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Tibetan as a “model language” in the Amdo Sprachbund: evidence from Salar and Wutun

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Abstract: This paper outlines Tibetan morphosyntactic features transferred into two genetically unrelated and typologically distinct languages, Salar (Turkic) and Wutun (Sinitic), both spoken in the same linguistic area, the Amdo Sprachbund located in the Upper Yellow River basin in Western China.¹ Due to long-term linguistic contact with Amdo Tibetan, the culturally dominant language in the region, Salar and Wutun have undergone many parallel convergence processes, and they have developed shared grammatical features not found in their genetic relatives spoken elsewhere. By comparing the grammatical structures transferred from Tibetan into both Salar and Wutun, we aim to identify the most prominent Tibetan grammatical features that tend to be copied into neighboring languages despite their different genetic affiliations and typological profiles. Our study highlights the role of Tibetan as the dominant language of the Sprachbund, serving as a model for linguistic convergence for its neighboring languages.

Keywords: Tibetic, Sinitic, Turkic, Amdo Tibetan, Salar, Wutun, Amdo Sprachbund, linguistic convergence, language contact, morphosyntax, copy

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1 The Amdo Sprachbund: linguistic and sociolinguistic characteristics

As members of the Amdo Sprachbund language union, Salar and Wutun both share a long and intense history of contact with Amdo Tibetan. Amdo Tibetan has been the culturally dominant superstrate language in this region until very recently, when the influence of Chinese began to make itself felt in many places. Some Tibetan features have been transferred into several non-Tibetic (Mongolic, Turkic and Sinitic) languages of the region, e.g. syllable-initial consonant clusters² and evidentiality, which have been discussed by Slater (2001, 2003), Janhunen (2007) and Dwyer (2013). Our study provides a more detailed comparison of the transfer of Tibetan linguistic features into two unrelated languages of the Amdo Sprachbund. We focus on morphosyntactic features, which can be considered a crucial material trace of close contact between two language communities.

Our paper is structured as follows. Section 1 serves as an introduction to the Amdo Sprachbund and the Wutun and Salar languages, as well as their history of contact with Tibetan. We will also provide an overview of the respective typological profiles of Turkic and Sinitic languages and introduce the theoretical models of linguistic convergence that are relevant for our study. Section 2 is dedicated to a discussion of cases in which Salar and Wutun show convergence due to Tibetan influence. In Section 3 we deal with cases of convergence between Salar and Wutun where the role of Tibetan as the model language remains unclear or must be ruled out. Finally, we propose a more general review and a typology of the observed convergence features in Section 4.

1.1 Salar and Wutun in the Amdo Sprachbund

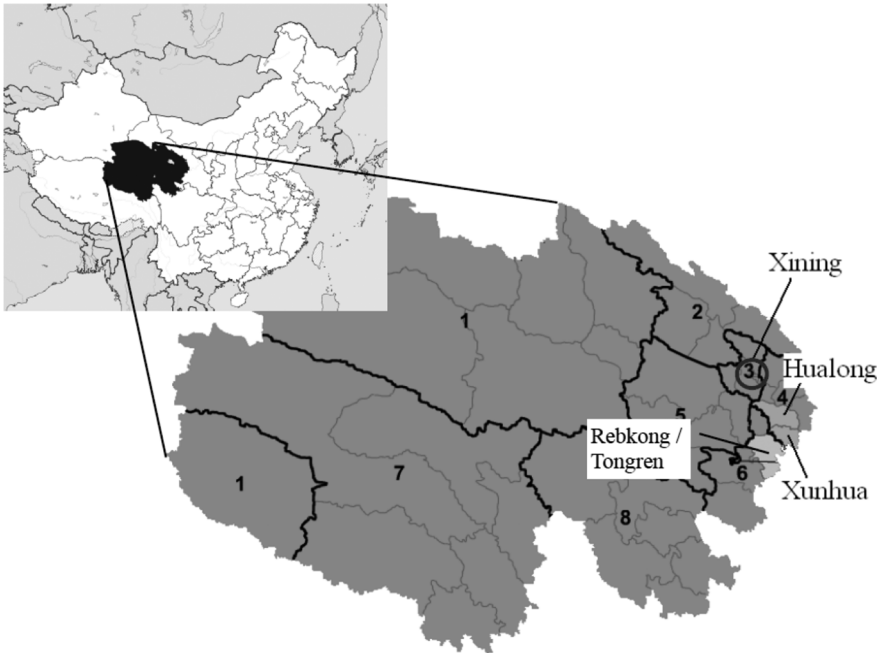
The Amdo Sprachbund is a linguistic union that comprises some 10–15 languages spoken in the Upper Yellow River basin of Western China, in the Eastern Qinghai and Southern Gansu provinces (Dwyer 1995; Janhunen 2007). Genetically, the languages of the Amdo Sprachbund represent four language families: Sinitic, Tibetic, Mongolic and Turkic. Due to long-term intensive contact, these languages have developed shared grammatical features that are not found in their genetic relatives spoken elsewhere. Varieties of Northwest Mandarin and Amdo Tibetan are generally used as *lingua francas* in the area,

² See also Róna-Tas (1966: 109–145).

while Mongolic and Turkic languages and some varieties of Sinitic are spoken at the more local level.

Salar is a Turkic language still fluently spoken by approximately 90% of the Salar people (i.e. between 90 000 and 100 000 people, according to Ma 2007: 6), mainly in the Hualong and Xunhua counties of the Haidong prefecture. It is considered to be an endangered language due to the decline in the number of (fluent) speakers, which coincides with the increasing level of formal education, the lack of a writing system and the restrictions of its domain of usage (see Ma 2007).

Wutun is a distinct local form of Northwest Mandarin spoken by approximately 4,000 people (Janhunen et al. 2008: 19) in Wutun, a rural locality consisting of three villages located in the Rebkong/Tongren County of the Huangnan Tibetan autonomous prefecture. While its basic vocabulary and most of the grammatical morphemes are of Chinese origin, Wutun shows heavy phonological and syntactic interference from Amdo Tibetan, as well as some Mongolic features. Although Wutun is still spoken as a first language by all generations, it is considered an endangered language due to its small number of speakers and lack of official recognition in China, which restricts its domain of usage to the domestic sphere (Map 1).



Map 1: Rebkong/Tongren, Hualong and Xunhua in China and in Qinghai.

1.2 Contacts with Tibetan

Contact between Salar and Tibetan speakers dates back approximately to the 14th century, when the Salars settled in Amdo (Dwyer 2007: 3–4) and intermarried with Tibetan women. Close economical relations were established and Salar-Tibetan bilingualism was widespread, at least among the male population. During the last decades, however, it has gradually been replaced by Salar-Chinese bilingualism (Dwyer 2007: 13–14; Simon 2015) especially due to the increasing level of formal education: Salar children are sent to Chinese-speaking schools. As Muslims, the Salars tend to assimilate to the Chinese-speaking Muslims (Hui), the most important Muslim community in the region. Cases of intermarriage are nowadays limited to marriage with members of other Muslim communities, i.e. mainly with Hui, and only very marginally with members of the small Tibetan-speaking Muslim community living in the Khargang area of Hualong county (see also Simon 2015).

The history of the Wutun language dates back to the 14th century, when the Upper Yellow River region formed a borderland on the Tibetan territory. The Wutun-speaking villages were part of a system by which local people were organized into hereditary border-guard units, based in various parts of Amdo (Janhunen et al. 2008: 16). The language probably emerged due to intermarriage between Chinese soldiers sent from other parts of China and the local Tibetan and Mongol women. The Wutun people adopted the Buddhist religion and regarded Tibetan as a prestige language. Almost all Wutun speakers are still bilingual in Amdo Tibetan, which remains the most important lingua franca for the Wutun community, although knowledge of both local Northwest Mandarin and Standard Mandarin is also common among younger generations. The children usually attend Tibetan-speaking schools, where both Amdo Tibetan and Standard Mandarin are studied as subjects. Mixed marriages between Wutun and Amdo Tibetan speakers are common, and in Wutun villages there are a lot of mixed families in which both Wutun and Amdo Tibetan are used. Knowledge of Tibetan is also essential in painting and selling thangkhas (traditional Tibetan religious paintings made on canvas) which is, besides agriculture, the most important source of income for the Wutun people.

As briefly described above, the history of contact with the Tibetan people is roughly the same for speakers of both languages in terms of how long it has been going on, although there are differences in many cultural aspects, the most important probably being religion. The Salars and Tibetans have had close economic ties since the 14th century and bilingualism has been common among the male population. However, in recent decades Salar-Tibetan bilingualism has decreased while Salar-Chinese bilingualism has increased. The Wutun

people have been bilingual in Amdo Tibetan and Wutun since the emergence of the Wutun language in the 14th century, and Wutun-Tibetan bilingualism is still the norm among both sexes and across all generations. One might expect that different educational choices, resulting from the religious differences between the two communities, could have played a role in the outcome of the language contact. The Wutun people are Buddhists, Tibetan is the prestige language and the children go to Tibetan schools, while the Salars are Muslims and their children receive their education at Chinese schools. However, this religious difference seems to be a more important divergence factor in the present day than it was in the past.³ Moreover, the consequences of educational choices are only relevant in very recent times, with the increase in school attendance.⁴ Therefore, it is not very likely to have had a significant influence on the grammars of the two languages.

Another factor frequently considered as having an influence on the outcomes of language contact-induced change is the original type of the replica language.⁵ However, we will show that despite important typological differences between Wutun and Salar, the influence of Tibetan often manifests itself in similar ways in both languages. Our goal is to provide an in-depth study of Tibetan convergence features in Salar and Wutun in the light of theoretical models on linguistic copying (Johanson 1998) and the formation of linguistic areas (Janhunen 2007), as well as of functional explanations of the borrowability of linguistic categories (Matras 2007). We observe that many results of this contact situation with Amdo Tibetan are similar in Salar and Wutun, despite the differences in the sociolinguistic situation as well as in the two languages' respective original types. Well-known convergence features in the languages of the Amdo Sprachbund attributed to the Tibetan superstrate include syllable-initial consonant clusters, a large amount of Tibetan loanwords, the postpositional indefinite article *zək*, based on the Amdo Tibetan numeral *xtək* ‘one’, and the Tibetan-type evidential system that has been documented in several typologically diverse languages of the region, namely Mongolic, Turkic and Sinitic languages (Dwyer 2013). In addition to relatively well-documented linguistic transfers within the Amdo Sprachbund, we will also discuss lesser-documented

³ Gerald Roche, personal communication based on his fieldwork observations, 10/11/2014.

⁴ This change is quite recent. For instance, Dwyer (2007: 89–90) indicates that the schooling rates were quite low in Xunhua for the year 1993 (10–30% of Salar children actually attended school at that time).

⁵ We use the terms “model language” for Amdo Tibetan and “replica language” for Salar and Wutun after Heine and Kuteva (2005), instead of the sociolinguistically less neutral alternative “dominant” vs. “dominated” language. This terminology is also consistent with Johanson’s model of code-copying on which we base our analysis.

examples of Tibetan convergence features in Salar and Wutun, such as the borrowing of Tibetan discourse particles.

1.3 Typological profile of the Turkic and Sinitic languages

The general common structure of the Turkic languages is described in Johanson and Csató (1998: 30–66). These languages are known for being archetype agglutinative languages, with fixed suffixation rules. The basic, unmarked word order is head-final, i.e. in the sentence it is Agent-Patient-Verb while in the noun phrase, demonstrative, numeral and all kinds of attributes (adjectives, genitival modifiers, etc.) always precede the noun. There are only a few cases of nominal agreement. The categories of plural, possessive and case are encoded in the noun phrase. If encoded, definiteness is generally indirectly expressed by demonstratives and an article derived from the number ‘one’ for the indefinite. Regarding the verb phrase “[t]he verbal morphology is complex, comprising productive markers of actionality, voice, possibility, negation, aspect, mood, tense, person, interrogation etc., normally in the order given here” (Johanson and Csató 1998: 41). The relationship between clauses is expressed by converbs (adverbial action clauses), which consist of either simple converb suffixes, or combinations of a nominalizer and a case marker or a postposition.

According to Norman (1988: 8–10), the Sinitic languages are monosyllabic tonal languages. Their morphosyntactic structure is analytic with very little inflectional morphology and the grammatical relations are primarily expressed by word order or by independent grammatical particles. The basic, unmarked word order generally appears to be Agent-Verb-Patient. However, it is important to note that sentences are characteristically organized on the basis of a topic-comment structure rather than an argument structure (Li and Thompson 1976, Li and Thompson 1981), and the grammatical relations of subject and direct object have not been grammaticalized as in the European languages (LaPolla 2009). Due to the topic-comment clause structure and non-importance of a grammatical subject, Sinitic languages are not very sensitive to an active-passive distinction and usually lack true passive constructions. In the noun phrase numerals, demonstratives and adjective attributes precede the noun. Most of the Sinitic languages have a rich system of numeral classifiers, which are used with numerals and demonstratives. Verbs are marked for aspect, but not for tense and person. Clause combining is achieved through serial verb constructions where verbs occur in chains without any morphology specifying their relationships.

The modern Tibetic languages are a group of about two hundred spoken varieties, all derived from Old Tibetan, and sharing one and the same literary

language (Tournadre 2005: 18). Most of them are not mutually intelligible. These languages are characterized by head-final word order and polysyllabic words derived from monosyllabic roots. The noun phrase comprises an optional dual and plural marker, an indefinite marker derived from the number ‘one’, as well as a case marker. Definiteness is optionally marked by demonstratives or by more specific definiteness markers. Morphosyntactically, these markers are enclitics. There is no agreement, neither within the noun phrase, nor between the verb phrase and its complements. The Tibetic languages are generally classified as “ergative languages” – ergativity being marked by cases on the noun phrase – although other alignment types coexist besides this predominant type (Tournadre 1996: 73; Zeisler 2007: 400).

In summary, Turkic and Sinitic languages show remarkable differences in terms of their structural properties and basic word order. However, due to linguistic convergence caused by Tibetan influence, Salar and Wutun have significantly diverged from their genetic relatives spoken outside the Amdo Sprachbund and they have approached a common typological profile.

1.4 Theoretical models of linguistic transfer and convergence

The analyses presented in this paper are based on the theory of linguistic copying developed by Johanson (1998). According to this theory, a given linguistic entity consists of the combination of (at least) four properties, represented in Figure 1.

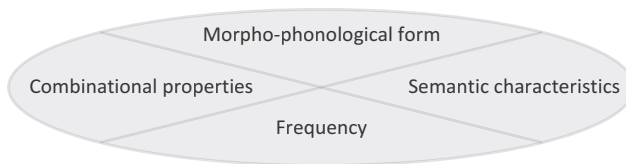


Figure 1: Johanson’s (1998) model of linguistic copying.

In a situation of contact between two or more languages, the transfer of linguistic material can concern either the four components of the linguistic entity altogether (global copy), or only one or some of its components, e.g. only its morphophonological form or its frequency (partial or selective copy). For example, “loanwords” are typically global copies, although they can also undergo a phonological adaptation to the replica language and/or a semantic shift in the process of copying. Partial copies are frequently attested in different languages.

For instance, it is cross-linguistically well-known that verbs tend to be less easily copied than nouns, and when they are transferred, they generally need to be re-verbalized in the replica language. This means that they are often transferred without their combinational properties (see, e.g. Curnow 2001: 415; Matras 2007: 48–49). Similarly, if a given language has two different grammatical means to express the same function, linguistic contact can increase the relative frequency of the grammatical category that is similar to the neighboring languages. Johanson also emphasizes the fact that the copy does not need to be identical with its model: linguistic copying is an active process, in which the speakers adapt and insert new linguistic material into their language. An obvious example of such an adjustment is the above-mentioned example of the adaptation of foreign-copied words to the phonology of the replica language.

The second theoretical model we will refer to deals with the general processes of formation of a linguistic area. Janhunen (2007) defines four processes leading to the convergence of different languages in contact. Two of them are active processes, concerning the adoption or the loss of a linguistic feature, under the influence of neighboring languages. The other two are passive processes, concerning the conservation of a given feature that also exists in neighboring languages, and the lack of development of features that are otherwise unknown in the area under consideration (Table 1).

Table 1: Janhunen's (2007) model of areal convergence processes.

	Active	Passive
Positive	Adoption of a new feature	Conservation of an original feature
Negative	Loss of an original feature	Non-adoption of a new feature

This model offers the advantage of presenting a global overview of linguistic evolution, and draws attention to the fact that the effects of language contact are not limited to copying. The linguistic copies in Johanson's model correspond more or less to the two active processes.

2 Tibetan as a convergence factor between Salar and Wutun

Amdo Tibetan influence has led to convergence between Salar and Wutun in many cases. Examples discussed in Section 2.1 concern cases where only one of

the two languages, Salar or Wutun, has actively evolved to converge with Tibetan, while the other of the two languages has converged in a passive way – according to Janhunen’s model – by retaining its original features that are already similar to Tibetan. In Section 2.2 we will present cases where both languages actively converge with Tibetan and diverge from their original typological profiles.

2.1 Asymmetric language change

2.1.1 Basic word order

The Tibetic and Turkic languages are verb-final languages, unlike the Sinitic languages in which the verb usually occurs between the Agent and the Patient. Thus, in the case of basic word order, the influence of Amdo Tibetan in the region triggers an alignment of Wutun towards Turkic and Tibetic languages. Examples (1) and (2) illustrate the basic word order in clauses governed by a bivalent verb in Amdo Tibetan and in Salar respectively, as representative of the basic word order in their language families, while examples (3) and (4) show the contrast between the word order in Wutun and Standard Mandarin.

- (1) Amdo Tibetan (Amdo -Tibetan CONSTR 2/3)

མེ་ལོ་ཟླ་གི་མིས་ རྒྱ་མཚོ་པར་ ལྷོ་གོ་གི
*[apo-sək-ki]*_{Agent} *[ts^haqpər]*_{Patient} *[rta-kokə]*⁶_{Verb}
 man-INDEF-ERG newspaper[ABS] look-IPFV.TEST
 ‘A man reads a newspaper.’

- (2) Salar (Salar CONSTR 7/153)

*[bala-sə]*_{Agent} *[təa]*_{Patient} *[iç-bər-a]*_{Verb}
 child-3POSS[ABS] tea[ABS] drink-IPFV.EGO-EXCL
 ‘The child drinks tea.’

⁶ The second line of the Amdo-Tibetan examples gives a phonological transcription. The examples were recorded in various places in Xunhua and Hualong counties (Haidong prefecture, Qinghai Province) and reflect different sub-varieties of the Amdo Tibetan language. The discrepancies are mainly limited to the phonological system (e.g. the sequence སྤྲེ <sd> is pronounced /z/ almost everywhere in Hualong county but /fid/ in Xunhua), but regarding the morphosyntactic features presented here, no significant differences between the subvarieties have been found in our data. We thank Xun Gong for his useful comments on the phonological transcription. The remaining mistakes are our responsibility.

(3) Wutun (elicited)

[*gu*]_{Agent} [*quandi*]_{Patient} [*xi-di-li*]_{Verb}
 3SG clothes wash-PROGR-SEN.INF
 ‘S/he is washing clothes.’

(4) Standard Mandarin (Li and Thompson 1981: 128)

[*nèi-ge shāngrén*]_{Agent} [*mài*]_{Verb} [*shuǐguǒ*]_{Patient}
 DEM-CLF merchant sell fruit
 ‘That merchant sells fruit.’

As illustrated by example (3), in Wutun the basic, unmarked word order is Agent-Patient-Verb like in the Tibetic and Turkic languages, while in Standard Mandarin the basic word order is Agent-Verb-Patient (as in example 4).

If we examine the neutral order of the participants more precisely, this alignment of Wutun towards the Tibetic and Turkic languages is also observed for the participants in ditransitive sentences. In the Turkic and Tibetic languages, the position of the R-argument⁷ can be either before or after the Patient. Different factors explain this variation: morphosyntactic incorporation into the verb phrase, information structure (the immediate pre-verbal position being the focus position), definiteness, etc. There exists a certain tendency for placing an animate (or human) R-argument (Recipient) before the Patient as a default syntactic position, whereas a Goal would more often appear in the position immediately before the verb.⁸ In other words, for trivalent verbs, the two following word orders are attested (Table 2):

Table 2: Tibetic and Turkic relative word order for patient, recipient and goal.

Transitive sentence	Agent	Patient	Verb
Ditransitive sentence	Agent	Recipient	Patient
	Agent	Patient	Goal

This tendency is not absolute and is easily overridden by pragmatic factors [at least in Amdo Tibetan and Salar], but is still attested in our data. The examples

⁷ The term R-argument here is taken as a cover term for participants marked in the dative case in the Turkic and Tibetic languages. We will then further divide R-arguments into two sub-categories depending on their animacy: Recipient refers to an animate R-argument, while Goal refers to an inanimate R-argument.

⁸ These two subcategories of R-Argument in Amdo Tibetan and Salar are further distinguished by other syntactic properties, such as the (im)possibility of being marked with a postposition.

(5) to (8) illustrate the position of the Recipient in Amdo Tibetan, Salar, Wutun and Turkmen; the last is taken as an example of a Turkic language spoken outside the Amdo Sprachbund.

- (5) Amdo Tibetan (Amdo-Tibetan CONSTR 5/659)

འདི་ རྒྱལི་ འདི་ གིས་ རྣ་ལོན་ ཟଁག་ ག་ རྟོས་བོ་ སྟེར་ བོ་གི
 [ʰdə cəji ʰdə-gi]_{Agent} [lolon səg-a]_{Recipient} [ʰŋiwo]_{Patient} [ʰter-kokə]_{Verb}
 DEM child DEM-ERG old INDEF-DAT thing[ABS] offer-IPFV.TEST
 ‘This one, this child gives a thing to an old [man].’

- (6) Salar (Salar CONSTR 16/8824)

[an-or]_{Agent} [baos(ə)-or-ɣa]_{Recipient} [dʒidʒek]_{Patient} [us-ba]_{Verb}
 girl-INDEF uncle-INDEF-DAT flower[ABS] give-IPFV.TEST
 ‘A girl gives flowers to an old man’

- (7) Wutun (elicited)

[ana]_{Agent} [enian-ha]_{Recipient} [huaeiga-ge]_{Patient} [ka-lio]_{Verb}
 mother child-NAGT.TOP book-REF give-PFV
 ‘The mother gave the child a book.’

- (8) Turkmen (Doğan 2007: 605)

[dayhan]_{Agent} [Ependä]_{Recipient} [tovşan]_{Patient} [getir-ip ber-ipdir]_{Verb}
 farmer[ABS] Effendi.DAT rabbit[ABS] bring-CONV give-PFV.INDIR
 ‘[One day,] a farmer gave a rabbit to Effendi.’

In all four languages examined, the Recipient precedes the Patient. Examples (9) to (13), on the other hand, illustrate the position of the Goal. The Goal follows the Patient.

- (9) Amdo Tibetan (Amdo-Tibetan CONSTR 3/329)

ལྷག་ག་གི་ རྩམ་ དི་ ཐང་འདྲ་ ལྷུང་གི་ བུམ་ལའ་བཟུག་ཟଁག
 [ʰtaqqa-gə ʰdzama tə]_{Patient} [tʰaŋ-a]_{Goal} [ʰuŋ-gə ʰcək-taŋ-zəg]_{Verb}
 behind-GEN vase DEM[ABS] soil-DAT fall-CONN CAUS-PFV
 ‘[He] makes the vase behind fall on the ground.’

- (10) Salar (Salar CONSTR 19/1348)

[beŋor-nə]_{Patient} [mə-ŋə]_{Goal} [a(h)-gej-mie]_{Verb} jaaa
 stick-ACC DEM.DAT take-come-PFV EXCL
 ‘Oh, [they] brought sticks here.’

- (11) Salar (Salar HIST HQ/130)

[Samarxand-di-gi torak Samarxand-i-gi su] Patient *[ana]* Goal
 S.-LOC-GEN earth[ABS] S.-LOC-GEN water[ABS] DEM.DAT
[a(h)-gel-dʒa] Verb
 take-come-CONN

‘Then, they had brought there [some] earth of Samarkand, [some of] Samarkand’s water...’

- (12) Wutun (elicited)

[Duojie] Agent *[yegai-ha]* Patient *[zhungo]* Goal *[dai-gu-lio]* Verb
 PN letter-NAGT.TOP China send-COMPL-PFV

‘Duojie sent the letter to China.’

- (13) Turkmen (Dogan 2007: 601)

[Alça diyen oğlan] Agent *[meni]* Patient *[kemaan-a]* Goal *[sal-ıp]* Verb
 PN[ABS] say.CONV boy[ABS] 1SG.ACC slingshot-DAT put-CONV

‘A boy named Alça put me in a slingshot, and...’

In Salar and Wutun, the word order in ditransitive sentences is similar to Tibetan, i.e. the Recipient precedes the Patient, while the Goal follows it. The functional motivation for this word order involves a combination of the animacy hierarchy with the hierarchy of syntactic functions: animate participants are placed before inanimate participants, and Patient appears before Goal. This word order is also identical with the neutral word order in the Turkic languages, e.g. in Turkmen, which is taken here as a representative of the Turkic language family.

However, in ditransitive sentences in Standard Mandarin, as illustrated by the examples (14) and (15), the Recipient usually follows the Patient, while the Goal precedes the Verb and the Patient.

- (14) Standard Mandarin (Li and Thompson 1981: 374)

[tā] Agent *[dài-le]* Verb *[yì bāo tang]* Patient *[gěi Zhāngsān]* Recipient
 3SG bring-PFV one bag candy to Zhāngsān

‘S/he brought a bag of candy to Zhāngsān.’

- (15) Standard Mandarin (Li and Thompson 1981: 404)

[wǒ] Agent *[zài shūjià-shang]* Goal *[fāng]* Verb *[zázhì]* Patient
 1SG at bookcase-on place magazine

‘I put the magazine on the bookcase.’

This change in the basic word order in Wutun corresponds to a partial copy in the categorization proposed by Johanson (1998). It involves copying the morphosyntactic properties of the participants according to their semantic characteristics, without any phonological form copied. This general change of word order in Wutun is congruent with Matras' (2007: 41) observations that languages undergoing a typological change tend to produce “an accommodation to the patterns of a socially dominant contact language”, which is precisely the role of Amdo Tibetan in the region. At the same time, as Matras notes:

Contact induced change in word order is generally not common in our sample. [...] The most common change in word order appears to affect possessive constructions [...]. This is understandable, given the fact that a change in the position of possessor and possessed does not affect the position of the verb, and so, it leaves the organization of the predication intact. (Matras 2007: 60)

Thus, this type of word order change suggests a very intensive and prolonged cultural contact between the Wutun and Amdo Tibetan speakers at some stage of the linguistic history of the Amdo Sprachbund.

2.1.2 Verb phrase: Lack of personal conjugation

In Amdo Tibetan, as in other Tibetic languages, there is no personal conjugation on the verb: no participant is indexed on the verb phrase, see (16a) and (16b).

(16) a. Amdo Tibetan (Amdo-Tibetan CONSTR 6/823)

འདི་ ཅི་ཅིག་ ཡིན་ རྗོ་ མི་ ཞེས་ གི་ རྩལ།
n̄dā t̄ɛtsək jən-no mə-ɕe-gə ŋi
 DEM what EQU-NMZ NEG-know-IPFV.TEST 1.ERG

‘This one, I do not know what it is, me.’

b. Amdo Tibetan (Amdo-Tibetan HIST 29/76)

[ཉམས་ཉམས་] བོད་ལ་ མི་ རྟག་ རྩལ།
[χexɛ] wo-la mə-ʔga-gə
 Muslim[ABS] Tibet-DAT NEG-like-IPFV.TEST

‘[The Muslims] do not like the Tibetans.’

The same is true for Wutun, see (17a) and (17b), as well as for other Sinitic languages, such as Standard Mandarin, see (18a) and (18b).

- (17) a. Wutun (Wutun_0028Conversation_2.)
ngu ra menzai ddo-la-li
 1SG also like.that think-INCOMPL-SEN-INF
 ‘I also think like that.’
- b. Wutun (Wutun_0028Conversation_2.)
gu-jhege zang-li wanlan-di-li
 3-PAUC Tibet-LOC do-PROGR-SEN-INF
 ‘They are working in Central Tibet.’
- (18) a. Mandarin Chinese (Li and Thompson 1981: 164)
 wǒ **zhīdao** nèi-jian shì
 1SG **know** DEM-CLF matter
 ‘I know that affair.’
- b. Mandarin Chinese (Li and Thompson 1981: 155)
 Tā **shuì** zài shāfa-shang
 3SG **sleep** at sofa-on
 ‘S/he sleeps on the sofa.’

In Salar too, we observe the lack of personal conjugation. In examples (19a) through (19d), the same morpheme is used in the future tense, regardless of whether the subject is first, second or third person.

- (19) a. Salar (Salar HIST HQ 257)
men de jac-bil-mi-ya
 1SG[ABS] too say-can-NEG-FUT.HET
 ‘Even I cannot say.’
- b. Salar (Salar CG 16)
Ssen jari-mə-ya
 2SG[ABS] be.able-NEG-FUT.HET
 ‘You will not be able.’
- c. Salar (Salar PS 140–142)
xandar-i-na salə-ba o
 jacket-3POSS-DAT rub-IPFV.TEST 3SG[ABS]
 ‘He rubs [the pear] on his jacket.’
- d. Salar (Salar PS 140–142)
ji-je ji-je var-ya
 eat-CONN eat-CONN go-FUT.HET
 [He/they] will go, while eating.’

However, lack of personal conjugation is an unusual feature for a Turkic language. Johanson and Csató explicitly mention this “anomaly” in the language family, in their description of Turkic:

A verbal predicate consists of a predicate core, provided with a thematic marker [indicating tense-aspect] and mostly with a personal marker, e.g. Turkish [*Sen*] *gel-iyor-sun* ‘You come’. [...] Personal markers are used whether an overt subject is present or not. [...] In Salar and Yellow Uyghur, finite verb forms normally dispense with personal markers altogether, Salar *Men kiler*, ‘I will come’, Yellow Uyghur *Sen parar*, ‘You will go’. (Johanson and Csató 1998: 53–53)⁹

Róna-Tas adds that the personal markers were already in development in Old Turkic (8th to 11th centuries), and indicates their forms:

The personal markers developed from personal pronouns. Even Old Turkic has structures such as *Ölteci sen* ‘You will die’. The suffixes were

1P.SG. *ben* > *-men* > *-m*,

2P.SG. *sen* > *-n*,

3P.SG. **i* > *∅*,

1P.PL. *biz* > *-biz/-miz*

and 2P.PL. *siz* > *-siz*.

Besides, *-ŋ* is found in the second person and *-k* in the first person plural. (Róna-Tas 1998: 75)¹⁰

This indicates that the lack of personal conjugation is indeed a loss in Salar, since the personal conjugation was attested prior to Tibetan-Salar contact.

As in the case of basic word order, the lack of personal conjugation illustrates a case of convergence, where one language (Salar) changes to become similar to Tibetan, whereas the other one (Wutun) retains its original characteristics. According to Janhunen’s (2007) model, the disappearance of the personal conjugation system in Salar is an active, negative convergence process (a loss of an original feature).

2.1.3 Passive voice

Both Tibetic and Sinitic languages are known for having no specific morphological marking for subject demotion (i.e. passive). The semantic and pragmatic functions generally assumed by the passive voice in such languages are

⁹ Emphasis added on the personal conjugation suffix in Turkish.

¹⁰ Emphasis added.

expressed by other syntactic means (for Tibetan, see Tournadre 1996: 92–93, for Chinese, see LaPolla 2009). A common feature of the Turkic languages, however, is a passive voice, expressed by the suffix *-(V)l*, or, in some languages *-(V)n* (Johanson and Csató 1998: 42–43).

In Salar, the suffix *-(V)l* is still attested, with a function which, at first, seems to be best described as passive, as in example (20):

(20) Salar (Salar PS 91)

lonzi ic-in-da-γə tædan ic-in-da-γə
 basket inside-3POSS-LOC-GEN basket inside-3POSS-LOC-GEN
armət ari-ǰik jer-e djyx-ǰl-ǰi
 fruit[ABS] clean-EMPH soil-DAT spill-PASS?-PFV

‘The fruits which were in the basket have been completely spilled onto the ground.’

However, if we examine more precisely the occurrences of this suffix, we observe that its usage is drastically restricted to some verbs only, and is not related to the syntactic structure of the verb phrase. That is, it is no longer productive, as shown by examples (21a) through (21c).

(21) Salar (specifically elicited)

a. *Bu qadən kiçi-tæk avu-sə-γa*
 DEM[ABS] woman person-ID[ABS] child-3POSS-DAT
tɛjaotɛjaoxwa jaɕ-ba
 whisper[ABS] say-IPFV.TEST

‘This woman tells a secret to her child.’

b. * *tɛjaotɛjaoxwa avu-sə-γa jaɕ-ǰl-ba*
 whisper[ABS] child-3POSS-DAT say-PASS?-IPFV.TEST
 intended: ‘A secret is told to the child.’

c. *avu-sə-γa tɛjaotɛjaoxwa jaɕ-ba*
 child-3POSS-DAT whisper[ABS] say-IPFV.TEST
 ‘A secret is told to this child.’

In fact, the use of the suffix *-(V)l* is impossible with the verb *jaɕ-* ‘to speak’, in example (21b), and the deletion of the noun referring to the Agent in (21c) does not trigger a specific passive voice marking on the verb.

Similarly, example (22b) shows that the verb *gor-* ‘to see’ does not require that a specific Agent be explicitly mentioned in the utterance. In this case, depending on the context, the Agent is either interpreted as impersonal, generic or beyond the scope of the communicative purpose, or as a zero-anaphora.

Example (22c), in turn, shows that the suffix $-(V)l$ can co-occur with the explicit mention of the Agent, marked in the absolutive/nominative case. In this case, it has a potential reading.

(22) Salar (elicited)

- a. *bugyn daq-da ana-ɬik burə gor-miç*
 today mountain-LOC girl-ID[ABS] wolf[ABS] see-PFV
 ‘Today, the girl saw a wolf in the mountains.’
- b. *bugyn daq-da burə gor-miç*
 Today mountain-LOC wolf[ABS] see-PFV
 ‘Today, a wolf has been seen in the mountains.’
 OR ‘Today, [she] saw a wolf in the mountains.’
- c. *bugyn daq-da (ana-ɬik) burə gor-əl-miç*
 today mountain-LOC (girl-DEF[ABS]) wolf[ABS] see-PASS?-PFV
 ‘Today [the girl] managed to see a wolf in the mountains.’

Finally, example (23) shows that a verb suffixed with $-(V)l$ can still govern a Patient marked in the accusative case, which definitely rules out the analysis of this suffix as a passive voice marker from a synchronic perspective.

(23) Salar (Salar FILM 346)

- japon dycmen-la-nə doz-ul-ya et-se doz-il-ma-miç*
 Japan enemy-PL-ACC crush-PASS?-FUT say-COND crush-PASS?-NEG-PFV
 ‘Even if they said that they would **be able** to crush the Japanese enemies, they **could** not crush them.’

In examples (22) and (23), the $-(V)l$ suffix is thus interpreted as expressing the ability of the Agent to carry out an action volitionally. Such an interpretation does not apply to the context of the example (20): no specific Agent is present in the situation.

This loss of a productive passive voice derivation in Salar is probably linked to the loss of agreement in the verb with its subject, a development compensated by the introduction of a Tibetan-type evidential system (cf. Dwyer 2000). In fact, both the lack of personal conjugation and the loss of passive voice in Salar have important ramifications for defining the category of subject. Thus, according to Janhunen’s model (2007), the loss of passive voice in Salar can be described as an active loss of an original Turkic feature under Tibetan influence, while the lack of development of a passive voice in Wutun could be described, in Janhunen’s terminology, as a passive negative convergence process (non-adoption of a new feature, which in theory could have developed, but is not attested

in Sinitic languages). At the same time, however, given the multidirectionality of the linguistic convergence in the area, the loss of both the personal agreement and the passive voice in Salar would be best attributed to the combined influence of both Sinitic and Tibetic languages.

The modification of word order in Wutun, and the loss of verbal agreement, as well as the loss of passive voice derivation in Salar, have led to convergence between Amdo Tibetan, Wutun and Salar. However, in cases where two of the three languages originally share the same characteristics, the role of Tibetan as the model language for linguistic change remains unclear. In fact, the linguistic change observed could as well be attributed to the influence of the other language family (respectively Turkic and Sinitic), or to the combined effects of two language families of the area. Only historical and sociolinguistic data can help to decide and reconstruct the most probable scenario for language change.

2.2 Parallel language change

In Sections 2.2.1 – 2.2.4 we will illustrate features for which both Wutun and Salar diverge from their original families and align according to the Tibetan grammatical pattern. Thus, in such cases, the role of Tibetan as a model language is clearly established, as long as the role of Mongolic languages is ruled out.

2.2.1 Position of the numeral in the noun phrase

The first example concerns the position of the numeral in the noun phrase. In Amdo Tibetan, like in all Tibetic languages, the numeral always follows the noun, but unlike Old and Classical Tibetan, it follows the indefiniteness marker (if it is present), as exemplified in (24).¹¹

(24) Amdo-Tibetan CONSTR 2/222

ཞ་ཡི་	ཚུ་ཚུ་	ཟིག་	གསུམ་
<u>cajə</u>	tʰuŋtʰuŋ	səq	xsəm
<u>child</u>	small	INDEF	three
‘three small children’			

¹¹ We thank an anonymous reviewer for having drawn our attention to the fact that this position of the indefinite marker before the numeral is exceptional for a Tibetic language and innovative with regard to classical Tibetan. This is the only word order attested in our data. We are not aware of a contact-language explanation for this phenomenon.

The order of the numeral and the noun in the Tibetic languages differs from the Sinitic languages, where the numeral precedes the noun (as in the example (25) from Standard Mandarin). In Wutun, we observe in (26a) that the numeral follows the noun, like in Tibetan. In some contexts, the original word order is maintained, as in example (26b). However, this is strictly restricted to combinations of numerals with Chinese-based units of time, such as *tian* ‘day’, *yai* ‘month’ and *nian* ‘year’.

(25) Standard Mandarin (Li and Thompson 1981: 104)

sān-ge rén
three-CLF person
 ‘three people’

(26) a. Wutun (Wutun_11Bike_2.)

qhichai liang-ge
car **two-REF**
 ‘two cars’

b. Wutun (Wutun_0028Conversation_2.)

liang-ge yai
two-REF month
 ‘two months’

In the Turkic languages, the basic word order in the noun phrase is illustrated by the Uyghur example (27). The numeral always precedes the noun. Conversely, in Salar, like in Wutun, both respective orders of the noun and the numeral are possible, as illustrated in (28a) and (28b).

(27) Uyghur (Doğan 2007: 681–703)

ikki it agin-em
two dog friend-1POSS
 ‘my two dog friends’

(28) a. Salar (Salar CONSTR 19/1161)

uç kiçi mə-nda getca jaç-ba
three people DEM-LOC speech tell-IPFV
 ‘Three people are talking here.’

b. Salar (Salar HIST HQ 199)

ax daç döt
white stone **four**
 ‘four white stones’

Contrary to Wutun, it has not been possible to draw a semantic or functional motivation for this alternation: it depends neither on the lexicon, like in Wutun, nor on the numerical value of the numeral. It does not correspond to a dialectal variation, as one and the same speaker can use both structures in turn. However, the pre-nominal position of the numeral is generally considered to be more archaic and characteristic of the speech of the elder generation.

The change of the position of the numeral in the noun phrase is a partial copy according to Johanson's (1998) classification. The syntactic properties of the Tibetan numeral are partially copied into Salar and Wutun. The copy remains partial since both in Wutun and Salar the original order is still marginally attested: the frequency of this word order is different in the copy languages and in the model language, where 100% of the noun phrases with a numeral follow this order. This example of linguistic transfer thus confirms Johanson's assertion that a copy is generally not totally identical with its model.

2.2.2 Discourse particles

Another type of partial copy is attested in both Salar and Wutun. This time, it involves the morphophonological form of the linguistic unit, with its syntactic properties, and only partly its semantic characteristics. As already mentioned by Dwyer (2013: 265), sentence-final pragmatic particles have been transferred from the Tibetic languages into the neighboring languages. In Amdo Tibetan, the sentence-final particles *-ba/-pa* and *-be/-pe* serve to express the speaker's subjectivity or surprise as in (29) and (30):

(29) Amdo Tibetan (Amdo-Tibetan MUSUL 76–77)

A: ལྷོད་གི་ རྒྱ་སྐད་ གསལ་གི་ཟེ།
tɛ^ho-gə 'rke ^x*sa-gə-pe*
 2SG-GEN language[ABS] clear-TEST-PHAT
 'Your pronunciation is very clear!'

B: ཨ་ རྩ་རྩ་གི་ ཡིན།
ŋa 'ɕjardɕja-gə jən
 1SG[ABS] PN-GEN EQU.EGO
 'I am from Gyagya.'

then	worry	LIGHTV-COND.too	
དྲི	ལྷན་ཡག་	ཡོད་མ་རེད་	ཟེམ།
<i>tʰa</i>	<i>pʰān-ja'</i>	<i>jo:mare'</i>	<i>sa'</i>
then	benefit-NMZ	NEG.exist.FACT	CIT

'Well, Uncle says it like this: Now, there is no point to get in trouble.'

In her study of the discourse particles in oral Standard Tibetan, Roux (2011: 62) classifies this particle as a “tag” or phatic particle: “Tags, [...] whether used to regulate the interactive process, or to express the speaker’s subjectivity, are central for the oral structure in Standard Tibetan” (Roux 2011: 62).¹⁵ Thus, such a linguistic means has a twofold function. The “regulation of the interactive process” corresponds to the function of ensuring the attention and/or understanding of the hearer. Thus, we find a similar – albeit not strictly identical – discourse marker in Central Tibetan and in Amdo Tibetan.

In Salar, as in Amdo Tibetan, the two markers *-ba* and *-be* are used to express the speaker’s non-commitment to his or her utterance, personal judgement or surprise:¹⁶

(33) Salar (SAL PS 42)

<i>Ooo, tsaomao bir</i>	<i>dayən-ba</i>	ba	<i>avu-ɟʒik</i>
EXCL hat	INDEF[ABS] wear-IPFV.HET	PHAT	boy-DEF

'Oh, he is wearing a hat, the boy.'

(34) Salar (Salar PS 97)

<i>o tɕo-si voba</i>	<i>kici</i>	be
3 PAUC-3POSS be.correct-IPFV.TEST	person	PHAT

'They are good people!'

The phatic function is also attested in Salar, as exemplified in (35).

(35) Salar (SAL HIST 343–345)

<i>bu</i>	<i>ge-ɟʒanə</i>	<i>bil-er</i>	ba
DEM[ABS]	come-CONN	know-IPFV	PHAT
After coming,		you [already] know, isn't it?	
<i>jeq-qeni</i>	<i>ol-ɟʒi</i>		
settle-NMZ.ACC	LIGHTV-PFV		

'They settled down [here].'

¹⁵ Original text: “Les tags, [...] qu'ils soient régulateurs du processus interactif ou porteurs de la subjectivité de l'énonciateur, sont essentiels dans la structure de l'oral en tibétain standard.”

¹⁶ Contrary to Wutun, this particle conveys no doubt on the part of the speaker.

In Wutun, the same morpheme also functions as a sentence-final marker, but with a slightly different meaning. As illustrated by examples (36) and (37), it marks uncertainty on the part of the speaker, and it could be analyzed as an epistemic modal expressing the probability of the event:

(36) Wutun (Wutun_0028Conversation_2.)

A: *nga-mu liang-ge-de tangka jhi-ge yai*
 1-COLL two.together-ASS thangka how_many-REF month
wanlan-lio ze-li
 do-PFV EXEC-SEN-INF

‘For how many months have our thangkas been made?’

B: *liang-ge yai hai-yek ba*
 two-REF month EQU-EGO PROB

‘Two months, I guess (but I don’t remember for sure).’

(37) Wutun (Wutun_0028Conversation_2.)

ou pa qhi-gu-ma-da
 EXCL friend go-COMPL-RES.PO -CONSEQ
gejhai ra lai-di-li be
 self also come-PROGR-SEN-INF PROB

‘Oh, when [his] friend has left, he will also come back himself, I guess (but I am not quite sure).’

However, this expression of uncertainty is intimately connected with the phatic function. The Wutun sentence-final markers *ba* and *be* are probably related to Tibetic tag questions as well, and the expression of uncertainty could have arisen as a semantic extension of the question forms.

The copy of the sentence-final particles *-ba* and *-be* confirms Matras’ (2007) suggestion that categories that are connected with the emotive level of the discourse are more prone to be transferred. In fact, Matras (2007: 57) notes that there is an “overwhelming tendency of the languages in the sample to borrow discourse markers.”

Thus, this example illustrates a case where the influence of Tibetan on Salar and Wutun manifests in the same domain of grammar, involving the same morphemes, but the semantic properties are more thoroughly transferred in Salar than in Wutun. Synchronically, the borrowing of discourse particles is close to a full copy in Salar, whereas it is only a partial copy in Wutun. Diachronic data would be necessary to decide whether the semantic features of the discourse particles were involved in the copying process in Wutun from the very beginning, or whether a language-internal evolution of the properties of these particles has led to the present situation.

2.2.3 Subordination: the causal relation

The subordination structure of a causal proposition is another example of the influence of Amdo Tibetan on both Salar and Wutun. In Amdo Tibetan, as in other Tibetic languages, the ergative-instrumental case marker suffixed to a nominalized verb is used to express a causal relation between two phrases (as in (38)):

(38) Amdo Tibetan (elicited)

དེ་རིང་ ལགས་ འབབ་ལོ་ནོ་ནོ་གིས་ ར་ ཕྱི་ལོགས་ལ་ མི་འགོ་
teran ^{fi}*nam* *m**bab-go-no-gi* *ŋa* *ɕ**ci**loɕ-ga* *mə*ⁿ*dzjo*
 today sky[ABS] fall-IPFV-NMZ-ERG 1SG[ABS] outside-DAT NEG.IPFV-go
 ‘Because it is raining, I will not go outside today.’

The use of converbs, composed of a nominalizer and a case marker is common in Salar, as in other Turkic languages. But the use of the genitive case marker in this structure can only be explained by the influence of Tibetan: Salar speakers interpreted the ergative-instrumental case marker in the Tibetan structure as a genitive, since both case markers are homophonic in Tibetan, and the inferred/supposed structure is reproduced in the Salar language. In this case, the copying process involves no morphophonological material.

(39) Salar (Salar FILM 237)

dyɕman *vo-yan-nige* *xandar-im-ni*
 enemy[ABS] exist-NMZ-GEN jacket-1POSS-ACC
yala-qan *jari-mes*
 lose-NMZ be.correct-NEG.IPFV
 ‘I cannot lose my jacket [just] because there are / because of the enemies.’

As examples (40a) and (40b) show, the genitive case marker is morphophonologically close to the interrogative pronoun ‘why’. However, in the causal structure, it is difficult to analyze *-nige* as the interrogative morpheme, given that it would be the only converb made up of a nominalizer and an interrogative pronoun, instead of a case marker.

(40) a. Salar (Salar PS 87)

avu-ɕik-nige *tsaomoa-si*
 boy-ID-GEN hat-3POSS
 ‘the boy’s hat’

b. Salar (Salar FILM 106)

asmən *nege* *belige* *soxw-a* *re*
 sky **why** such cold-INDIR INT
 ‘Why is it so cold?’

In Wutun, a causal relation is expressed by a structure similar to that of Turkic and Tibetic. The Wutun causal structure involves nominalization of the verb by means of the nominalizer *-de* (which has cognates in all varieties of Mandarin Chinese), together with the use of the case marker *-liangge*, which, in Wutun, covers a wide range of functions typical for both comitatives and instrumentals. The influence of Tibetic manifests itself in the very existence of such converb structures, and in the use of the instrumental case marker:

(41) Wutun (Wutun_WutunVillage_1.)

da yidaze suan-de jiosso hai-de-liangge

then everyone Tibetan-ASS education EQU-NMZ-INSTR

suan yegai zowo ze-ma jjhang-la-ma

Tibetan language main.thing do-CONN study-INCOMPL-CONN

‘Then, because of the custom of all [the schoolchildren in our village] getting a Tibetan education, they take Tibetan as the main language of study...’

The case marker *-liangge* in Wutun is based on the Mandarin Chinese numeral *liǎng*, ‘two’ and the general classifier *-ge*. The use of the numeral ‘two’ as a case marker represents a grammatical replication from the Mongolic Bonan language, which is spoken in four villages located in the immediate vicinity of the three Wutun-speaking villages (Sandman 2012: 376). Bonan has the instrumental case marker = *bala* based on the numeral *ɬar* ‘two’ (Fried 2010: 60). The instrumental case in Bonan is used to express instruments and causal relations, the latter use is probably due to Tibetic influence. Therefore, the causal subordination construction in Wutun represents a replication of the Tibetan grammatical pattern, while the case marker involved in this construction is a loan calque from a Mongolic language.

The case of causal subordination is interesting insofar as the influence of Tibetan manifests itself in different ways in Wutun and Salar. In Wutun, the syntactic structure itself is transferred, since Sinitic languages normally do not have the subordination structure V-NMZ-case marker. Concerning Salar, such a syntactic structure is commonly attested in Turkic languages, but the use of the genitive case marker in this construction, with this semantic characteristic, can only be explained by contact with Tibetan.

More generally speaking, the fact that expressions of the causal relation are affected by contact-induced change corresponds to the observations made by Matras (2007: 55): “Subordinating conjunctions are [...] a frequent target of borrowings. [...] [One also notes the] high presence, among borrowed conjunctions that introduce adverbial clauses, of those that mark concessive relations

[...], causal relations [...], and purpose.” He then goes on to propose the following hierarchy of borrowability for the subordinators: “Concessive, conditional, causal, purpose > other subordinators” (Matras 2007: 56). The influence of Tibetan on causal subordination in Salar and Wutun is in accordance with this hierarchy.

2.2.4 Other examples of parallel language change

In addition to the position of the numeral in the noun phrase, discourse particles and the causal subordination structure, there are three examples of a parallel language change facilitated by Tibetan influence in both Salar and Wutun that we would like to briefly mention. However, due to limitations of space, we will not discuss these three examples in great detail.

Our first example concerns the grammaticalization of the verb ‘to sit’ as a progressive/durative marker in a serial verb construction,¹⁷ which is observed in both Salar and Wutun. Like the causal subordination process, this feature is easily transferrable in Salar, since there are already similar – though not identical – constructions in Turkic languages (position verbs used to express aspectual values in a subordination structure). Standard Mandarin has not grammaticalized the verb ‘to sit’ as a durative marker, but this construction exists in Wutun. The introduction of this construction into Wutun may have been facilitated by the fact that it is a peripheral (and non-obligatory) category. Once again, the intensity of language contact between the Wutun and Tibetan speakers also certainly played a role in this process. The second example of borrowing in the domain of aspect is the progressive aspect based on the existential copula, which is found in both Salar and Wutun. This construction is isomorphic with the Amdo Tibetan progressive aspect, and its introduction into both Salar and Wutun has probably been facilitated by language contact with Amdo Tibetan.

The copy of the Tibetan-type evidentiality system into both Salar and Wutun, observed by Dwyer (2000) and Sandman (forthcoming) is a different case, since, this time, the linguistic transfer affects a very central aspect of the

¹⁷ According to Janhunen (2003), several auxiliary verbs are used in various Mongolic languages to express different aspectual or modal distinctions, such as ‘to put’, ‘to become’, ‘to come’ and ‘to go’. However, the only Mongolic languages where the verb ‘to sit’ is used as an aspectual auxiliary are Bonan, Santa and Shira Yugur, i.e. members of the Amdo Sprachbund. In the other Mongolic languages, the progressive or durative value is usually assumed by a construction involving the locative copula.

verbal system: it pervades the whole system of Tibetan verbs, and, accordingly, has been copied into Salar and Wutun to a very large extent. The main explanation for such a linguistic change can only be the intensity of language contact. We must add, however, that according to Matras, the domain of modality (to which evidentiality belongs), as well as aspect, is more frequently transferred than, for instance, tense: “[...] We have seen the high density of (matter) borrowing in the domain of modality, in some cases also in mood, frequent matter and pattern replication in the area of aspect and Aktionsart, and few cases of pattern replication in tense, all involving the future” (Matras 2007: 46). In her cross-linguistic study on evidentiality, Aikhenvald (2004: 288) has also noted that evidentials are easily borrowed from language to language and they are a prominent feature of several linguistic areas in the world.

3 Other cases of contact-induced change within the linguistic area

In this section, we will consider some language contact processes in the Amdo Sprachbund that do *not* involve convergence between Salar and Wutun under Tibetan influence. In Section 3.1, we will discuss cases where Wutun and Salar have undergone parallel language change, but this language change is probably due to some other factor than contact with Amdo Tibetan. In Section 3.2, we will consider some examples in which Tibetan influence has contributed to divergence between Salar and Wutun. This involves cases where only one language has aligned to a Tibetan grammatical pattern, while the other language has retained its original features that are different from Tibetan.

3.1 Convergent language changes not triggered by Amdo Tibetan

In Section 2, we have outlined several examples of linguistic convergence between Salar and Wutun in which the importance of Tibetan influence has been firmly established. By comparing the features for which both Salar and Wutun diverge from their respective language families, we have also found other cases of convergence. In these cases, however, the role of Tibetan as a model language either remains unclear or can clearly be ruled out. One of the most prominent examples is the comparative construction, which is discussed in Section 3.1.1.

3.1.1 The comparative construction

The verb ‘to look’ has similar specific uses in the three languages studied. First, the combination of the verb ‘to look, to watch’ and the conditional marker allows expressing one’s point of view in Amdo Tibetan, Wutun and Salar, as illustrated by examples (42a) through (42c).

(42) Point of view

a. Amdo Tibetan (elicited)

ར_ས་ བཞུས་_ན་ ལྷོད་ མ་_སོང་_ན་ ལྷོ_གི
nj *ϕti-na* *te^ho* *ma-s^hong-na* *sa-gə*
 1sg-ERG **look-COND** 2sg[ABS] NEG-go-COND good-TEST
 ‘As I see it, you should not go.’

b. Wutun (elicited)

yangze *kan-la* *gu* *sangwa* *jedo-di-li*
 appearance **look-COND** 3SG secret know-PROGR-SEN-INF
 ‘It seems (to me) that s/he knows a secret.’

c. Salar (Salar FILM 375)

men *vaq-sa* *baodzi* *da* *ayəl-de* *var-a*
 1sg[ABS] **look-COND** treasure[ABS] too village-LOC exist-TEST
 ‘I think the treasure is also in the village.’

This structure evolved into an isomorphic comparative construction in all three languages considered here, as exemplified below. Notably, it does not seem to be attested in any other Tibetic language outside this area: it is an independent development of the Amdo Sprachbund and its source remains unclear.

(43) The comparative construction

a. Amdo Tibetan (elicited)

ལྷོ་ས་ བཞུས་_ན་ ཟྱེ་ལིང་ ཆེ_གི
l^hasa-‘a *ϕti-na* *səlan* *tʃ^he-gi*
 Lhasa-DAT **look-COND** Xining big-TEST
 ‘Xining is bigger than Lhasa.’

b. Wutun (elicited)

je-ge *jjhakai* *zhungo* *kan-la* *xaige* *ga-li*
 this-REF country China **look-COND** very small-SEN-INF
 ‘This country is much smaller than China.’

c. Salar (Salar FILM 243)

biqirox *jiguo* *elige* *dʒan-aŋ* *vaq-sə* *da* *ayər-a* *ro*
 cloth all that.way life-2POSS **look-COND** too heavy-TEST INT
 ‘Are all such clothes weightier (i.e. more important) than your life?’

Such a use of the verb ‘to look’ for expressing comparison is attested neither in Sinitic, nor in Mongolic or Turkic languages. Example (44) illustrates the comparative structure in Lhasa Tibetan, Mandarin Chinese, Turkish and Khalkha Mongolian.

(44) The comparative construction II

- a. Lhasa Tibetan (Thlib video corpus – introduction to Tibetan carving tools)

དེ་ལས་ རྒྱ་ཚམ་ ལྔ་པ་ རེད།
t̪e-lä: *t̪ets* *ʃ̪ũŋ-wa* *re'*
 DEM-COMP a.bit small-NMZ ESS.FACT
 ‘It is a bit smaller than that.’

- b. Mandarin Chinese (Li and Thompson 1981: 564)

tā *bǐ* *nǐ* *gāo*
 3SG **compare** 2SG tall
 ‘S/he is taller than you are.’

- c. Turkish (Johanson and Csató 1998: 57)

buz-dan soğuk
 ice-ABL cold
 ‘colder than ice’

- d. Khalkha Mongolian (Tserenpil and Kullmann 1996: 2015)

Герман Монгол-оос хөгжилтэй
 Germany Mongolia-ABL developed
 ‘Germany is more developed than Mongolia.’

Another example of convergence between Wutun and Salar is the syntactic structure of the immediate future, grammaticalized from the verb ‘to say’. The same pattern is also attested in Amdo Tibetan, but not in other Tibetan dialects. This structure is, however, attested in different Mongolic languages (see e.g. Dandii-Yadam Tserenpil and Rita Kullmann 2005: 210), which is the probable source of this innovation in Wutun, Salar and Amdo Tibetan. The semantic transparency of such a structure is a factor facilitating the linguistic transfer.

3.2 Tibetan as a divergence factor between Wutun and Salar

In this section, we will present examples of linguistic transfer where only one of the languages studied undergoes a change under the influence of Tibetan, whereas the other one is left unchanged and behaves differently from Tibetan. In these cases, the influence of Tibetan has triggered divergence between Salar

and Wutun: the two languages used to behave similarly, and only one of them has changed to align according to Amdo Tibetan. Our most important example presented in Section 3.2.1 concerns the word order in the noun phrase. We have already shown in Section 2.2.1 that the position of the numeral has changed in both Salar and Wutun under the influence of Tibetan, but in Wutun, the reorganization of the nominal phrase is more advanced and it also concerns the position of the demonstrative and the adjective attribute.

3.2.1 Word order in the noun phrase: position of the demonstrative and the adjective attribute

The position of demonstratives and adjective attributives in the noun phrase differs in Amdo Tibetan, Wutun and Salar. In Amdo Tibetan, demonstratives always follow the noun (and the adjective, if there is one), as in example (45).

(45) Amdo Tibetan (Amdo-Tibetan CONSTR 2/207 and elicited)

- a. * འདི་ འཇོ་ རིང་ལོ་ རིང་ལོ་
 "**da** otɕo raŋwo raŋwo
 DEM stick long long
- b. འཇོ་ རིང་ལོ་ རིང་ལོ་ འདི་
 otɕo raŋwo raŋwo "**da**
 stick long long DEM
 'this long, long stick'

In Wutun, demonstratives can either precede the noun like in other Sinitic languages (46a), or follow the noun like in Amdo Tibetan (46b).

(46) Wutun (elicited)

- a. **je-ge** joze
 DEM-REF table
 'this table'
- b. joze **je-ge**
 table DEM-REF
 'this table'

In Salar, demonstratives always precede the noun (as in example 47), like in other Turkic languages, such as Turkmen in (48).

(47) Salar (Salar CONSTR 7/112)

- a. **bu** qadən kici
 DEM woman person
 'this woman'
- b. *qadən kici **bu**
 woman person DEM

(48) Turkmen (Doğan 2007: 600)

bu tääsin gül-i
 DEM beautiful flower-ACC
 ‘this beautiful flower’

In Wutun, adjective attributes occur either in an attributive phrase preceding the noun, as in example (49), or as nominalized, post-nominal adjective attributes, as in example (50). The two strategies are equally possible for adjectives of both Chinese and Tibetan origin.

(49) Wutun (Wutun_1Picnic_2.)

da je kan-la yak-la-de ti-she-li qhi-lai
 then DEM look-COND beautiful-INCOMPL-ASS place-on-LOC go-1.IPFV
 ‘Let’s go to a more beautiful place than this one!’

(50) Wutun (elicited)

ngu hu yak-la-la-de-ge mai-lio
 1SG flower beautiful-INCOMPL~INCOMPL-NMZ-REF buy-PFV
 ‘I bought a very beautiful flower.’

The position of adjectives in a noun phrase in Wutun follows the grammatical pattern attested in Tibetic languages. In Tibetic languages, adjective attributes can occur either before the noun, usually in a combination with the genitive case marker, or after the noun. The post-nominal position indicates neutral attribution, while the pre-nominal position is usually associated with restrictive usage. The same is true for Wutun, where pre-nominal adjective attributes usually indicate restrictive usage and post-nominal adjective attributes express neutral usage. The position of adjective attributes in Wutun differs from Standard Mandarin, where adjective attributes always precede the noun. The ability to occur as nominalized, post-nominal attributes distinguishes Wutun adjectives from verbs. It seems that the nominalizer *-de* in Wutun is used to derive true lexical adjectives from property words, as in Tibetic languages where adjectives are etymologically constructed with the nominalizer *-pa/-po*.

In Salar, adjective attributes are always placed before the noun:

(51) Salar (Salar CONSTR 18/1076)

bu kitci-ǰik dudur-ǰæk ana-or er-a
 dem[ABS] **small-EMPH** **sweet-EMPH** girl-INDEF[ABS] be-INDIR
 ‘This is a small sweet girl!’

Thus, Wutun, under the influence of Tibetan, has undergone a more general syntactic change in the order of the elements of the NP than Salar. In Salar, only the position of the numeral has (partially) changed under the influence of Tibetan, whereas in Wutun, this change has been generalized to the position of the demonstrative and the adjective. The diffusion of this areal feature is thus more advanced in Wutun than in Salar. Given the current sociolinguistic situation, and the shift from Salar-Tibetan to Salar-(Standard-)Chinese bilingualism, it seems rather unlikely that Salar will continue its evolution in the direction of convergence with Tibetan for this feature. In such a case, one can only speculate whether the original structure of the language and/or the new sociolinguistic setting prevents the transfer.

Other examples of linguistic copies that affect Wutun and Salar unequally include the modification of the functional range of the dative case marker in Salar under Tibetan influence. In Salar, in fact, the functions of the dative case are extended to semantically adjacent classes of arguments: not only the Recipient and the Goal receive this case marker but also the Possessor – the first argument of the predicative possession structure – and the Target – the second argument of the “affective verbs”, such as ‘to like’. As mentioned by Matras (2007: 47): “Contact phenomena in the area of voice and valency are almost exclusively pattern-oriented, and usually involve an increase in frequency distribution of an existing option.” In the case of Salar, this extension of the syntactic functions of the dative case – from the Recipient to the Possessor – does not correspond to an already existing pattern, but rather to an innovation, just as in the case of the loss of passive derivation. Again, it suggests long and intensive language contact. We also observe that the extension of the use of dative coincides with “marginal” syntactic patterns, in the sense that it does not affect the general tendency of accusative alignment in Salar (whereas the Tibetic languages have a predominant ergative alignment pattern).

In this case too, the original linguistic type of the Sinitic languages, which typically lack case markers, explains why Wutun is not affected by this kind of linguistic change: unlike Salar, Wutun does not have a dative case marker like the Tibetic and Turkic languages.

4 Conclusion

Table 3 summarizes the cases of contact-induced syntactic change discussed in this paper. The first three sections of the table present the cases where the role of Tibetan as a model language is established with a reasonable certainty. Sections

1 and 2 show cases of linguistic changes that result in convergence between the three languages considered. Some of them have not been discussed in this paper, namely, the parallel dative-case marking for the possessor or the participant that accesses to possession, and the target of controlled perception verbs in Salar and Amdo Tibetan. Section 3 of the table shows cases where the influence of Amdo Tibetan has triggered divergent evolution in Wutun and Salar. Section 4 outlines the two examples of areal convergence for which the model language is unclear, probably Mongolic in the case of the immediate future tense.

Our findings outline the importance of sociolinguistic and historical factors in explaining the outcome of language contact. Explanations of linguistic convergence generally fall into three types. First, convergence is determined by the intensity of exposure to the contact language throughout history, and the linguistic outcome of the contact situation depends on the sociolinguistic factors (Thomason and Kaufman 1988: Ch. 3). Second, the structural similarities and differences among the languages in contact can explain the convergence, or the lack of convergence. Finally, inherent semantic-pragmatic or structural properties of the linguistic categories are also frequently invoked to explain that some categories are more prone than others to contact-induced linguistic change (Curnow 2001: 417–422; Matras 2007: 34). Regarding the inherent properties of linguistic units that can facilitate – or, on the contrary, restrain – linguistic transfer, Matras (2007) proposes several generalizations. First, the likelihood of a given unit to be transferred by contact depends on its absolute frequency in the model language: the more frequently the unit is used, the more likely it is to be transferred. Similarly, the more semantically transparent and morphologically well delimited the category is (cf. Weinreich 1953: 36–37; Heath 1978: 105, cited in Curnow 2001: 415), the more likely it will be a good candidate for linguistic copy. For example, numeral classifiers are cross-linguistically prone to borrowing because of their semantic transparency (Matras 2007: 44).

In spite of the structural differences between Sinitic and Turkic languages, the linguistic influence of Amdo Tibetan manifests itself in a remarkably similar way in Wutun and Salar. This is most obvious in the case of structural features illustrated in the first section of Table 3, such as the Tibetan-type evidential system, the constructions for progressive and durative aspect, causal subordination construction and the borrowing of discourse particles. Moreover, categories that are borrowed from some other language than Amdo Tibetan (such as the immediate future tense construction) or that cannot be proved to have been directly transferred from Amdo Tibetan (such as the comparative construction) are isomorphic in the three languages studied. They are summarized in the fourth section of Table 3. In some cases, the inherent properties of the structural categories may have played a role in the convergence. For example, structural

Table 3: Tibetic influence and contact-induced language change in Wutun and Salar.¹⁸

	Amdo Tibetan	Tibetic	Wutun	Sinitic	Salar	Turkic
1 Amdo Tibetan triggers language change in both Wutun and Salar						
Verb phrase:	'Tibetan type' of evidential system	✓	✓	×	✓	×
Verb phrase:	Grammaticalization of the verb 'to sit' as a durative marker	✓	✓	×	✓	×
Verb phrase:	Progressive aspect constructed with the existential copula	✓	✓	×	✓	×
Converb:	Causal subordination: V-NMZ+ -ERG/INSTR	✓	✓	×	≈	×
Discourse:	Sentence final particle: <i>-ba/-be</i>	✓	≈	×	✓	×
Word order:	Noun–Numeral	✓	≈	×	≈	×
2 Amdo Tibetan triggers language change in only Wutun or Salar (the other language family being already aligned with Tibetic)						
Word order:	Agent – Recipient – Patient – Verb and Agent – Patient – Goal – Verb	✓	✓	×	✓	✓
Converb:	Use of nominalizer and converb in clause combining	✓	✓	×	✓	✓
Converb:	Conditional suffix: logical or temporal relationship	✓	✓	×	✓	?
Verb phrase:	Lack of personal conjugation	✓	✓	✓	✓	×
Verb phrase:	No passive voice	✓	✓	✓	✓	×
3 Amdo Tibetan triggers language change in only Wutun or Salar (the other language behaves differently from Tibetic)						
Case marker:	Possessor and 1st argument of 'to win' marked in the dative	✓	×	×	✓	×
Case marker:	2nd argument of 'to like' and (+ control) perception verbs marked in the dative	✓	×	×	✓	×
Adjectives:	Adjectives are etymologically constructed with a nominalizer	✓	✓	×	×	×
Word order:	Noun–Adjective Noun–Demonstrative	✓	✓	×	×	×
4 Amdo Tibetan, Wutun and Salar became isomorphic, Identity of the model language unclear						
Verb phrase:	Immediate future tense: V-NMZ+ 'say'-imperfective	×	✓	×	✓	×
Adjective:	Comparative construction: arg1 'to look'-CONDarg2+ ADJ	×	✓	×	✓	×

¹⁸ In this table, the symbol ✓ means that the considered feature does exist in the language or language family. The symbol × means that the feature does not exist or is not identical with the Tibetan model, and ≈ means that some similarities are shared between the languages and language families under consideration, but the features under consideration are not identical.

particles and evidentiality have a high frequency in the model language, Amdo Tibetan, and they are very functional in the discourse, so this may have facilitated their borrowing into the replica languages. However, the inherent properties of the structural categories alone cannot explain such a pervasive convergence process as the three languages have undergone. Moreover, several structural properties that should not be very prone to borrowing in the light of cross-linguistic studies, such as word order and the comparative construction (see Matras 2007: 59–60) have undergone significant convergence in Amdo Tibetan, Wutun and Salar. Only in a few cases does the original typological profile of the replica language seem to have influenced the outcome of the contact situation. A case in point is the modification of the functional range of the dative case marker in Salar (summarized in the third section of Table 3). Because Turkic languages have a dative case like the Tibetic languages, it is natural that the functional range of the dative in Salar has converged to the grammatical pattern of the model language, Amdo Tibetan. The non-introduction of this feature into Wutun, on the other hand, can be explained by the typological profile of the Sinitic languages, namely that these lack datives and other cases.

To conclude, the comparison between Wutun and Salar allows us to confirm Thomason and Kaufman’s (1988: Ch. 2 – Ch. 3) assessment that the sociolinguistic situation is the main factor for predicting the outcome of a situation of language contact. Although the typological characteristics of the replica languages, as well as the inherent properties of structural categories may have played a role in the convergence process in Amdo Sprachbund, they appear merely as secondary factors that may have facilitated the contact-induced change. The similarity of the respective histories of contact with Amdo Tibetan seems to be the best hypothesis to explain our observations.

Abbreviations

1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
ABL	ablative
ABS	absolute
ACC	accusative
ASS	associative
ASP	aspectual auxiliary (phasal aspect)
CAUS	causative
CIT	citative

CLF	classifier
COLL	collective
COMPL	completive
COND	conditional
CONN	connective particle
CONSEQ	consequential converb
CONV	converb
DAT	dative
DEF	definite
DEM	demonstrative
DUR	durative
EGO	egophoric
EMPH	emphatic
EQU	equative
ERG	ergative
EXCL	exclamative
EXEC	executive auxiliary (semantically void auxiliary based on the verb ‘to do’, which is used to connect evidentials with perfective aspect marker in Wutun)
FACT	factual
FUT	future
GEN	genitive
H	honorific
HET	heterophoric
ID	identifiable (sub-category of definite)
INCOMPL	incompletive
INDEF	indefinite
INDIR	indirect modality
INF	inferential
INT	interrogative
INSTR	instrumental
IPFV	imperfective
LIGHTV	light verb
LOC	locative
NAGT	non-agent
NEG	negative
NMZ	nominalizer
PASS	passive
PAUC	paucal
PFV	perfective
PHAT	phatic
PL	plural
PN	proper name
PO	patient-oriented
POSS	possessive
PROB	probabilitative
PROGR	progressive
REF	referential

RES	resultative
SG	singular
SEN	sensory evidence
TEST	testimonial
TOP	topicalizer

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