The Wutun Language:
A Tibetanized Variety of Northwest Mandarin

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1. Introduction

Wutun is a local form of Northwest Mandarin spoken in three villages located in Qinghai Province, China, also known as Amdo (*a mdo*) region of ethnic Tibet. The Wutun language has been heavily influenced by long-term language contact with local lingua franca, Amdo Tibetan, and it exhibits a variety of Tibetan features in all levels of its linguistic structure. Tibetanized nature of Wutun was already noticed by Chen Naixiong (1981; 1982; 1986), the first linguist who worked on Wutun. Since then, Wutun has received some attention in language contact studies (see e.g., Li 1983; 1984; 1986, Thomason & Kaufman 1988: 91−92). However, in earlier studies the contact-induced features in Wutun were not systematically described. In this paper, I will present an outline of Wutun typological properties and then illustrate the Tibetanized nature of Wutun morphosyntax by examining two significant features of Tibetan origin, which have not received much attention in earlier research: comparative construction and evidentiality, which also expresses verbal perspective. The Wutun data is compared to corresponding categories in Tibetan. The data[1] used in the examples is mainly based on my fieldwork with native speakers of Wutun in the spring of 2006 and summer of 2007 and it includes elicited sentences, descriptive text, and conversational data. [2] In some examples I also use data published in the basic grammar by Juha Janhunen & Marja Peltomaa & Erika Sandman & Xiawu Dongzhou (2008). The Tibetan examples all come from published sources, and they include both Amdo Tibetan and Lhasa (*lha sa*) Tibetan data. This paper is structured as follows. Firstly, I will provide some basic information on Wutun and its sociolinguistic and areal context. I will also briefly discuss earlier research on Wutun. Secondly, I will summarize the typological characteristics of Wutun with a special focus on interaction of native Sinitic and contact-induced Tibetan features. Then I will discuss comparative construction and evidentiality in more detail and compare Wutun data to Tibetan examples. Finally, I will present some concluding remarks.

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[1] I would like to thank Frank Shawo Dondrub and Myrtle Tserang Kyi for providing me Wutun data, valuable information on their language and practical help during my stays in Qinghai.

[2] Because part of my data comes from conversation, the original data also contains some personal names. I have omitted all the names in examples and use notations like X or NN instead (see "Symbols and abbreviations" at the article's end).

2. The Wutun Language and the Amdo Sprachbund

The Wutun language (SM *Wutunhua* 五屯话, WT *Seng ge gshong gi skad*) is a community language spoken by ca. 4000 people in Wutun 五屯 (WT *Seng ge gshong*), a rural locality located few kilometres north of Longwu 龙务 (WT *Rong bo*) town. Longwu town is the county centre of Tongren County (SM *Tongren Xian* 同仁县, WT *Reb gong*), Huangnan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (*Huangnan Zangzu Zizhizhou* 黄南藏族自治州), Qinghai Province (*Qinghai Sheng* 青海省), People's Republic of China. The Wutun area comprises three administrative villages, Upper Wutun (*Wutun Shangzhuang* 五屯上装), Lower Wutun (*Wutun Xiazhuang* 五屯下装) and Jiacangma 加仓玛 (WT *rGya tshang ma*), which together contain eight natural villages. Wutun is spoken only in these three administrative villages, and nowhere else. In terms of genetic taxonomy, Wutun is a Sinitic language, which can be classified as a distinct local form of Northwest Mandarin. Its basic vocabulary and gram-matical morphemes have material cognates elsewhere in Mandarin Chinese. However, Wutun is in contact with the dominant regional language, Amdo Tibetan, and it has adopted many Tibetan structural properties, as well as some cultural vocabulary. The language has also interacted with the Mongolic Bonan language, which is spoken in four neighbouring villages. Almost all speakers of Wutun are bilingual in Amdo Tibetan and knowledge of both local Northwest Mandarin and Modern Standard Chinese is common among younger genera-tions. Tibetan and Chinese are also used for written communication. Wutun is an unwritten language, and no attempts have been made to create a writing system.

Wutun is not the only case of contact-induced language change in the region. Many of its structural properties are actually areal features, which allow it to be classified as a member of a language union best termed Amdo Sprachbund. The Amdo Sprachbund comprises ca. 10–15 languages spoken in Eastern Qinghai (*Haidong* 海东) and Southern Gansu (*Gannan* 甘南). These languages represent four genetic groups: Sinitic, Bodic (Tibetan), Mongolic and Turkic. All these languages have developed common features not shared by their genetic relatives spoken elsewhere, and they are approaching a common language type. (Janhunen 2001: 1; Janhunen et al. 2008: 21–22.) In the Amdo Sprachbund, there are also other cases of close interaction between Chinese and Tibetan/Mongolic languages. Two other typologically transformed varieties in the region are Gangou 甘沟 and Tangwang 唐王. Gangou is spoken at Gangou Hui Township (*Gangou Xiang* 甘沟乡), Minhe Hui and Tu Autonomous County (*Minhe Huizu Tuzu Zizhixian* 民和回族土族自治县), Qinghai Province (*Qinghai Sheng* 青海省). Further information on Gangou is provided by Feng Lide & Kevin Stuart (1992) and by Zhu Yongzhong & Üjiyediin Chuluu & Keith Slater & Kevin Stuart (1997). Tangwang is spoken at Tangwang

Township (*Tangwang Xiang* 唐王乡), Dongxiang Autonomous County (*Dongxiang Zizhixian* 东乡自治县), Gansu Province (*Gansu Sheng* 甘肃省). Tangwang is discussed in more detail by Ibrahim (1985) and Mei W. Lee-Smith (1996). Another aberrant variety of Chinese which resembles Wutun is the Dao language (*Daohua* 倒话), a Tibetanized variety of Chinese spoken by a small local population in Yajiang County (*Yajiang Xian* 雅江县), Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (*Ganzi Zangzu Zizhizhou* 甘孜藏族自治州), Sichuan Province (*Sichuan Sheng* 四川省) (Acuo 2004: 2). Areally, however, Dao remains outside the Amdo Sprachbund.

Wutun still remains a little documented language. The first descriptions of Wutun were written by the Chinese linguist Chen Naixiong (1981, 1982). Later, Chen worked out an expanded version of his paper (1986), as well as studies on Wutun phonology (1988) and verbal morphosyntax (1989). There is also a description by Xi Yuanlin (1983) and an entirely secondary treatise by Mei W. Lee-Smith & Stephen A. Wurm (1996). The local encyclopaedic handbook of Huangnan Prefecture contains some information on Wutun (Huangnan Zangzu Zizhizhou Bianyuan Weiyuanhui 1999: 1465–1502). Yixiweisa Acuo, who mainly focuses on Dao, also discusses Wutun in his book (Acuo 2004: 212–250). In addition, the work by Zhong Jinwen on minority languages and cultures of Gansu and Qinghai provinces contains a brief section on Wutun (Zhong 2007: 68–76.) The first systematic grammatical description was published by Janhunen et al. (2008) in the context of the research project *Patterns of Ethnic Interaction and Adaptation in Amdo-Qinghai* carried out at the University of Helsinki, Department of East-Asian Studies. Juha Janhunen has also discussed phonological change in Wutun (2008) and investigated a possibility of using the Tibetan alphabet to write Wutun (2009). In addition to these more specific studies, Wutun is briefly mentioned by Charles N. Li (1983, 1984, 1986) who has worked on language contacts in Western China, and by Sarah G. Thomason & Terrence Kaufman (1988) who have developed a theoretical framework for the study of language contact. Keith Slater (2001) also discusses Wutun in his article on historical development of typologically transformed varieties of Chinese in Gansu-Qinghai. There exists a very little literature on the history and culture of Wutun speakers. Xiawu Dongzhou (2004) has written a brief article about the topic. The ethnic taxonomy of Wutun speakers is discussed in Juha Janhunen & Lionel Ha Mingzong & Joseph Tshe dPag rNam rGyal (2007)

Despite its small number of speakers, Wutun remains a living language spoken by all generations in the speech community. However, due to the small size of the speech community, Wutun is vulnerable to massive economic and demographic changes taking place in Western China, and can be regarded as a potentially endangered language. The Wutun people tend to identify themselves as Tibetans and consider their language as a local form of Tibetan. They are also officially classified as Tibetans in the system of ethnic administration in

China. Wutun people follow Gelukpa (*dge lugs pa*) school of Tibetan Buddhism, and apart from agriculture, their most important economic activity is *thang ka* painting, which is known as "Rebgong (*reb gong*) School of Tibetan Art."

3. Typological Characteristics of Wutun

Typologically, Wutun may be characterized as a Tibetanized form of Chinese with some Mongolic features. Tibetan influence is visible in all levels of Wutun linguistic structure: phonology, lexicon, morphology and syntax. On the other hand, Wutun still retains many native Sinitic features. Influence from Bonan is more marginal and mainly occurs in some aspects of morphosyntax.

Due to influence from neighbouring non-tonal languages, Amdo Tibetan and Bonan, Wutun has lost the tonal distinctions once present in the language. The simplification of tone systems is a common tendency in the Amdo Sprachbund, where Sinitic languages are spoken in the immediate vicinity of non-tonal languages. However, Wutun is the only form of Chinese which has completely lost its tones. Wutun has also developed preinitials of the Amdo Tibetan type, which are present in the Tibetan part of the lexicon. There are also some borrowed Tibetan consonant phonemes, e.g., voiceless lateral fricative *lh* [ɬʰ], as in *lhoma,* 'pupil, student' ← AT *lhoma* (WT *slob ma*). A clearly Sinitic feature in Wutun phonology is the use of Mandarin type semi-vocalic medials. Wutun has two medials, labial *u* (*w) vs. palatal *i* (*y), as in *hua* [hᵘa], 'speech' (SM 话 *huà*), *tian* [tʰⁱɛ)], 'sky' (SM 天 *tiān*). For a more detailed discussion of Wutun phonology, see Janhunen et al. 2008, Janhunen 2008.

Most of the Wutun basic vocabulary is of Chinese origin. Janhunen et al. (2008) contains a 235-word list based on Swadesh 200-word list with some additions, particularly for culture-specific terms. Among the non-culture-specific terms of the word list (225 words altogether) only 19 (=8.4 per cent) are always expressed using a Tibetan word, e.g., *co,* 'lake' (WT *mtsho*), *ddang,* 'to think' (WT *vdang*), *dong,* 'thousand' (WT *stong*). 4–5 terms have no obvious cognates in either Chinese or Tibetan, e.g., the word *wuwa,* 'mountain'. The rest of the basic vocabulary has cognates in other forms of Mandarin Chinese. Many Sinitic items also have a Tibetan synonym, so the Wutun speakers can use either Tibetan or Chinese expression, e.g., *lo* (SM lǎo 老) vs. *ggi* (WT *rgas*), 'old'. However, personal and demonstrative pronouns, lower numerals, and most grammatical elements remain constantly Sinitic. Basic vocabulary also includes some specifically Northwest Mandarin items, e.g., *ga,* 'small'.

In terms of word order typology, Wutun may be characterized as a verb-final language like Amdo Tibetan and Bonan. The basic unmarked sentence starts with a nominal phrase representing the subject/topic and ends with a verbal phrase, while direct and/or indirect objects are placed in between the main constituents:

1) *ni*   *zhaze*   *da-pe-lio*
    2P:SG   window   hit-get:broken-PRF

    zeli
    EXEC-SEN.INF
    'You have broken the window.'
    (Janhunen et al. 2008: 80, *my glosses*)

Like both Mandarin Chinese and Amdo Tibetan, Wutun is a topic-prominent language. The pragmatic role of topic plays an important role in Wutun clause structure, and the sentences are often organized on the basis of topic-comment structure. Topic is an element, which specifies what the sentence is about. In Wutun, sentences can have more than one topic. In example (2), the primary topic *je huaiqa* occurs clause-intially and receives no overt morphological marking. It sets the framework within which the main predication holds. The second person singular pronoun *nia* functions as a secondary topic, which is the most immediate nominal constituent in the rest of the sentence, and is marked with the non-agent topic marker *-ha*:

2) *je*   *huaiqa*   *ngu*   *nia-**ha**   *ka-yek*
    this   book (TOP) 1P:SG   2P:SG-NAGT.TOP give-EGO
    'As for this book, I give it to *you.*'
    (Field notes, spring 2006)

Unlike Amdo Tibetan, Wutun has not developed a system of ergativity. Rather, it continues with a nominative-accusative system like other forms of Mandarin Chinese.

In nominal phrase, modifiers like adjectives, demonstratives or numerals can either precede the noun as in Chinese, or follow the noun, as in Tibetan. Therefore, both expressions like *je(-ge) joze,* 'this table' or *joze je(-ge),* 'table this' are allowed. An interesting feature of the Wutun noun phrase is an extremely reduced system of classifiers. Wutun retains only one Mandarin Chinese classifier, *ge*, (SM 个 *ge*) and the use of a classifier is not obligatory. Unlike the use of classifiers in most Sinitic languages, the use of *-ge* in Wutun is not conditioned by the semantics (e.g., animacy, physical properties or functional properties) of its noun referents and its primary function is to mark the noun phrase as referential.

Unlike most Sinitic languages, which are usually highly isolating and have very little inflectional morphology, Wutun has developed a more agglutinative type of morphology, and has a rather elaborate system of suffixed grammatical markers. Nouns can take optional paucal or plural marking. Paucal is used for small numbers and plural for large numbers, e.g., *lhoma-jhege,* 'a few students',

ren-dera, '(the) people'. The paucal-plural distinction is one of the most significant examples of Bonan influence in Wutun morphosyntax. Wutun nouns can also take case marking. The example 3 illustrates ablative case *-la*:

3) *aga*   *dadada* *gguan-la* *lai-lio*
 elder:brother just:now temple-**ABL** come-PRF.EGO
 'Elder brother just came from the temple.'
 (Janhunen et al. 2008: 60)

Wutun is a clause-chaining language. In complex sentences, the final clause may be preceded by one or more non-final clauses containing verbs marked with converbal suffixes (e.g., the coordinative converb *-ma* in the example 4) that indicate the logical or temporal relation of the non-final clause to the clause following it in the sentence:

4) *gu*   *yidaze* *qe-ma*
 3P:SG   everything eat-**COORD**

 lio-gu-ge-ma-li
 get:finished-COMPL-CAUS-RES-SEN.INF
 'S/he has eaten up everything.'
 (Janhunen et al. 2008: 79, *my glosses*)

Aspectual and modal meanings are often indicated by means of auxiliaries and complement verbs. Auxiliaries and complement verbs are partly grammaticalized subclasses of verbs, which modify the meaning of the main verb but retain part of their original lexical meaning. Wutun also has verbal suffixes that are purely grammatical elements and void of any lexical meaning. Verbal categories in Wutun include voice, tense-aspect and modality.

In addition to these more familiar verbal categories, Wutun has an evidentiality system of Tibetan origin. Some evidential markers in Wutun correlate with person and mark verbal perspective, which marks the speaker's involvement in the events or states in contrast to non-involvement, and is closely intertwined with evidentiality. Evidentiality and verbal perspective are discussed in more detail in chapter 4.2.

4. Tibetan Elements in Wutun Morphosyntax
4.1 Comparative Construction
Comparative constructions in Wutun are marked by the means of converbal construction *kan-la*, which also has a variant *kan-ra*. This construction is a compound of the verb *kan* (SM *kàn* 看), 'to look, to watch' and a conditional marker *-la~-ra*. The conditional marker indicates that the modal relationship between two events belongs to irrealis:

5) *je-ge*   *wanlan-ma*
 this-REF   do-COORD

 lio-gu-ra
 finish-COMPL-**COND**

 ni   *liang-ge*   *yenze*
 2P:SG   two together   money

 a-mende-ge   *yek-li*
 INTERR-like that-REF   EXIST-SEN.INF
 'If you finish making this tangka, how much money will you two
 get?' (Field notes, summer 2007)

In comparative construction, the noun serves as a point of comparison and is followed by the construction *kan-ra*, while the adjective serves as a predicate in the sentence. Adjectives in Wutun are essentially verbal roots which often serve as predicates and can take verbal markers. The meaning of this construction is 'looking at, in view of' > 'compared to':

6) *je-ge*   *jjhakai*   *zhungo*   ***kan-la***
 this-REF   country   China   **look-COND**

 xaige   *ga-li*
 very   small-SEN.INF
 'This country is much smaller than China.'
 (Janhunen et al. 2008: 62, *my glosses*)

The example 7 comes from conversational data. The speaker is explaining how much money his two friends will get when they sell the *thangka*s they are currently making:

7) *bai-li*
 NEG:EQU-SEN.INF

 je-ge   ***kan-ra*** *do-li*
 this-REF   **look-COND** much-SEN.INF

 ni *liang-ge-ha*   *dong*   *wu-ge*
 2P:SG two together-NAGT.TOP thousand five-REF

 yek-mu
 EXIST.EGO-INTERR

'No, it's not like that, it's more than that, you two will get five thousand [yuan], isn't it?' (Field notes, summer 2007)

Wutun comparative construction has a parallel in Amdo Tibetan comparative construction *hdi-na* (WT *bltas.na*), which is also based on the verb 'to look, to watch' (WT *lta*) and a conditional marker (WT *na*) (Janhunen et al. 2008: 62, 91). Comparative constructions in Wutun and Amdo Tibetan are almost isomorphic.

8) *dpal ldan*   *rdo rje-'a*   **bltas-na**   *lo*   *che-gi*
   Huadan   Dorje-OBL   **look-COND**   year   big-DIR
   'Huadan is one year older than Dorje.'
   (Norbu et al. 1999: 171, *my glosses*)

4.2 Evidentiality and Verbal Perspective
Evidentiality and the verbal perspective are important Tibetan features in Wutun. Evidentiality refers to the speaker's source of information. It specifies the ways in which the information was acquired (e.g., visual or other sensory evidence, hearsay, or generally known facts). Evidentiality can also indicate how reliable the information is, and whether the speaker takes responsibility for his/her statement or not. Verbal perspective is a type of grammatical category in which the first person is usually marked differently from second and third person in statements and second person is marked differently from first and third person in questions. The key function of this category is to divide statements into two contrasting types: those belonging and those not belonging to the speaker's personal (egophoric) sphere. In addition to person, verbal perspective is also connected with evidentiality. It indicates the role of the speaker in acquiring the information. For example, verbal perspective can specify whether the speaker participated in the action directly, and therefore has firsthand information about it. It also indicates whether the speaker acts volitionally and controls his/her actions, therefore conveying the speaker's responsibility for the assertion. Verbal perspective is often called a conjuct/disjunct system or egophoricity in typological literature. Some linguists claim that this category is distinct from evidentiality and indicates the speaker's source of information only in an indirect way (see e.g., Aikhenvald 2006: 123–130). However, several studies on the Tibetan system (see e.g., Garrett 2001, Tournadre 2008) have convincingly shown that in Tibetan, the morphemes indicating verbal perspective do have a source of information as their primary meaning, and the sharp distinction between verbal perspective and evidentiality does not work in analyzing Tibetan morphosyntax. Garrett (2001), for example, analyzes the Lhasa Tibetan evidentiality system as a tripartite system in which ego evidential markers *yin* and *yod* represent the speaker's personal knowledge, the direct evidential marker *'dug* direct sensory evidence, and the indirect evidential

marker *red* an indirect source of information, including common knowledge. The choice of an evidential marker shows a strong correlation with person, *yin* and *yod* typically being used with first person. However, the basic system can be manipulated due to semantic and pragmatic factors indicating the speaker's viewpoint to the event. My data suggests that evidentiality and the verbal perspective are closely intertwined in Wutun as well, which has acquired the category of evidentiality as a result of language contact with Tibetan. The morphemes indicating verbal perspective are basically evidential markers correlating with person, and therefore function as a person marking strategy. Wutun has four grammatical markers whose primary meaning is to indicate the source of information and/or role of the speech act participant. These markers are the ego evidential marker *-yek*, the sensory-inferential evidential marker *-li,* the factual auxiliary *re,* and the reported auxiliary *sho*.

4.2.1 Ego Evidential *-yek* and Sensory-Inferential Evidential *-li*

The ego evidential marker *-yek* and the sensory-inferential evidential marker *-li* are both bound suffixes which are added to the last full verb or auxiliary in the sentence. The ego evidential marker *-yek* may be a cognate with the Mandarin Chinese existential copula *yǒu* (有), or it may be a borrowing from the Amdo Tibetan egophoric copula *yod*. The sensory-inferential evidential marker *-li* may be connected with the Mandarin Chinese modal particle *le* (了). Ego evidential is typically used in statements containing a first person subject/topic. Sensory-inferential evidential is used with non-first person subjects or topics. In addition, evidential can also be used with subjects/topics which are considered as "extensions" of the speaker, such as family members or belongings:

9) [a] *je*   *ngu-de*   *huaiqa*   *hai-**yek***
        this   1P:SG-ASS   book   EQU-**EGO**
        'This is my book.'

     [b] *je*   *ni-de*   *huaiqa*   *hai-**li***
        this   2P:SG-ASS   book   EQU-**SEN.INF**
        'This is your book.'

     [c] *je*   *gu-de*   *huaiqa*   *hai-**li***
        this   3P:SG-ASS   book   EQU-**SEN.INF**
        'This is his/her book.' (Janhunen et al. 2008: 97, *my glosses*)

In questions the perspective is reversed: the ego evidential is used with second person and the sensory-inferential evidential is used with first person:

10) *ni*   *ma-ge* *nian-di-**yek***
  2P:SG   what-REF read-PROGR-**EGO**
  'What are you reading?' (Janhunen et al. 2008: 98, *my glosses*)

11) *nga-mu*   *liang-ge-de*   *tangka*
  1P-COLL   two together-ASS   thangka

  jhi-ge *yai* *wanlan-lio* *ze-**li***
  how many-REF month do-PRF EXEC-**SEN.INF**
  'For how many months have our thangkas been made?
  (Field notes, summer 2007)

Compare the Wutun examples 9–11 with equative sentences in Tibetan. In equative constructions, both Lhasa and Amdo Tibetan use the ego evidential *yin* with first person and the indirect evidential *red* with non-first persons in statements. In questions the perspective is reversed. The examples 12–15 are from Lhasa Tibetan:

12) *nga*   *bod pa*   ***yin***
  1P:SG   Tibetan (person) **EQU:EGO**
  'I am a Tibetan.'
  (DeLancey 1990: 295, *my glosses*)

13) *kho*   *bod pa* ***red***
  3P:SG:MASC Tibetan **EQU:INDIR**
  'He is a Tibetan.'
  (DeLancey 1990: 295, *my glosses*)

14) *khyed rang* *bod pa* ***yin*** *pas*
  2P:SG   Tibetan **EQU:EGO** INTERR
  'Are you a Tibetan?'
  (DeLancey 1990: 295, *my glosses*)

15) *nga*   *rgya mi*   ***red***   *pas*
  1P:SG   Chinese person **EQU:INDIR**   INTERR
  'Am I a Chinese?'
  (DeLancey 1990: 295, *my glosses*)

By choosing the evidential, Wutun speakers make a distinction between events that they have been personally involved in and events they are not part of. Ego evidential represents a speaker's most immediate source of information: the speaker knows something because s/he has been personally involved in the

event. One of the most important factors conditioning evidentiality marking is *volitionality.* The ego evidential marker *-yek* is typically used in statements with a first person subject/topic when the act is *volitional,* and allows for a speaker's *control.* In questions, responsibility of the assertion shifts to the addressee, and the ego evidential is used with second person:

16) A**:** *ni*   *yan*   *za-de*   **yek**   *ya*
       2P:SG   tobacco   smoke-NMLZ   **EXIST:EGO**   EMPH
       'You smoke, don't you?'

    B**:** *mi-yek*
       NEG:EXIST-**EGO**
       'No, I don't.' (Field notes, summer 2007)

In reported speech, the ego evidential is used when subjects of the main clause and quotation are co-referential. Wutun is a pro drop language which often lacks overtly marked personal pronouns, but the use of ego evidential in quotation reveals that the main clause and the quotation are co-referential:

17) *gui ri*   *X*   *awo*   *jio-she-ma*
     recently   X   mister   call-get-COORD

     lai-ma   *yida*   *suan zhang*   *ze-di-lio*
     come-COORD   together   count costs   do-PROGR-PRF

     qhichai   *hen-di-yek*   *sho-ma*
     car   share-PROGR-**EGO**   QUOT
     'Recently [he[i]] came and asked Mister X to share the costs.
     [He[i]] said [he[i]] wants to share the car.'(Field notes, summer 2007)

This usage also has an exact parallel in Lhasa Tibetan, which makes use of the equative copula *yin* in reported speech when the subject of the quotation is co-referential with the subject of the main clause:

18) *kho-s*   *kho*   *bod pa*   ***yin***
     3P:SG:MASC-ERG 3P:SG:MASC   Tibetan   **EQU:EGO**

     zer-gyis
     say-IMPRF:DIR
     'He[i] says that he[i] is a Tibetan.' (DeLancey 1990: 295, *my glosses*)

The sensory-inferential evidential marker *-li* is typically used in statements with second or third person subject/topic. Like the ego evidential marker, it also combines features of person marking and evidentiality. This marker indicates that the speaker has not been personally involved in the event, but has been able to observe the event directly and therefore has direct sensory evidence about it:

19) A: *loshe*   *ma-ge* *sho-**li***
   teacher   what-REF say-**SEN.INF**
   'What did the teacher say?'

 B: *loshe*   *ho-**li***   *sho-**li***
   teacher   good-**SEN.INF**   say-**SEN.INF**
   'The teacher said that [buying computers for the school] is a good [idea].' (Field notes, summer 2007)

This evidential resembles the direct evidential in Tibetan to some extent. Direct evidential is marked by an auxiliary *'dug* in Lhasa Tibetan and a suffix *-gi* in Amdo Tibetan. It indicates that speaker has direct sensory evidence about the event, such as the following Lhasa Tibetan example:

20) *dir* *mo.Ta* *man.po* ***'dug***
 here car   many   **EXIST:DIR**
 'There are a lot of cars here [I see it, I hear it, I feel it etc.].'
 (Garrett 2001: 72, *my glosses*)

However, unlike the direct evidential in Tibetan, the sensory-inferential evidential in Wutun can also indicate information based on inference or reasoning:

21) *a* *yi*   *tian*   *yi*   *poqia*   *ra*
 EXCL one   day   one   package even

 be-gek-ra-da
 NEG-be enough-COND-CONSEQ

 ni-de   *aba-de*   *qhuku* *da-**li***
 2P:SG-ASS   father-ASS expences big-**SEN.INF**
 'Oh, if even one package [of cigarettes] a day is not enough,
 then your father spends a lot of money [I assume it on the basis what I've been told].' (Field notes, summer 2007)

Evidential marking in Wutun is not entirely tied to person and it is conditioned by pragmatic rather than syntactic factors. When describing acts which are

involuntary and beyond control, the sensory-inferential evidential marker -*li* is commonly used with first person. Typical verbs marked by sensory-inferential evidential with first person are verbs of perception or cognitive processing (e.g., *jhan,* 'to see', *jedo,* 'to know, to understand', *ddo,* 'to think'), verbs denoting bodily processes (e.g., *dun,* 'to feel cold', *koshe,* 'to fall asleep') and verbs of emotion (e.g., *gga,* 'to like, to be glad'):

22) *ngu   ra   menzai   ddo-la-li*
      1P:SG   also   like this   think-INCOMPL-**SEN.INF**
      'I agree.' (Field notes, summer 2007)

23) *ngu   koshe-gu-lio   ze-li*
      1P:SG   sleep-COMPL-PRF   EXEC-**SEN.INF**
      'I felt asleep.' (Janhunen et al. 2008: 95, *my glosses*)

24) *ni   je   huaiqa   kan-gu-de   hong-la*
      2P:SG this   book   read-COMPL-NMLZ VOL-COND

      ngu   xaige   gga-la-li
      1P:SG   very   glad-INCOMPL-**SEN.INF**
      'If you read this book, I will be very glad.'
      (Janhunen et al. 2008: 91, *my glosses*)

In case of involuntary acts like feeling cold, the speaker has firsthand evidence about his/her condition, but has not been involved in planning the action. Therefore, the sensory-inferential evidential is used instead of ego evidential.

    When describing involuntary acts with the first person, Tibetan makes use of a direct evidential instead of ego evidential (examples 25 and 26):

    Lhasa Tibetan:

25) *nga   na-gi-'dug*
      1P:SG   sick-IMPRF-**DIR**
      'I am sick.' (DeLancey 1986: 207, *my glosses*)

    Rebgong Amdo Tibetan:

26) *nga   da   ltogs-gi*
      1P:SG   now   hunger-**DIR**
      'I am hungry now.' (Garrett 2001: 100, *my glosses*)

A comparison with Tibetan reveals that Wutun sensory-inferential evidential *-li* does not have an exact parallel in Tibetan. It can be used to indicate both direct sensory evidence and inferential evidence, so it overlaps in function with both direct evidential *-'dug/ -gi* and indirect evidential *red.* When used with first person, it can also indicate the low degree of volitionality and the lack of speaker's control like direct evidentials in Tibetan.

4.2.2 Factual Auxiliary *re*

Factual auxiliary *re* represents a structural borrowing of the Tibetan copula verb *red,* and it resembles its Tibetan equivalent in meaning as well. It marks the statement as a generally known fact. Factual *re* has characteristics of both an evidential and an epistemic modal. It indicates that the speaker's knowledge is based on an indirect source of information such as encyclopedic knowledge, not on personal involvement or direct observation. It also marks information as reliable and implies strong commitment on the part of the speaker. In the following example, speakers are talking about the prices of *thang ka* paintings. Factual *re* is used with information which is shared by all the members of community and therefore considered as a reliable fact:

27) *yidaze*   *jedo-gu-ma-da*
     all   know-COMPL-RES-CONSEQ

    ma-ge   *mi-ho-de*   ***re***   *ya*
    some-REF   NEG-good-NMLZ   **FACT**   EMPH
    'Everybody knows [that], so [the price of the thangka] [certainly] is not very good.' (Field notes, summer 2007)

In the example 28, factual *re* is used in a folktale narrative in which the speaker is talking about old, historical facts:

28) *mende-ge-de*   *hai-de*   *kuli*   *da*
    like:that-REF-ASS   EQU-ASS   when   then

    dangma   *nga-n-de*   *wu-li-de*   *adia*
    long:ago   1P-COLL-ASS DIST-LOC-ASS   monk

    hai-de   ***re***   *sho-li*
    EQU-NMLZ   **FACT**   REP-SEN.INF
    'In those days, our monks were under such circumstances, they say.' (Janhunen et al 2008: 108, *my glosses*)

The example 29 is from the beginning formula of a folktale narrative. Compare this example with Lhasa Tibetan example 30, which has a strikingly similar construction:

Wutun:

29) *ki*   *nganqai-ge*   *nganqai-ge* *ki* *nga-n-de*   *ti-she*
    also   before-REF   before-REF also 1P-COLL-ASS   place-on

    hai-de   **re**   *sho-li*
    EQU-NMLZ   **FACT**   REP-SEN.INF
    'This is said to have happened at our place a long time ago.'
    (Janhunen et al. 2008: 107, 113, *my glosses*)

Lhasa Tibetan:

30) *sngon ma*   *sngon ma*   *gcig-la*   *spo'o*   *gcig*
    before   before   one-LOC   man   one

    dang   *rmo'o*   *cig*   **yod red**
    and   woman   one   **EXIST:INDIR**
    'Once, a long, long time ago, there was an old man and an old woman'
    (Garrett 2001: 39, *my glosses*)

Factual *re* is structurally more independent than the ego evidential marker *-yek* and sensory-inferential evidential marker *-li*. However, the connection between factual *re* and two bound evidential markers is suggested by the fact that unlike most other auxiliaries, *re* can replace evidential markers, but it cannot co-occur with them. It can be concluded that the coding of evidentiality in Wutun has scattered to various parts of the grammar and different evidential markers may have distinct structural properties, but they all contribute to same semantic meaning: the source of information.

4.2.3 Reported Evidential *sho*
Wutun also has a distinct marker to indicate information based on someone else's report. The verb *sho* (SM 说 *shuō*, 'to say, to speak') conveys information based on reported evidence. The verb *sho* still functions as a full lexical verb in Wutun, but it has also developed into an auxiliary expressing both direct quotes and hearsay, without any reference to the exact author of the information. In the example 31, *sho* is used to quote another person:

31) A: *ni-de*   *NN*   *je*   *nian*
     1P:SG-ASS   NN   this   year

     zang-li   *qhi-ma*   *ho-li*
     Tibet-LOC   go-COORD   good-SEN.INF

     sho-*di-li-a*
     REP-PROGR-SEN.INF-INTERR
     'This year NN from your family went to Tibet [to sell thangkas], did
     it go well [according to what he has told]?'

    B: *be-ho-li*   **sho**-*di-li*
     NEG-good-SEN.INF   **REP**-PROGR-SEN.INF
     'No, he said it did not go well.'
     (Field notes, summer 2007)

Sho can also indicate that the direct quote is finished, like in the example 32:

32) *XX*   *menzai sho-di-li*
     XX   like this say-PROGR-SEN.INF

     nga-ha qhichai be-ka-ra
     1P:SG:OBL-NAGT.TOP car NEG-give-COND

     ngu   *daijhe-ge*   *jua-ma*   *lai-ma*
     1P:SG   knife-REF   hold-COORD   come-COORD

     qhichai   *kan xian-zhe*   **sho**-*di-li*
     car   break-INT   **REP**-PROGR-SEN.INF
     'XX said like this: "If you don't give the car to me, I will take a knife
     and break [that] car." That's what he said.' (Field notes, summer 2007)

In the example 33, *sho* refers to information obtained from someone else, without specifying the exact authorship of the information. The speaker is talking about the traditions of his home village. By using a reported evidential, he indicates that his knowledge about the origins of *thang ka* painting tradition is based on hearsay evidence. This example also illustrates the coexistence of the two functions of verb *sho*: a verb of speaking used as a main verb, and an auxiliary, conveying reported information:

33) *je-ge-de*   *rejjhen*   *ngoma*
    this-REF-ASS   thangka tradition   essence

    zzhamo   *sho-ma*   *qhi-la*
    that kind of   say-COORD   start-COND

    da   *waiwo-de*   *zzojjhen*   *hai-yek*
    then   Nepal-ASS   painting tradition   EQU-EGO

    menzai   ***sho****-di-li*
    like this   **REP**-PROGR-SEN.INF
    'To say something about this thangka tradition, it is a Nepalese
    painting tradition, they say.' (Field notes, spring 2006)

It is a common tendency in languages with an evidentiality system that traditional stories are told in reported evidential (Aikhenvald 2006: 310). My data suggests that this is also the case in Wutun. The example 34 is from a folktale narrative. This example also illustrates how a reported evidential can be combined with other evidentials. The reported evidential *sho* represents the information source of the speaker and the factual *re* represents information of his/her informant. The speaker has heard the story from somebody, who has stated it as a historical fact:

34) *zang-li*   *do-tala*   *san-ge*   *yai-ma*
    Tibet-LOC   arrive-TERM   three-REF   month-and

    she-wu   *tian*   *xhen-dio-de*
    fifteen   day   go-NEC-NMLZ

    re   ***sho****-li*
    FACT   **REP**-SEN.INF
    'They say that, in order to arrive in Tibet, you had to walk three months
    and fifteen days.' (Janhunen et al. 2008: 92, *my glosses*)

The Wutun reported evidential has a parallel in the Tibetan quotative complementizer *se*, which can follow all evidentials. The quotation marker in Tibetan is also based on the verb 'to say' (Garrett 2001: 215). It indicates the information source of the speaker and other evidentials in the sentence refer to the information source of the quoted person (see Lazard 1999: 103; Tournadre 2008: 298.):

Lhasa Tibetan:

35) *kho*   *'gro-gi-yin-**se***   *nga-s*
      3P:SG:MASC   go-EGO:FUT-QUOT   1P:SG-ERG

      kho-'i   *rtsa-nas*   *go-song*
      3P:SG:MASC-GEN   side-ABL   hear-DIR:PAST
      'I heard from him[i] that he[i] *[j] will go.'
      (Garrett 2001: 214, *my glosses*)

5. Conclusions

The Sinitic status of Wutun language is evident from its basic vocabulary and grammatical morphemes, which are predominantly of Chinese origin. However, Wutun has structurally adapted its current linguistic environment in which Amdo Tibetan is the dominant language. The comparative case and the evidentiality system offer good examples of categories acquired from Tibetan. In both cases, Wutun uses predominantly Sinitic grammatical morphemes to express Tibetan morphosyntactic functions, as in the case of the reported evidential expressed by using the Chinese verb 'to say, speak.' An exception is the factual auxiliary *re*, which is directly borrowed from Amdo Tibetan. Some constructions in Wutun are isomorphic with Amdo Tibetan. A case in point is the comparative construction. On the other hand, there are markers which show some resemblance to Tibetan categories but have no exact parallels in Tibetan, such as the sensory-inferential evidential marker-*li*. Language contact between Sinitic and non-Sinitic languages of China is often assumed to be unidirectional (Sinitic → non-Sinitic). However, in the case of Wutun, the reverse is true and the language contact with Tibetan has had a profound effect on a Sinitic language.

Symbols and Abbreviations

1P	first person
2P	second person
3P	third person
ABL	ablative case
ASS	associative
CAUS	causative
COLL	collective plural
COMPL	completive
COND	conditional
CONSEQ	consequential
COORD	coordinative
DIR	direct evidential
DIST	distal demonstrative

EGO	ego evidential
ELPA	existential, possessive, locative or attributive clause
EMPH	emphatic
EQU	equative copula
ERG	ergative case
EXCL	exclamation
EXEC	executive auxiliary
EXIST	existential copula
FACT	factual evidential
FUT	future
GEN	genitive
IMPRF	imperfective aspect
INDIR	indirect evidential
INT	intentional aspect
INTERR	interrogative
LOC	locative
MASC	masculine
NAGT.TOP	non-agent topic
NEC	necessitative
NEG	negative
NCOMPL	non-completive
NMLZ	nominalizer
OBL	oblique case
PAST	past tense
PL	plural
PRF	perfective aspect
PROGR	progressive aspect
QUOT	quotative
REF	referential
REP	reported evidential
RES	resultative aspect
SG	singular
SEN.INF	sensory-inferential evidential
TERM	terminative
TOP	topic
VOL	voluntative
AT	Amdo Tibetan
SM	Standard Mandarin
WT	Written Tibetan
←	externally from
-	morpheme boundary
:	morphological relationship
( )	no explicit marker
*	ungrammatical form
X	notation used instead of personal name in the examples
XX	notation used instead of personal name in the examples
NN	notation used instead of personal name in the examples

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