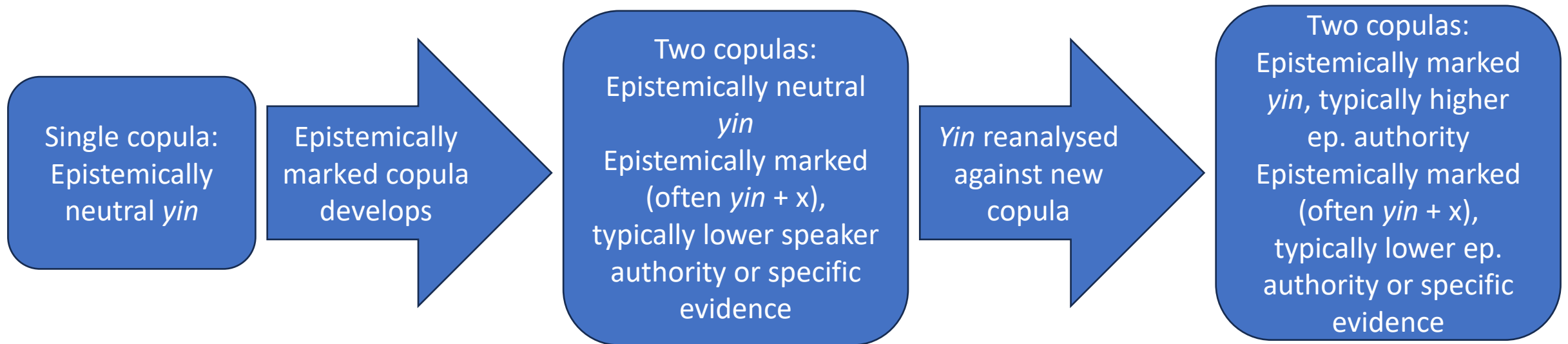


## 2. Epistemic contrasts in Tibetic languages

- Epistemic Authority
- Construed here as a scale, from high to low
- Higher epistemic authority
  - More “direct” evidence
    - Participatory (+volition) vs Experiential (-volition) vs Visual vs Inferential
  - Stronger epistemic support
    - Epistemic modality
  - Egophoric vs non-egophoric
- As a scale, the boundaries between high and low in 2-term systems will not always align

## 2. Epistemic contrasts in Tibetic languages

- Zemp (2020) argues that neutral reflexes of OT *YIN* gain epistemic meaning contrasted against newer forms



## 2. Epistemic contrasts in Tibetic languages

- Others show a reflex of *yin* but with more terms
  - Amdo Tibetan (gCig.sGril variety)
    - *Yin* [jɪn] vs *red* [zɛ], along with a number of other compound forms (Tribur 2019)
    - Speculative, future, factual, inferential, direct evidence, all *yin* + some suffix, often including *-red*
  - Hile Sherpa
    - No existential/equative distinction (Graves 2007)
    - Aspectual distinction *hín* and *hoɬ-u*
    - Two ‘evidential’ particles that appear similar to copulas
      - ‘observational’ *wé* and ‘mirative’ *nók*
      - Cooccurrence attested in *hín-nók*, no meaning given



### 3. Brief comment on methodology

- Data collected alongside a Field Methods class at the University of Sydney, Aug-Nov 2022
- Two speakers:
  - Sisters
  - Born in Tongshang/Tongmizhangsa Gewog but grew up and have predominantly lived in Dzongkha-speaking areas
  - Now living in Sydney, Australia
- Data presented here collected through elicitation activities
  - Family task (San Roque et al 2012)
  - Man and Tree image sets (Levinson et al 1992)

## 4. Chocangaca equative copulas

- Primarily two-way contrast
- Authoritative vs Non-Authoritative

	Authoritative	Non-Authoritative
Declarative	<i>yin</i>	<i>yincok</i>
Interrogative	<i>yinnam</i>	<i>yincokpi(ya)</i>
Negative	<i>man</i>	<i>mancok</i>

- *Yincok* is phonetically [jìn.tɕo] in most positions, as final *-k* is deleted word finally or assimilated into nasals throughout
  - Only visible in interrogative [jìn.tɕok.pi], but can't be *\*-kpi* as the *-pi* interrogative is widespread

# Yin/yincok basic contrast

(1)

a)      *cho-i*                      *nyugu yin*  
         2.SG-GEN              pen      COP  
         ‘It is your pen.’

b)      *cho-i*                      *nyugu yincok*  
         2.SG-GEN              pen      COP.  
         ‘It is your pen.’ (Just discovered, didn’t know it before.) [Elicited]

\*Mirative-seeming explanation of meaning difference from consultants



# Yin/yincok in use

(2)      *ula*                      *yin-nam*  
         DEM.PROX              COP-INT  
         ‘Is it this one?’

*ula*                      *yin*  
         DEM.PROX              COP  
         ‘It is.’

(3)      *tsikpa*    *re*              *za-te*  
         angry    even            become-PAST.ALLO  
         ‘See, they were getting angry... You see?’

*yincok*  
         COP.EVD  
         ‘Yes’

*tamo...*  
         look

*thong-di-ya*  
         see-PRES.PROG?-INT

# Yin/yincok in use

(4)    *kha pre-te*                      *nyikara*            *marpo*            *yincok-pi-ya*  
         [scattered]-PAST.NON\_EGO   both            red            COP.EVD-INT-?

‘They are separate and both are red, right?’

*nyikara*            *marpo*            *yincok*  
both            red            COP.EVD

‘Both are red.’

# Yincok in narrative

- Use in narratives shows character-origo

(5)    *moisa-ki*        *[poisa yincok-ze]*    *she-ze*        *poisa natpa*        *jur-te-me*  
woman-ERG    man    COP.EVD-NF?    know-NF?        man    wounded        become-PST.ALLO-DIR  
'When the woman found out [it was the man], he was already wounded.'



# Chocangaca equative copulas

- *yin* used in guessing game, when epistemic authority was held by a specific individual
- *yincok* used in shared description tasks, when neither individual held higher epistemic authority
- Many other uncontrolled variables make it hard to pinpoint if any given one is the key criterion

# Chocangaca equative copulas

Man & Tree Guessing Game	Family Story Description Task
Unequal epistemic authority (Origo-authority)	Equal epistemic authority
Visual evidence, but specifically polling personal knowledge?	Visual evidence
Less confident	More confident
Old information/integrated information	New information/unintegrated information

# Chocangaca equative copulas

- Appears that most likely factor conditioning the selection of *yin* or *yincok* is whether or not one SAP has greater authority
  - Mirativity is also a possibility
- Shared authority (at least here) stems from shared visual evidence, or some mirative sense
- Forms with higher speaker authority are typologically less likely to be marked (Aikhenvald 2004: 73)

# Terminology

- Many potential options
- Use much broader than Egophoric/Allophoric definitions
- Zemp uses Factual/Testimonial to refer to similar diachronic processes and functional distinctions
  - Here: “factual” seems to suggest that the opposing form is less realis/factual, which isn’t necessarily evident from the data available
  - Also not clear that “factual” form (*yin*) excludes testimonial evidence
- Zeisler (2018) uses Assertive, which could also work
- Here: Authoritative/Non-Authoritative
  - More neutral in lieu of a more extensive study into the exact usage of the forms

## 5. Similarities to Western Tibetan

- Immediate similarity with CN *yincok* to WT *insuk/intsuk/intsok* forms
  - Similar function, though not always perfectly parallel
    - Purik *insuk* is inferential, but by my reading other -suk forms are functionally more similar to *yincok*? (Zemp 2018)
- No other possible cognates that I can find in closer languages
- Are they related?
  - How can we tell?
  - If so, how do we explain it?



# Are they related?

- Zemp proposes \*-s-*duk* etymology for -*suk* in Purik (2018)
  - Potential issue in CN: inconsistent vowel shift
    - 'dug still present in CN as *duk*, not *dok*, so we would need to explain why we see *cok* and not *cuk*
- Can we find another source?
  - Grammaticalised verb?
  - *Classical Tib imperative for come* ལོག་
    - Motion verbs have grammaticalised in this way in other cases (Lh.Tib. -*song*)
    - Potential problem in the use of the imperative, but might be consistent with the imperative in *yinosh*
  - *Classical Tib imperative (or base form) for put* ལོག་, འཛོག་པ་
  - *Classical Tib ལོག་, a sort of nominaliser?*
    - Jäschke (1881) gives *yin-no-cog* as “those being, existing (things or persons)” (142)

# Unanswered questions

- Also recorded: *yindu*, *yinosh*
  - Functional distinction unclear, but similar meaning
  - Interrogative, tag question?
  - Used much less often

(6)      *nange*                      *yindu*  
         Inside                      COP.EQ.INT?  
         ‘Inside, right?’

(7)      *ngaca*    *nyi*            *pushi*    *duk-la*                      *pushi*    *ra*            *yinosh*  
         1.pl       two       like       COP.EX-NF?            like       ?            COP.EQ.INT?  
         ‘It’s like how we are, right?’  
         *o*  
         (affirmation)

# Unanswered questions

- Clear etymology for *yindu*
  - Presumably *yin+duk*, with the final k elided in most contexts
  - Similar forms found in Denjongke (Yliniemi 2021), maybe in Western Tibetic?
  - Forms that appear similar but have different sources:
    - *yindo* (Lamjung Yolmo, Gawne 2013)
    - *yinda* (Brokpa, Wangdi 2021)
- *Yinosh* potentially related to Dzongkha *-sh* ཤེག་
  - Tshering and van Driem (2019) give *`mo-sh?* མོ་ཤེག་ ‘Isn’t that so?’ as a use of the suffix
    - No further elaboration

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