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The cycle of applicative in Tibetic

Lexicalization, grammaticalization and pragmaticization

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This paper investigates the grammaticalization and subsequent pragmaticization of an applicative construction in Tibetic. Based on linguistic data ranging from the 8th century to modern times, we show how successive linguistic changes link a verb phrase originally meaning ‘to act as a companion (of sb.)’ to an imperative marker, through an applicative construction. Despite the scarcity of data, we document the different stages of evolution of this particular construction: the lexicalization of a verb phrase; its grammaticalization into a sociative-benefactive applicative marker; the pragmaticization of particular use patterns of this applicative construction into markers of complaints, wishes and commands; and eventually a secondary grammaticalization into an imperative marker. As they developed, most of these stages have been retained in the modern Tibetic languages and co-exist with lexicalized units based on the same morphological material. Our analysis adds to the recently discussed cross-linguistic data by demonstrating that applicative markers can directly grammaticalize from nouns without an intermediate stage of noun incorporation or adposition. We also show that the range of functions taken over by this construction in synchrony can only be understood by referring to its diachronic evolution.

Keywords: Tibetic languages, noun incorporation, applicative voice, sociative, benefactive, “attitude holder”, imperative marker, lexicalization, diachronic syntax, grammaticalization, pragmaticization, secondary grammaticalization

1. Introduction

Since Peterson's (2007) cross-linguistic study, verbs and adpositions have been accepted as major sources for applicative morphology in the languages of the world.¹ Nominal lexemes have been considered further potential sources but only through an intermediate stage of either adposition or noun incorporation. The latter development has been confirmed in a series of detailed studies. As argued by Gerdts and Hinkson (2004), the dative applicative marker in Halkomelem (Central Salish, Canada) has grammaticalized from a lexical suffix, itself originating in the noun for 'face'. Nordlinger (2019) shows that Murrinhpatha (Southern Daly, Australia) has an applicative construction descended from an incorporated noun meaning 'hand' via the external possessor construction. For Mojeño Trinitario (Arawak, Bolivia), Rose (2019) describes applicative constructions that have developed from verb classifiers, ultimately likewise descended from incorporated nouns. All of these grammaticalization patterns enrich our data set on nominal sources of applicative markers, but they do not demonstrate whether or not applicative markers can likewise grammaticalize from free (i.e. non-incorporated) nouns. As far as this goes, Peterson's assumption that applicative markers do not directly develop from nouns would remain valid. In this paper, however, we argue that the Tibetic applicative marker *-grog*s, attested already in Old Literary Tibetan, grammaticalized directly from the common noun *grog*s 'companion'. This seems to be the first very clear example of the grammaticalization path *noun* > *applicative* reported in linguistic literature.

This paper presents a diachronic investigation of an applicative construction which was described in a synchronic and comparative perspective in Simon (2022). This construction, which is relatively rare in general corpora, has received little attention in linguistic descriptions except for in one particular, derived use. The paper attempts to retrace the historical development of this applicative construction, from a free syntactic construction to a fully grammaticalized voice derivation device, and later, to a pragmatic marker.

Despite the rarity of the construction in the corpora, the main stages of grammaticalization are documented in parallel with the preserved non-grammaticalized uses of the construction. The construction under consideration has undergone multiple developments, which all have been maintained in most of the modern Tibetic languages. The historical linguistic approach thus accounts for the diversity of use patterns of the construction observed in synchrony.

1. Peterson (2007:124ff). Kuteva et al. (2019:127) provide several examples of the applicative derivation *copula, locative* > *applicative*.

The remainder of this article is structured as follows. Section 1 presents a general introduction to the Tibetic languages (§1.1), the corpora used in this study (§1.2), the relevant syntactic features of the Tibetic languages (§1.3), and a definition of applicative voice (§1.4). Section 2 describes the first stages of grammaticalization as documented in Old and Middle Tibetan. Subsequently, in §3, the pragmaticization path, which is already documented in Middle Tibetan, is discussed. Next, two (seemingly unrelated) phenomena are examined: in §4, the disproportionate use of the construction in passive voice in the older language stages is discussed, and in §5 various forms of the lexicalization of the construction are introduced, such as noun incorporation, light verb constructions and nominal compounds, all of which complicate the analysis of the construction from a purely synchronic perspective. Finally, §6 situates the discussion of the data in a broader cross-linguistic context.

1.1 Tibetic languages

Tibetic languages are classified as belonging to the Trans-Himalayan (TH) language family,² within which they form part of the so-called Bodic group. The latter has been variously defined, and a comprehensive study of the historical relationship between the included languages has not yet emerged. It is generally accepted, but again not yet satisfactorily proven through the Comparative Method, that the Kaike-Ghale-Tamangic and East-Bodish languages are the closest relatives of Tibetic languages, forming together the Bodish subgroup within the Bodic group.³

All historically attested Tibetic languages derive from Old Tibetan, a language spoken in the southern part of the Tibetan Plateau roughly between 600 and 800 CE. Old Literary Tibetan (OldLitTib) is the oldest attested Tibetic language. It is the language of native Tibetan documents composed roughly within the period of the Tibetan Empire after the invention of a script in the 630s or 640s. A wide range of written artefacts has come down to us from the period of the Tibetan Empire (ca. 600–850 CE; Bialek 2021). Apart from native Tibetan compositions, this period witnessed an overall increase in translatory activity, as confirmed by

2. Formerly referred to as Indo-Chinese, Sino-Tibetan, or Tibeto-Burman. On the term “Trans-Himalayan” and the related Fallen Leaves model of the language family (accepted here for heuristic reasons), see van Driem (2012: 139ff.)

3. The first studies comparing East Bodish and Tibetic can be found in Michailovsky and Mazaudon (1994), and DeLancey (2008). More recently Bodt (2023) presented a detailed comparative analysis of all documented East Bodish languages, supplementing the study with data from Literary Tibetan. Zhuang (2022) is the first investigation looking at the possible historical connections between Tamangic and Tibetic.

the existence of extensive Buddhist literature and texts translated from Chinese, as well as from Turkic and Indic languages. OldLitTib should be distinguished, on the one hand, from Middle Literary Tibetan (MidLitTib) and, on the other hand, from Old Tibetan (OldTib), which was a spoken language.

MidLitTib (often called “Classical Tibetan”, CTib) is a standardized version of OldLitTib that received some influence from historical spoken varieties (Middle Tibetan). MidLitTib was in use in Tibet from approximately the second half of the 9th century (Bialek 2022: 9ff). From the second half of the 7th century onwards, the spoken and written languages developed parallel to each other, although the former continued to influence the latter.

The military expansion of the Tibetan Empire and the ensuing colonization of the subdued territories have brought Tibetic languages to all corners of the Tibetan Plateau and beyond, a fact reflected in their modern distribution: from Baltistan in northeastern Pakistan to the Gansu province in China, Tibetic languages form an uninterrupted continuum. Nowadays, Tibetic languages are spoken in six countries: Pakistan, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar and China (Tournadre & Suzuki 2023). Tournadre (2014: 118) estimated the overall number of Modern Tibetan dialects as exceeding 200, and the *Comparative Dictionary of Tibetan Dialects* includes data on 141 spoken varieties (Bielmeier et al. 2018: 38). The matter of their classification is complicated by mutual interactions of neighbouring dialects, influences from prestigious dialects and intense contacts with other non-Tibetic languages (especially in border areas), all of which constitute serious obstacles to a clear-cut subgrouping. Synchronically, Modern Tibetan dialects are classed into dialect groups or, less securely, languages. Depending on the methodology chosen, scholars distinguish between five and eight such “dialect groups” or “sections”.⁴

1.2 Corpora

The survey of OldLitTib is based on the *Old Tibetan Documents Online* (OTDO)⁵ corpus, which contains 246 texts (approx. 205,000 syllables; as of 01/09/2022) from Central Tibet and Central Asian colonies of the Tibetan Empire. Passages quoted from OldLitTib were transliterated on the basis of scans made available on the International Dunhuang Project (IDP) and Gallica. The corpus mainly

4. See Uray (1954: 312f.), Róna-Tas (1966: 21f., 1985: 153ff.), Bielmeier et al. (2018: 38ff.), and Tournadre and Suzuki (2023) for approaches that combine linguistic, historical and geographical criteria. Critiques of these purely heuristic groupings can be found in Sun (2003: 794–797) and Hill (2019: 5).

5. <https://otdo.aa-ken.jp/> (accessed 01/09/2022).

consists of native compositions, but the Tibetan translations of the Indian epic *Rāmāyaṇa* have likewise been included since, taken together, their various redactions are the major OldLitTib source for constructions that are relevant to our topic.

As the main source for MidLitTib, we have used *Mi la ras payi rnam thar* (ML), a biography of Mi-la Ras-pa (a tantric master from Central Tibet, roughly 1040–1123) authored by Gcañ-smyon Heruka (1452–1507). The work (approximately 72,000 syllables) is well-known for its lively language that reflects a spoken variety of 15th-century Central Tibet. Since its main narrative consists of a life story of Mi-la Ras-pa as personally related to his closest disciple Ras-čuñpa, its language shares many traits with the spoken vernacular. In addition, *Rgyal rabs gsal bayi me loñ* (GLR; approximately 70,000 syllables) ‘The Mirror Illuminating the Royal Genealogies’ was also examined for the relevant constructions. GLR, composed in 1368 by Bsod-nams Rgyal-mchan (1312–1375), is a narrative work that recounts the history of Buddhist teachings in Tibet. While the *Mi la ras payi rnam thar* sheds light on the spoken Middle Tibetan, the *Rgyal rabs gsal bayi me loñ* represents MidLitTib.

Data for modern spoken Tibetic languages are restricted to Lhasa and common Tibetan, two varieties of Central Tibetic, respectively spoken in Lhasa, Tibet’s capital, and in the diaspora in South Asia (India and Nepal), North America, Europe and Australia. These data were recorded and elicited in Lhasa during field research in 2009–2010, and, since 2012, in elicitation sessions as well as in open conversations with Tibetan speakers in India and in France. An overview by Simon (2022) reveals that an applicative construction similar to the one examined in this paper is found in a number of other Tibetic languages geographically distant and belonging to four different sections: Northeastern/Amdo, Southeastern/Khams (Derge and Nangchen Tibetan), Central (Lhasa, Shigatse and Common Tibetan) and South (Southwestern Drokpa and Dolpo).⁶ The distributions of these languages are represented in Figure 1. Simon (2022) is a synchronic analysis of morphosyntactic and semantic-pragmatic properties of the construction in these languages. Systematic research on this topic in other modern Tibetic languages may reveal the existence of the construction in many more languages of the family. Note that in one further group, Northwestern, there is a morphologically different applicative construction which is not taken into account here.⁷

6. Dolpo data were elicited by Zuzana Vokurkova during her fieldwork trip in summer 2022. We wish to express our thanks to her for sharing the data.

7. See Zeisler (2019: 330; 2021) and Zemp (2018: 518–21).



Figure 1. Tibetan dialects with the applicative construction *gros byed* marked in red⁸

1.3 Relevant syntactic features of the Tibetic languages

Before focusing on the morphosyntax and semantic-pragmatic characteristics of the applicative construction in Tibetic, some relevant linguistic features of the Tibetic languages will be briefly discussed.

Tibetic languages are verb-final, and the verb carries morphemes expressing tense-aspect-modalities, but no argument is indexed on the verb phrase. Core arguments are defined by the combination of two properties: (a) they are marked by case markers (as opposed to postpositions); and (b) they can be realized by zero-anaphora (an option not available to non-core arguments, which must be overtly mentioned). When the arguments are overtly realized, their syntactic functions are primarily marked by case markers (suffixes or enclitics) and position in a pragmatically neutral utterance (Tournadre 2009). Secondary criteria⁹ such as reflexive pronoun control, nominalization, valency changes or switch reference are also used, especially in the earlier language stages. Any core argument can be realized as zero-anaphora, as long as the context allows the hearer to iden-

8. Map based on: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tibetan_Autonomous_Areas_Map.png (accessed 24/04/2023). No machine-readable author provided. Ufudu~commonswiki assumed (based on copyright claims); CC BY-SA 3.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>), via Wikimedia Commons.

9. Cf. Lazard (1994: 73–77).

tify it. Compare the overtly expressed arguments in (1a) with (1b) where the arguments are realized as zero-anaphora.

- (1a) Central Tibetic, Common Tibetan (Dharamsala, Elicited, M+/-30, 2017)

ཕྱོགས་ར་དེ་ཡི་ག་དེ་རྫོག་གྱི་ཡོད་པ་འདྲ།¹⁰

p^hōsa: t^hɛ̃ j̥ike t^hɛ̃ lōʔ-kijøpaʈa¹¹

young_man DEM letter DEM read_aloud-NPFV.EPIST.SEN

‘This young man seems to be reading aloud this document.’

- (1b) Central Tibetic, Common Tibetan (Dharamsala, Elicited, M+/-30, 2017)

རྫོག་གྱི་ཡོད་པ་འདྲ།

lōʔ-kijøpaʈa

read_aloud-NPFV.EPIST.SEN

‘[S/he] seems to be reading [that] aloud.’¹²

The generalization of zero-anaphora combined with the fact that the verb phrase does not index any of its arguments has a direct implication for our study: in corpora, it is very rare to find a clause in which arguments are overtly realized. In most cases, one or all of the arguments is realized as zero-anaphora, which makes it impossible to find out and test what syntactic function is attributed to the different arguments.

10. Examples from modern spoken Tibetic varieties are — as much as possible — transcribed in Tibetan script in their etymological spelling, with some minor adaptations (e.g., phatic particles are transcribed with a subscribed ⟨ꠔ⟩ to render the long vowel). For Literary Tibetan the script is transliterated according to the principles put forward in Bialek (2020b). Forms transliterated from written materials are marked with italics. The OldLitTib reversed *gi gu* is transliterated as (*ī*). All passages have been translated by the authors. Phonemic transcription of modern data (see fn. 11) is provided in regular typeface to distinguish it from transliteration of Literary Tibetan forms.

11. This paper focuses on morphosyntax rather than phonology. For this reason, we have used a simplified phonemic transcription for the modern examples which may blur the phonological differences between Lhasa Tibetan and the Common Tibetan varieties. Thus, even though Lhasa Tibetan has 12 phonemic vowels (Gong 2020), we follow Tournadre’s tradition, in which “only the 8 major vowels of Lhasa Tibetan are represented” (Gong 2020: 247). Such a simplification provides a unified transcription for the Lhasa and Common Tibetan examples, thus making the examples easier to compare. Similarly, nasal codas are usually realized as a nasalized vowel in Lhasa Tibetan, but we chose to indicate the nasal coda in order to account for instances of nasal consonants realization, more frequent in Common Tibetan varieties, or in slow speech. As common in Tibetan linguistics, macron and low line mark high and low tone respectively.

12. In a marked context, the clause could also be understood as ‘[I] seem to be reading [that] aloud,’ for instance, if I see myself in a video (see, e.g., Oisel 2017: 104).

Tibetic languages follow an ergative (or split-ergative) alignment, and case marking patterns are often influenced by semantic and pragmatic features (Tournadre 1996; Zeisler 2007; Simon 2016).

1.4 Applicative: A definition

An applicative construction can be defined as a voice derivation device (comparable to passive, reflexive or reciprocal voices); a voice marker is a specific morpheme on the verb phrase that is associated with changes in the argument frame. The applicative voice adds a new argument, the so-called applied argument (usually a beneficiary, an instrument or a location),¹³ and this newly introduced argument is generally realized as a direct object. In (2b) the noun phrase ‘Kitso’ represents a beneficiary and is introduced into the base sentence (see 2a) through the applicative derivation of the verb (in this language, the infix *-el-*).

(2a) Tswana, South Africa (Creissels 2006: 74)

<i>Lorato</i>	<i>O</i>	<i>Tlaa</i>	<i>kwal-a</i>	<i>lokwalo</i>
1Lorato	3SG.1	FUT	write-FIN	11 letter
Agent		V		Patient
Subject				Object

‘Lorato will write a letter.’

(2b) Tswana, South Africa (Creissels 2006: 74)

<i>Lorato</i>	<i>O</i>	<i>Tlaa</i>	<i>kwal-el-a</i>	<i>Kitso</i>	<i>lokwalo</i>
1Lorato	3SG.1	FUT	write-APL-FIN	1Kitso	11 letter
Agent		V		Beneficiary	Patient
Subject				Object	Object

‘Lorato will write a letter **to Kitso**.’¹⁴

Creissels (2006: 73) distinguishes between “optional” and “obligatory” applicatives:

Les applicatifs optionnels permettent de promouvoir au statut d’objet un terme qui, en l’absence de dérivation applicative, pourrait figurer comme oblique. [...] Les applicatifs obligatoires permettent de mentionner un participant qui ne pourrait en aucune façon figurer comme oblique dans la construction du verbe

13. See Polinsky (2013) and especially the most recent publication edited by Pacchiarotti and Zúñiga (2022) that contains much original data on applicative semantics and morphology from various languages across the world.

14. Interlinear morpheme translations in (2a) and (2b) follow Creissels (2006).

concerné en l'absence de dérivation applicative, et qui ne pourrait être introduit qu'au prix de paraphrases relativement lourdes.¹⁵

The Tibetic applicative derivation focused on here was first identified and described in Simon (2014: 501) and is attested in modern Tibetic languages belonging to four different dialect groups.¹⁶ It consists in the construction V-(g)rogs byed. The morpheme (g)rogs, is semantically related to the ideas of 'association' or 'help'; the word-family encompasses lexemes such as: *grogs* 'friend'; *ygrogs* 'to accompany'; *sgrog* 'to bind'; *sgrog* 'fetters'; *drogs* 'packed up, made up into pack or parcel';¹⁷ and *rogs* 'friend, companion', indicating that the root of the word-family was probably $\sqrt{\text{rog}}$.¹⁸ In V-(g)rogs byed, *byed* is a light verb (LV) meaning 'to do' or, as we will see below, 'to act as'. Depending on the language, and the period, other synonymous light verbs such as *bgyid* or *myad* are also used in this construction.

In the Tibetic languages, like in Tswana, this applicative construction corresponds to an obligatory applicative: the presence of an applicative morpheme is required in order to introduce a noun phrase with the semantic role of beneficiary or a co-agent¹⁹ in the argument frame of a verb such as 'to read', which, normally, does not index a beneficiary. Contrary to Tswana, this new argument is realized as a dative-marked argument.

15. "Optional applicatives allow promoting to the status of an object a term that, in the absence of the applicative construction, would occur as an oblique. [...] Obligatory applicatives allow mentioning a participant that could occur as oblique with the respective verb without the applicative derivation, and that could only be introduced in the verb construction by means of relatively cumbersome paraphrases."

16. Other applicative constructions based on the verb 'give' in southwestern and northwestern Tibetic languages have been recently documented (Zeisler 2019, 2021; Zemp 2018). As pointed out by an anonymous reviewer, various applicative constructions are also known in other languages of the region representing distinct language families: Turkic: Salar (Simon 2016: 587); Mongolic: Mangghuer (Slater 2003: 166), Shira Yughur (Nugteren 2003: 281), Bonan (Hugjiltu 2003: 342) as well as other branches of the Sino-Tibetan family: Rgyalrongic: Japhug (Jacques 2021: 859), Situ (Zhang 2020: 158).

17. Cf. *khur drogs* 'khur po bzo ba; ²khur po khyer' (DSM: 58a).

18. The dictionaries of Padma Rdorje (1979/2005) and Bielmeier et al. (2018) add *drags* 'to bind' and *sbrag(s)* 'to put together' to the list, but these attest to the root vowel *a* and therefore must have formed a distinct word-family.

19. i.e. an agent performing the action together or reciprocally with another agent.

- (3a) Central Tibetan, Common Tibetan (Dharamsala, Elicited, M+/-30, 2017)
 རྩོམ་གསར་དེ་ཡི་གེ་དེ་རྒྱུག་གྱི་ཡོད་པ་འདྲ།

p^hōsa: t^hɛ̃ j̥ike t^hɛ̃ lōʔ-kijøpaʈa
 young_man DEM letter DEM read_aloud-NPFV.EPIST.SEN
 ‘This young man seems to be reading aloud this document.’

- (3b) Central Tibetan, Common Tibetan (Dharamsala, Picture description, M+/-30, 2017)
 རྩོམ་གསར་དེ་རྩོམ་ལགས་ལ་ཡི་གེ་དེ་རྒྱུག་རྩོགས་བྱེད་ཡོད་པ་འདྲ།

p^hōsa: t^hɛ̃ mō:la=la j̥ike t^hɛ̃ lōʔ-roʔ
 young_man DEM grandmother.HON=DAT letter DEM read_aloud-APL
 t^hɛ̃-kijøpaʈa
 LV:NPFV-NPFV.EPIST.SEN
 ‘This young man seems to be reading aloud this document **for the old woman**.’

This dative-marked beneficiary can also be expressed by zero anaphora, as in example (1b) above, or in example (4), and therefore counts as a core argument of the verb phrase. Example (4) is a spontaneous comment uttered while watching a movie in which a child has been punished and must stay in detention until he has finished copying lines. However, this child is so slow that the supervisor, who is obviously bored, writes out the punishment himself. The action is thus performed for the child’s benefit.

- (4) Central Tibetan, Lhasa Tibetan (Movie comment, M25, 2010; Simon 2011: 206)
 ཁོང་གིས་བྲིས་རྩོགས་བྱས་སོང་ན།

k^hōŋ=ki t^hi-roʔ t^hɛ̃-son-ŋa:
 3SG=ERG write-APL LV:PFV-PFV.SEN-PHAT
 ‘He wrote [the punishment] **for** [the pupil], right?’

Semantically, the applied argument often corresponds to a beneficiary, but it can also have features of a co-agent, depending on the context. For instance, in example (5a) the grandfather can be considered as the beneficiary proper, marked with dative, and does not need to be physically present when the doctor is consulted:

- (5a) Central Tibetan, Lhasa Tibetan (Elicited, F28, 2010)
 ངས་སློབ་ལགས་ལ་ཨ་མ་ཚེར་བརྟེན་རྩོགས་བྱས་པ་ཡིན།

ŋɛ̃ pō:la=la ɛ̃mtɛi: tɛ̃n-roʔ t^hɛ̃-pajin
 1SG:ERG grandfather.HON=DAT doctor:DAT consult-APL LV:PFV-PST.EGO
 ‘I consulted the doctor **for** grandfather.’

But such an utterance is also perfectly correct in a context where the grandfather is also present and involved in the event. In this case, the meaning of this utter-

ance can be clarified by a paraphrase such as (5b), specifying that the event is performed together by the speaker and the grandfather, as co-agents:

- (5b) Central Tibetic, Lhasa Tibetan (Elicited, F28, 2010)
 ངས་སྤྲོ་བོ་ལགས་མཉམ་དུ་ཨ་མ་མཚོར་བརྟེན་པ་ཡིན།
 ŋɛ pō:la ŋāmtu ěmtɛi: tēn-pajin
 1SG:ERG grandfather.HON **together** doctor:DAT consult-PST.EGO
 ‘I consulted the doctor **with** grandfather.’

When the applied argument has the semantic role of a co-agent, this role can (optionally) also be made clear by marking the applied argument with the postposition ‘with’. Nevertheless, the default role of the applied argument is that of beneficiary, and the default marking is dative. Another example illustrates the fact that the semantic role of the applied argument can be blurred: example (5c) is acceptable in a context where the speaker is a demon who enters the old woman’s body to give her his strength to get up with and for her at the same time.

- (5c) Central Tibetic, Lhasa Tibetan (Elicited, F28, 2010)
 ངས་སྤྲོ་མོ་ལགས་ལ་ཡར་ལངས་རྟོགས་བྱས་པ་ཡིན།
 ŋɛ mōmo-la=la ja: laŋ-roʔ tɕʰɛ-pajin
 1SG:ERG grandmother-HON=DAT up get_up-APL LV:PFV-PFV.EGO
 ‘I got up for/with the old woman.’

This construction may occur with verbs belonging to various syntactic classes. Examples (4) and (5c) illustrate its use with bivalent and monovalent verbs, respectively. It may also be used with trivalent or ditransitive verbs,²⁰ as in (6):

- (6) Central Tibetic, Common Tibetan (Paris, Elicited, M+/-40, 2023)
 རྟེན་རང་གིས་ང་ལ་ཚོས་གྲགས་ལ་སློབ་འབྲིན་བསྐྱར་རྟོགས་བྱས་བྱུང་།
 cʰɛraŋ=gi ŋa=la tɕʰøʔaʔ=la lōkʈin kū:roʔ tɕʰɛ=tcuŋ
 2SG=ERG 1SG=DAT Chödrak=DAT email send-APL LV:PFV=EGO.REC
 ‘You sent an e-mail to Chödrak for me.’

As we will see, the sociative/benefactive applicative with an overtly stated applied argument is rare in corpora of spontaneous speech or guided conversation. Beside (5a) and (6), yet another such occurrence with an overtly expressed beneficiary marked in dative (here, the daughter) is illustrated in example (7):

20. Applicative derivation of ditransitive verbs seems to be rare. Speakers tend to avoid it, preferring to use coordinated constructions, but they nevertheless consider it to be grammatical.

(7) Central Tibetic, Lhasa Tibetan

(TV soap Opera *Bro snan ldan payi ycho ba*, Barkhor TV)

བུ་མོ་འདིར་དགའ་རོགས་ཡག་པོ་འདྲ་ཅིག་བསྐོས་རོགས་བྱས་ན་ང་རེའི་བསམས་དོན་ཅད་དེ་གྲུབ་སོང་།

p^humo di: karo' jakpo ra=tei' kō-ro' te^hg=na
daughter DEM:DAT companion good like=INDF appoint-APL LV:PFV=CONDngare: sāmton pēt tɥp-sonɣ
1SG:GEN Goal completely be_achieved-PST.SEN

'My wishes would be completely fulfilled if [we] could choose a good husband for [our] daughter here.'

The identification of a similar applicative construction in several geographically distant modern Tibetic languages (cf. Simon 2022 and Figure 1 above) leads us to believe that this construction is inherited from a common ancestor language that might have been OldTib. Thus, the primary objective of the paper is to investigate the grammaticalization path of the applicative by combining the synchronic and diachronic perspectives. The paper also aims to illustrate how a given linguistic form in a language family can evolve from lexical to grammatical, and further, to pragmatic functions, while keeping its old meanings and functions as the new ones develop.

2. Rise of a new applicative in Old and Middle Tibetan

In this section we introduce and discuss a set of constructions that revolve around the verb phrase *grogs byed* (var. *rogs byed*). The constructions are historically related to each other and seem to have equally contributed to the grammaticalization of the applicative construction, as we will sketch in §6.

2.1 Verb *byed* 'to act' in Literary Tibetan

One of the popular meanings of the verb *byed*, 'to do, to make', in LitTib is 'to function, to act as', lit. 'to do X', where X denotes a function or a position. This usage is illustrated in (8) for OldLitTib and in (9) for MidLitTib. In LitTib, *byed* has two frequent near-synonyms, *bgyid* and *myad*, that are used interchangeably with *byed* in the said construction.²¹

21. In OldLitTib, *bgyid* (cf. PFV *bgyis* in (8)) does not yet seem to have acquired the status of the humble equivalent of *byed* (cf. PFV *byas* in (9)), which it displays in MidLitTib. On the other hand, *myad* is attested as an honorific equivalent of *byed* already in the oldest extant texts. All Tibetic languages possess humble and honorific speech registers beside the unmarked one; for the emergence of the honorific register in OldTib, see Bialek (2023).

- (8) OldLitTib (PT 1287: 89–90)

མཐོན་མྱི་འབྲིང་པོ་རྒྱལ་བརྩན་ནུས་ལྷོན་ཆེ་བཀྲིས་པ་ན་ཡང་།

mthon_myi ybriñ_po_rgyal brcan_nus blon+čhe

Mthon_myi Ybriñ_po_rgyal Brcan_nu:ERG councillor+great(ABS)

bgyis=pa=na=yañ //

make:PFV=NMZ=INESS=ADD

‘Even though Mthon-myi Ybriñ-po-rgyal Brcan-nu performed the duty of (lit. acted as) grand councillor, [...]’

- (9) MidLitTib (GLR 25v4)

ལྷོན་པོ་ནི་རུ་ལ་སྐྱེས་ཀྱིས་བྱས་སོ།།

blon+po=ni ru_la_skyes=kyis byas=so//

councillor+NMZ.M(ABS)=FOC Ru_la_skyes=ERG do:PFV=FNL

‘Ru-la-skyes acted as [his] minister.’

The clause structure of this construction can be outlined as:

- (10) S
- _{ERG}
- O
- _{ABS}
- byed/bgyid/mjad*
-
- ‘S acts/serves as O’

Compare Modern French

- (11) French
-
- En ce moment, il fait serveur dans un restaurant.*
-
- in DEM.M moment 3SG.M do:3SG.PRS waiter in INDF.M restaurant
-
- ‘He currently works as a waiter in a restaurant.’

2.2 *Grogs byed* as a verb phrase

The phrase that interests us here, *grogs byed*, is attested in OldLitTib in a number of variant forms but also in three different constructions that will be examined in the following sections. Table 1 provides an overview of the variant readings grouped according to the construction in which they occur.

Table 1. *Grogs byed* in OldLitTib

	Construction	Phrase	Source	Ex.
I.	<i>grogs byed</i>	<i>rogs bgyid</i>	ITJ 737-1:215	(11)
		<i>dan rogs</i>	ITJ 737-2: v42	
II.	NP+GEN <i>grogs byed</i>	<i>grogs mjad</i>	PT 981: r163	(13)
		<i>dan grogs bya</i>	PT 981: r192	
		<i>dan rogs bgyis</i>	PT 981: r193	
		<i>dan grogs byas</i>	ITJ 737-1: 188	
		<i>dan gro[g]s mjad</i>	ITJ 737-1: 189	
		<i>dan rogs byas</i>	PT 983: v5-1	
		<i>dan rogs bgyis</i>	PT 983: v5-3	
		<i>grogs byed</i>	PT 1287: 293	
		<i>grogs bgyi</i>	PT 1289: r2-8	
		<i>rogs byas</i>	ITJ 734: 1r2	
III.	RC+GEN <i>rogs byed</i>	[<i>dan</i>] <i>rogs myi byed</i>	PT 981: r192	(15)
		<i>dan grogs bya</i>	ITJ 737-1: 188	
		<i>grogs bya</i>	ITJ 737-2: v4	
		<i>dan rogs bya</i>	PT 983: v5-2	

As is evident from Table 1, beside *grogs* and *rogs*, the corpus also attests to *dan (g)rogs*, occurring in the same contexts.²²

Our MidLitTib corpus is more standardized and attests to only two forms: *grogs byed* and *grogs po byed* (see examples (19) and (20)). While *grogs po* seems to have a more literal meaning ‘friend’, *grogs* surfaces in constructions already on the verge of grammaticalization.

2.2.1 *Grogs byed* ‘to act as a companion’

Apart from the more complex constructions discussed further below, we encounter *grogs byed* and its variants as a simple verb phrase with the meaning ‘to act as a companion’. This construction is a straightforward continuation of the previously introduced verbal phrase *X byed* ‘to act as X’ (see (8) and (9)) that has remained in use in MidLitTib.

22. According to BDRC, *dan (g)rogs* in conjunction with the verb *byed* or its equivalents occurs only a handful of times in MidLitTib. In OldLitTib, the compound, also in its variant form *than (y)grogs* (see PT 981: r235 and ITJ 737-1: 250-1), is attested only in translations of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and so *dan/than* might be a loanword. For other tentative hypotheses, see de Jong (1989: 53).

- (12) OldLitTib (ITJ 737-1: 215-6)

བདག་མོངས་པ་ན་ཡང་རོགས་བགྱིད་བགྱིད་དེ། རྫོབ་དེ་ཡང་ཉེ།

bdag phons=pa=na=yañ rogs

1SG.HML(ABS) miserable=NMZ=INESS=ADD companion(ABS)

bgyid~bgyid=de / glo_ba de=yañ ñe /

make:NPFV~RDP=GER breast DEM(ABS)=ADD be_close

‘Although I am a miserable one, acting as [your] companion, [I] will also be loyal (lit. [my] breast will be close).’

- (13) MidLitTib (ML
- apud*
- de Jong 1959: 113, ll. 19–20)

ང་རང་གིས་ཀྱང་གྲོགས་བྱས་ནས་མའི་ཅུས་པ་ལ།སྐྱ་ཚ་ཚ་བཏབ།

*ña+rañ=gis=kyañ grogs byas=nas mayi rus+pa=la{s}*²³

1SG+self=ERG=ADD companion(ABS) do:PFV=EL mother:GEN bone=DEL

cha_cha btab/

figurine(ABS) PFV:LV

‘I acted as a companion and then [we] made figurines out of my mother’s bones.’

Example (13) confirms the ergative marking on the acting agent in accordance with the structure sketched in (10). Table 2 summarizes the occurrences of the construction in the examined corpus of LitTib.

Table 2. *Grogs byed* in LitTib

OldLitTib	GLR	ML
2	2	1

2.2.2 NP+GEN *grogs byed*

Since X in ‘X *byed*’ (see (10)) is an independent NP, it can be modified by preposed and/or postposed elements in accordance with Tibetan morphosyntactic rules. Examples identified thus far include *grogs* or its variants as heads of determinative phrases only, in which the modifying element is joined to the head NP by a genitive marker. The modifier can be a simple noun (e.g. (15)) or a complex NP (e.g. (14)). Example (15) confirms that the subject of *byed* requires the ergative marker (cf. (10)).

23. Instead of the attested allative *la*, one would expect relative of substance denoting a material from which an object is made.

- (14) OldLitTib (PT 1287: 293)

ཕུ་ནུ་སྒྲིང་རིངས་པ་འི་གྲོགས་བྱེད་རེ།།

pu+nu sñin riñs=pa=yī grogs
 clan_member(ABS) heart(ABS) be_away:PFV=NMZ=GEN friend(ABS)

byed=re //

do:NPFV=NEG.HORT

‘[We] shall not act as companions of those brothers and cousins who are dis-loyal (lit. [whose] heart is far away).’

- (15) OldLitTib (ITJ 734: 1r1–2; trslr. *apud* Thomas 1957: 61)

ད་ཡང་སྲིན་གྱིས་སྲི་གཡོན་ཆེན་གྱི་རོགས་བྱས་པས།། སྲི་གཡོན་ཅན་སྤྲོས་ཆེ་བར་འོང་ངོ།།

da=yan sr[i]n=gis myī gyon=čhan=kyi rogs
 now=ADD demon=ERG man fault=POSS=GEN companion(ABS)

byas=phas // myi gyon=čan stobs čhe=bar

do:PFV=NMZ:ERG man fault=POSS(ABS) strength be_>great=NMZ:TERM

yon=no //

come(NPFV)=FNL

‘Now, because a demon acted as a companion of a devious person, the devious person will become powerful.’

This type of construction is not attested in our corpus of MidLitTib but see *skyo grogs* in §5.3. Table 3 summarizes the occurrences of the construction in the examined corpus of LitTib.

Table 3. NP+GEN *grogs byed* in LitTib

OldLitTib	GLR	ML
10	-	-

2.2.3 RC+GEN *grogs byed*

Another extension of the verb phrase *grogs byed* is the modification of *grogs* (or its variants) by a preposed relative clause (RC) connected to *grogs* via genitive. Thus, RC+GEN *grogs byed* can be literally translated as ‘to act as a *grogs* who RC’. The collected examples attest once again to the clause structure schematized in (10), with the agent argument marked in ergative. In this construction, the agent of the relative clause is co-referent with the agent of the verb *byed*. In OldLitTib, this construction has been thus far attested only with the compound *dan (g)rogs* (see (16)) but, in terms of the OldLitTib morphosyntax, there is nothing that would formally forbid its occurrence with the simple (g)*rogs*.

(16) OldLitTib (PT 983: v5.1–2)

ཐུད་ཀྱིས་ངའི་བཅུན་མོ་བཙལ་བའི་དན་རོགས་བྱ་བར་དམ་བཙལ་ཞེས་བྱས་པ་དང།

khyed=kyis [*ñayi* / *bcun+mo* *bcal=bayi*]_{RC} *dan_rogs*

2PL=ERG 1SG:GEN wife+NMZ.F(ABS) PFV:search=NMZ:GEN companion(ABS)

bya=bar *dam* *bčay=žes* *byas=pa=dañ* //

do(DPASS)=NMZ:TERM VOW(ABS) promise(DPASS)=QUOT do:PFV=NMZ=COM

‘[King Ra-ma-na] said: “The vow will be made that a helper who has searched for my wife will be made by you.”’

In (16) the predicate of the relative clause, *bcal*, is a *v2*-stem, i.e. it has perfective meaning.²⁴ This indicates that in OldLitTib the construction RC+GEN *grogs byed* was not frozen yet and, unlike in MidLitTib (see below), it allowed for forms other than *v1*-stems. Furthermore, (16) uses passive voice twice in the words of King Ra-ma-na. Especially noteworthy is the occurrence of the passive form *bya* in the construction *dan rogs bya*. This is not an isolated case resulting from a scribal error but a phenomenon that recurs on a regular basis in all constructions with *grogs byed* in OldTib and MidLitTib. We will examine it more closely in §4.

For MidLitTib, the GLR and the ML display further examples with *grogs* modified by a relative clause but, as mentioned above, their common feature is the imperfective *v1*-stem in the relative clause.

(17) MidLitTib (GLR 17v6)

ཁོ་མོས་ཀྱང་སེམས་ཅན་གྱི་དོན་བྱེད་པའི་གོགས་བྱ་གསུངས་ཏེ།

kho+mos=kyan [*sems_čan=gyi* *don* *byed=payi*]_{RC}

1SG+NMZ.F:ERG=ADD sentient_being=GEN welfare(ABS) do:NPFV=NMZ:GEN

grogs *byed* *gsuris*

companion(ABS) do:NPFV say.HON:PFV

‘[Jo-mo Khro-gñer-čan] said: “I, too, will act as a companion who promotes the welfare of sentient beings.”’

24. On verb semantics in OldLitTib, see Bialek (2020a).

(18) MidLitTib (ML; trslr. *apud* de Jong 1959: 27, ll. 1–3)

བྱེད་འདིར་ཚོགས་ཀྱི་མཆེད་ལྷན་དུ་སྐྱོན་ནམས་དང་། དད་འདུས་ཀྱི་ཉ་མ་ནམས་
 ཀྱིས་ཀྱང་ངའི་གསོལ་བ་འདེབས་པའི་གྲོགས་མངོན་པར་བྱ་བའི་གསོལ་བ་བཏབ་ནས།
khyed ydir chogs=kyi mched+lcam rdo_rje
 2SG.HON(ABS) DEM:TERM assemblage=GEN brother.HON+sister.HON vajra

spun=rnams=dañ / dad+ydus=kyi ña_ma=rnams=kyis=kyañ
 kin=PL=COM faith+assemble:PFV=GEN maiden=PL=ERG=ADD

[*ñayi gsol+ba ydebs=payi*]_{RC} *grog*
 1SG:GEN request+NMZ(ABS) NPFV:LV=NMZ:GEN companion(ABS)

mjad=par źu=žes gsol+ba
 do.HON=NMZ:TERM tell.HON(NPFV)=QUOT request+NMZ(ABS)

btab=nas
 PFV:LV=NMZ:GEN

[Ras-čhuñ-pa] requested: “[I] tell you (*khyed* = Mi-la Ras-pa) that the kin, *vajra* brothers and sisters assembled here, and maidens who have gathered out of faith, act as companions [to me] who put forward [this] request of mine.”

In (18) the speaker assures Mi-la Ras-pa that those present at the assembly would assist the speaker in putting forward the request to Mi-la Ras-pa. The restriction of the predicate in relative clauses to an imperfective form (cf. *byed* in (17) and *ydebs* in (18)) might indicate the first step towards lexicalization of the construction. Moreover, whereas in (17) no beneficiary argument seems to be intended in the verb frame, in (18) the beneficiary might be identical with the speaker.

A very similar construction, albeit with *grog* *po* (MidLitTib *grog* *po* ‘friend’) instead of the ubiquitous *grog*, is found in our MidLitTib corpus. Another more significant difference is its lack of ergative marking on the agent argument, cf.:

(19) MidLitTib (GLR 9r4–5)

རྒྱ་གར་གྱི་རྒྱལ་པོ་དང་། རྒྱ་ནག་གི་རྒྱལ་པོ་གཉིས་མ་མཐོང་མ་འཕྲད་པའི་གྲོགས་པོ་བྱས་སོ།
rgya_gar=gyi rgyal+po=dañ / rgya_nag=gi rgyal+po gñis
 India=GEN king+NMZ.M=COM China=GEN king+NMZ.M two(ABS)

[*ma=mthoñ ma=yphrad=payi*]_{RC} *grog*+*po byas=so /*
 NEG=see NEG=meet=NMZ:GEN friend+NMZ.M(ABS) do:PFV=FNL

‘The king of India and the king of China became friends who have neither seen nor met [each other].’

(20) MidLitTib (ML; trslr. *apud* de Jong 1959: 41, ll. 5)

ངེད་གཉིས་མཐུན་པའི་གོགས་པོ་བྱས།

ned gñis [mthun=payi]_{RC} grogs+po byas
 2PL two(ABS) agree=NMZ:GEN friend+NMZ.M(ABS) do:PFV
 ‘We two became friends who agree [with each other].’

The meaning of *grogs po byas* in (19) and (20) is more literal than that of *grogs byed/mjad* in (17) and (18), but there is a strong sense of reciprocity in both passages: the actors carry out an action together and are at the same time the goal of that action; they act upon themselves. This might explain the lack of an ergative marker on the agent arguments in both passages.

The common feature of all the examples quoted in this section is that the head of the relative clause, whether *grogs* or any of its variants, is the underlying actor of the relative clauses. That is, the relative clauses are relativized off of the subject argument. This is true for all occurrences of the construction in our corpus, which are summarized in Table 4.²⁵

Table 4. RC+GEN *grogs byed* in LitTib

OldLitTib	GLR	ML
4	3	2

2.3 Grammaticalization of *grogs byed* as a new applicative construction

The earliest occurrence of *grogs byed* grammaticalized as what seems to be a new applicative construction can already be found in an OldLitTib text:

(21) OldLitTib (ITJ 738: 3v44-6)

མོ་འདི་ནི་བྲིམ་ཕྱ་དང་སློག་ཕྱ་ལ་བཏབ་ན།། བྲིམ་གི་ལྷ་བཟང་པོ་འི་ཡ་མེས་གསལ་བཟང་པོ།

གཙང་མ་རྩྭ་ན་དུ་ག་དང་འདྲ་བ།།

གཙང་ས་དང་མཐོན་པོར་འདུག་པ་ཅིག་འཆེས་གོགས་བྱེད་ཅིང་འདུག་པས།།

ལེགས་པར་གཙང་སླ་བྲིན་བར་མཛོད་ཅིག།།

mo ydi=ni khyim+phya=dan srog+phya=la btab=na // [...]

lot DEM(ABS)=FOC house+phya=COM life+phya=ALL PFV:cast=INESS

khyim=gi lha bzan_po=yam pha+myes+gsas bzan_po / gcan_ma
 house=GEN deity good=CONJ father+grandfather+gsas good(ABS) pure(ABS)

smyin_drug=dan ydra=ba // gca[n]+sa=dan mthon_por
 Pleiades=COM be_similar=NMZ(ABS) pure+earth=COM heights:TERM

25. The counts include the MidLitTib constructions with *grogs po*.

ydug=pa=čīg *yčhes-grogs* *byed=čīñ* *ydug=pas //*
 stay=NMZ=INDF(ABS) feel_sympathy-APL LV:NPFV=DUR stay=NMZ:ERG

legs_par *gcañ²⁶+sbra phyin=bar* *mjod=čīg //*
 good:TERM gcañ_sbra come=NMZ:TERM do:SPASS=IMP

‘If [you] have cast this lot for the *phyā* of the house and for the *phyā* of life, [...], because good deities of the house or good *gsas* of the ancestors, being pure like the Pleiades [and] dwelling on pure earth and on heights, feel sympathy for [you], act so that *legs par gcañ sbra* comes!’

The passage comes from a work on divination and is therefore not fully intelligible. Its interpretation is additionally hindered by the unclear semantics of *yčhes*. Here, we have followed Dotson’s (2017: 539) translation ‘to feel sympathy or pity for sb,’ but this meaning is far from established.²⁷ Note however that *grogs byed* forms part of a new construction, in which it follows directly a *v1*-stem (!) of a verb: *yčhes grogs byed*. The restriction of the verb form to *v1* displays specialization, i.e. the loss of choice between various forms permitted within a construction (Hopper 1991: 25). The subject of the verb, the long NP *khyim gi lha bzañ po yañ pha myes gsas bzañ po/ gcañ ma smyīn drug dañ ydra ba// gca[n] sa dañ mthon por ydug pa čīg*, stands in absolutive and the clause does not contain any other element. Presuming that the proposed meaning of *yčhes* is correct, the applicative construction *yčhes grogs byed* indicates that the person who cast the lot is the beneficiary for whom the gods feel sympathy. Moreover, the zero-marked applied argument of *yčhes grogs byed* becomes the subject of the following imperative clause, suggesting that the function of the applicative in (21) was to make a non-core argument available for zero-anaphora.

The construction gained popularity during the MidTib period but this is not yet fully borne out in GLR, where *grogs byed* has only one attestation:

(22) MidLitTib (GLR 59v1)

རྒྱལ་པོས་ཀྱང་ལྷ་ཁང་རྩེག་གྲོགས་མངོད་པར་ཞལ་གྱིས་བཞེས་སོ།།
rgyal+pos=kyañ *lha+khañ* *rcig²⁸-grogs*
 king+NMZ.M:ERG=ADD deity+house(ABS) (NPFV)build-APL

mjad=par *žal=gyis* *bžes=so //*
 LV.HON=NMZ:TERM mouth.HON=ERG take.HON=FNL

‘The king promised to erect the temple for [queen Khri-bcun].’

26. Read: *gcañ*?

27. Dotson (2017) related *yčhes* to *gčes* ‘to have attachment, to love’ and derived its meaning from this one. Verb *yčhes* is rarely used in OldLitTib and thus only in highly conventionalized clauses of divination texts. *yčhes pa* is glossed as *len pa* ‘to accept’ in BDSN (*apud* Mimaki 1992: 484).

The subject of *mjad* is certainly the king because of the honorific register of the verb. If we assume that at that point the construction was already fully grammaticalized in the language (see (21) from OldLitTib), then the correct translation has to include the beneficiary argument ‘for the queen.’

The construction *V-grogs byed* prevails in the ML, indicating that by the 15th century it has started to replace RC+GEN *grogs byed* in the spoken vernacular. In (23), after many years Mi-la Ras-pa visits the home of his tutor who had passed away in the meantime. Knowing that Mi-la Ras-pa’s mother had likewise passed away, the tutor’s son offers to Mi-la Ras-pa:

- (23) MidLitTib (ML; trslr. *apud* de Jong 1959: 113, ll. 17–8)
 ཚ་ཚ་འདྲེབས་གྲོགས་བྱའོ།
cha_cha ydebs-grogs byayo
 figurine(ABS) NPFV:LV-APL LV (DPASS):FNL
 ‘The figurines shall be molded for [you].’

Again, noteworthy is the use of the passive form *bya* in (23). Two sentences later, Mi-la Ras-pa says:

- (24) MidLitTib (ML; trslr. *apud* de Jong 1959: 113, ll. 19–20)
 ང་རང་གིས་ཀྱང་གྲོགས་བྱས་ནས་མའི་ཅུས་པ་ལ།ཚ་ཚ་བཏབ།
na+ran=gis=kyan grogs byas=nas mayi rus_pa=la{s}
 1SG+self=ERG=ADD companion(ABS) do:PFV=EL mother:GEN bone=DEL
cha_cha btab/
 figurine(ABS) PFV:LV
 ‘I also acted as a companion and then [we] made figurines out of my mother’s bones.’

In (24), the verb phrase *grogs byed* is used in accordance with (10), i.e. its agent receives the ergative marker. In (23), it is the tutor’s son who expresses his readiness to help Mi-la Ras-pa, whereas (24) quotes Mi-la Ras-pa’s words in which he confirms that he has joined the tutor’s son in making the figurines.

An unusual case concerns the construction *V-grogs byed* used as a predicate in a relative clause in (25). This is also the only instance identified thus far with the form *ygrogs* instead of the ubiquitous *grogs*.

28. We follow here the Lha-sa edition, for the Sde-dge edition reads *brcig*.

- (25) MidLitTib (ML; trslr. *apud* de Jong 1959: 25, ll. 10–1)
 བོད་ན་བཞགས་སྐྱམ་པ་ལྷ་མ་ལ་བརྟམ་བཅོས་ཀྱི་སྐོར་མ་མཉམ་འགྲོགས་ཀྱི་དེད་པའི་བྱིད་པོ་བྱིད་རང་སྐྱོང་
 རྩོམ་ཡིན་མོད།

bod=na bžugs sñam+pa [bla_ma=la brñas_bčos=kyi
 Tibet=LOC abide.HON thought+NMZ(ABS) lama=DAT contempt=GEN
*sgo=nas mñam-ygroggs byed=payi]*_{RC} *dred_po khyod=rañ*
 door=EL be_equal-APL LV:NPFV=NMZ:GEN impudent(ABS) 2SG=self(ABS)
snañ_ñor yin+mod/
 perception:TERM COP+AUX.EMPH
 ‘[Your] idea that [the lama] resides in Tibet – you, impudent who equals
 [yourself] with [him, showing thus] contempt towards the lama – is just an
 illusion.’

Example (25) comes from an account of Ras-čuñ-pa’s dream in which he primarily thinks his teacher Mi-la Ras-pa would reside in Tibet. But then Ras-čuñ-pa scolds himself for this thought with the words of (25). The grammar of the passage is difficult to analyze, but, in accordance with other similar constructions in the ML, we interpret *mñam ygroggs byed* as applicative with the applied argument, realized as zero-anaphora, referring to the lama.

Table 5 summarizes the occurrences of the construction *V-groggs byed* in the examined corpus of LitTib.

Table 5. *V-groggs byed* in OldLitTib

OldLitTib	GLR	ML
1	1	2

3. Further development: Pragmaticization of the construction

In the Tibetic languages, this applicative construction has undergone a further development as a way to introduce an “attitude holder”, rather than a beneficiary proper. As defined by Bosse et al. (2012), “attitude holders” correspond to entities who express a specific attitude towards the achievement of a given event. In the Tibetic case, this entity is the speaker who wishes the event to occur or, when negated, regrets it does not occur.

The realization of an attitude holder as a dative-marked noun phrase is a cross-linguistically well-known phenomenon usually referred to as the “ethical dative”. It is found in French in utterances such as *Goûtez-moi ce plat*, lit. ‘Taste (me) this dish,’ in which the speaker holds a positive attitude towards the real-

ization of the action or *Il nous a fait une crise d'appendicite juste pendant les vacances*, lit. 'He had an appendicitis attack on us just during the vacations,' in which the speaker expresses that she and other people were negatively affected by this event. The originality of Tibetic, compared to languages with ethical dative, lies in the fact that the presence of the attitude holder is indicated in an indirect way, through the use of the applicative construction, rather than by the simple addition of a noun phrase marked in dative.

3.1 Polite commands

In the imperative mood, the applicative construction evolved towards a pragmatic marker of polite commands.²⁹ In the modern Tibetic languages, this construction is overwhelmingly used in this mood. A precise account of its occurrence in imperative, as opposed to other TAM, is made difficult by the relative rarity of the construction and the lack of accessible, indexed, machine-searchable large corpora of spoken Tibetic languages. By a rough estimation, however, at least 90 per cent of its occurrences are in imperative. With six attestations, imperative mood is also the most popular use of *grog*s *byed* already in the ML (15th century; see Table 7). Several of them, though, still correspond semantically to an applicative form. For instance, (26) illustrates the use of a sociative applicative in imperative mood.

- (26) MidLitTib (ML; trslr. *apud* de Jong 1959: 67, ll. 7–8)
 ངའི་ལྷུ་བ་འབྲུལ་གྲོགས་མཛོད་ཅིག
ñayi z'u=ba ybul-grog mjod=čig
 1SG:GEN request=NMZ(ABS) NPFV:give.HML-APL AUX.HON(SPASS)=IMP
 'Present my request [to Mar-pa] with [me].'

This utterance is pronounced by Mar-pa's wife Bdag-med-ma when she asks Mar-pa's disciples to assist her in presenting a request to Mar-pa. Because the disciples, as well as Bdag-med-ma and Mar-pa, are present when she's uttering the request, it is apparent that her expectation is for the disciples to present the request with her; the sociative applicative meaning is still clearly present here.

Similarly, example (27) illustrates the use of an applicative voice in imperative, this time with a benefactive meaning. In (27), Mi-la Ras-pa's mother asks a mendicant yogin to deliver a message to her son who was staying far away from home

29. Meiteilon, a Tibeto-Burman language spoken in northeastern India, also presents an overlap between polite commands and applicative (Betholia 2005); its applicative construction is unrelated to the Tibetic applicative construction described here.

at that time. It is obvious that the mendicant alone should deliver the message for the benefit of the mother, but it is also a polite way to ask for a favor:

- (27) MidLitTib (ML; trslr. *apud de Jong 1959: 44, ll. 21–2*)
 དེ་ལ་ཕྱིན་རེ་ཙམ་སྐྱར་བ་ཡིན་པས་དེ་རྣམས་ཀྱང་སྤྱོད་གྲོགས་གྱིས་བྱས་ནས།
de=la phrin re cam skur=ba yin=pas
 DEM=DAT news some about(ABS) (NPFV)send=NMZ AUX=NMZ:ERG
de=rnams=kyañ spro-d-grogs gyis byas=nas/
 DEM=PL=ADD (NPFV)deliver-APL LV:IMP do:PFV=EL
 ‘[The mother] said: “[I] would send him some news; please, give [him] these [on my behalf].”’

In other instances, though, the construction is used in imperative without any obvious beneficiary or co-agent, like in (28):

- (28) MidLitTib (ML; trslr. *apud de Jong 1959: 123, ll. 4–5*)
 ངའི་མིག་གིས་མི་མཐོང་ན་བས་མི་ཐོས་པའི་ཡུལ་ཕྱོགས་ཤིག་དུ་འགྲོ་རྒྱུ་གིས།
nayi mig=gis mi=mthoñ rna_bas mi=thos=payi
 1SG:GEN eye=ERG NEG=see ear:ERG NEG=hear=NMZ:GEN
yul+phyogs=sig=tu ygro-rogs gyis /
 region+direction=INDF=TERM (NPFV)go-APL LV:IMP
 ‘Please, go to a place where I can neither see nor hear you.’

In (28), Mi-la Ras-pa’s aunt expresses a request for Mi-la Ras-pa to leave the village. Rather than being a proper beneficiary of the event, the aunt expresses her wish to see Mi-la Ras-pa disappear, i.e. she holds a positive attitude towards the achievement of this particular event. MidLitTib data show an increased use of the construction in imperative as opposed to other TAM, with an incipient pragmatization process.

In contemporary spoken Tibetan too, some cases of imperative uses of the construction also retain their characteristics of a sociative/benefactive applicative, with the newly introduced beneficiary or co-agent explicitly mentioned (as in (29)) or not (as in (30)).

- (29) Central Tibetic, Lhasa Tibetan (Elicited, F28, 2010)
 དེ་རིང་ང་ལ་ནན་ལགས་ལ་དགོངས་པ་ཅིག་ལྷུ་རྒྱུ་རྒྱུ་གིས་གནང་།
tʰerij ŋa=la kɛŋla=la koŋpa=tɕiʔ ɕu-roʔ nāŋ
 today 1SG=DAT teacher.HON=DAT leave=INDF ask.HML-APL LV.HON
 ‘Please ask the teacher for a leave for me/on my behalf today.’

- (30) Central Tibetic, Lhasa Tibetan (Elicited, F28, 2010)
 རྒྱུད་རང་གི་པ་མ་གཉིས་ལ་འཚམས་འདྲི་བྱ་རོགས་གནང་།
 c^hēraŋ=gi p^hāma=ŋi=la t^hām̄t̄i ɛy-roʔ nāŋ
 2SG=GEN parenst=DU=DAT Greeting LV.HML-APL LV.HON
 ‘Greet your parents for [me]!’

Later, the construction in imperative mood was reinterpreted as a polite command in general. This shift towards a pragmatic function requires that the beneficiary, once introduced by the applicative derivation, is necessarily coreferent with the speaker (1st person) and cannot be expressed overtly. Moreover, as illustrated in examples (31)–(34), the role of the participant introduced by the applicative construction has shifted from that of a beneficiary proper, semantically bound to the event, to the pragmatic role of an attitude holder, here an entity who expresses a positive attitude towards the achievement of the event expressed in imperative mood. In other terms, the speaker wishes or hopes that this event occurs. The next four examples illustrate this pragmatic shift from a clear beneficiary in (30) to an unambiguous attitude holder in (33) and (34).

- (31) Central Tibetic, Lhasa Tibetan (Elicited, F28, 2010)
 ང་དེ་རིང་འགྲོ་བྱུང་བ་མ་རེད། ཚེས་པ་འགྱུར་བ་བཏང་རོགས་གནང་།
 ŋa t^herij ʋ t^hūp-samare t^hēpa cūrwa tāŋ-roʔ nāŋ
 1SG today go can-EPIST.NEG.FUT.SEN date change LV-APL LV.HON
 ‘It seems I won’t be able to go today. Please change the date for [me]!’
- (32) Central Tibetic, Lhasa Tibetan (Elicited, F28, 2010)
 ཁོང་ལ་དོ་དགོང་མཚན་གཅིག་གནས་ཚང་གཡམ་རོགས་གནང་།
 k^hōŋ=la t^hokon t^hēn tciʔ nētsaŋ jā-roʔ nāŋ
 3SG.HON=DAT tonight night one hosting_place lend-APL LV.HON
 ‘Please [do me a favor and] host him/her one night today.’
- (33) Central Tibetic, Lhasa Tibetan (Elicited, F28, 2010)
 དེ་རིང་རྒྱུད་རང་རྫོད་རྫོད་བཞུགས་རོགས་གནང་།
 t^herij c^hēraŋ t̄ol̄o ɛy-roʔ nāŋ
 today 2SG relaxed stay.HON-APL LV.HON
 ‘Please have a rest today [and I will be satisfied].’
- (34) Central Tibetic, Lhasa Tibetan (Elicited, F28, 2010)
 རྒྱུད་རང་ས་ཆ་ཐག་རིང་པོར་མ་ཐད་རོགས་བྱོས།
 c^hēraŋ sātea t^hāʔ riŋpo: ma=t^hēʔ-roʔ nāŋ
 2SG place distance long:DAT NEG=go.HON-APL LV.HON
 ‘Please don’t go far away [otherwise, I will feel sad/worried].’

The last step of this pragmaticization path is manifested by the erosion of the light verb *byed* originally present in the construction. For MidLitTib, we see that, contrary to the proper applicative use illustrated in (26), examples (27) and (28) lack the imperative clitic /čig/. This grammatical change is clearer in modern spoken Tibetan: the once-applicative construction is morpho-phonologically reduced to the morpheme *rogs* (without the light verb), a morpheme that belongs to the same paradigm as other imperative markers. In the pair of examples below, *dan* indicates a more direct command, while *rogs* can be analyzed as a polite imperative marker (without any reference to a beneficiary or an attitude holder).

- (35) Central Tibetic, Lhasa Tibetan (Elicited, F28, 2010)

གནས་ཚུལ་འདིར་སྤྱུགས་བཞེས་ཡག་པོ་གནང་དང་།
 nētsy: di: tʰükceʔ jakpo nāŋ-tʰa
 situation DEM:DAT thought.HON good LV.HON-IMP
 ‘Do think well about this situation!’

- (36) Central Tibetic, Lhasa Tibetan (Elicited, F28, 2010)

ངའི་གནས་འབབ་ལ་སྤྱུགས་བཞེས་གནང་རོགས།
 ŋɛ: nēpap=la tʰükceʔ nāŋ-roʔ
 1SG:GEN situation=DAT thought.HON LV.HON-IMP
 ‘Please, think about my situation.’

These examples support the reconstruction of the linguistic change as: ‘do something with/for sb.’ > ‘do something with/for me!’ > ‘do something [and I would be pleased]!’ > ‘please, do something!’

3.2 Wishes or hopes

This pragmatic function of the applied argument can also be found in the expression of wishes or hopes, exemplified in (37) and (38). In these examples, the single argument of the main verb (‘rain’, ‘sun’) is an inanimate entity, while in the case of proper applicative the Agent cannot be inanimate nor act involuntarily. Hence, such utterances indicate the full pragmaticization of the construction.

- (37) Central Tibetic, Common Tibetan (Paris, Elicited, M+/-40, 2023)

ཆར་པ་བབས་རོགས་བྱས་ན་དག་འ་བ་ལྟ།
 tɕʰā:pa pʰap-roʔ tɕʰɛ-na ka:la:
 rain fall-APL LV:PFV-COND pleased.CMPR-EXCLAM
 ‘How nice if it would rain!’

Through this utterance the speaker expresses her wishes that it will rain, even though the actual, direct beneficiary of the rain could be someone else (for instance, farmers who are suffering drought); the speaker uses the *ro*' construction to express her positive attitude towards the event realization.

Similarly, in example (38), if the speaker is the one going on a picnic, she is the beneficiary of the sun shining and, at the same time, expresses a positive attitude toward this event. But such an utterance ('I hope the sun will be shining') could also be used if someone else was going on a picnic.

- (38) Central Tibetic, Common Tibetan (Paris, Elicited, M+/-40, 2023)
 སང་ཉིན་ལྷིང་ག་བཏང་ཀར་འགྲོ་ཡག་ཡིན། ཉི་མ་གར་རོགས་བྱས་ན་བསམ་གྱིས།
 sānŋin linka tāŋ-ka: [ɔ-jajin ŋima ēā:-ro' tɕʰɛ-na
 tomorrow picnic LV-COMP go.PRS-FUT.DEO SUN rise-APL LV:PFV-COND
 sām-ki?
 think.NPFV.SEN
 'We are going on a picnic tomorrow; I hope the sun will be shining!'

3.3 Complaints

Finally, a third type of use of the applicative construction to introduce an attitude holder rather than a beneficiary can be found in complaints about someone's behavior. In this case, the speaker uses the applicative construction in negative utterances to express her regrets that an event does not occur. Here again, the attitude holder is never overtly mentioned, and it always corresponds to the speaker.

- (39) Central Tibetic, Common Tibetan (Paris, Conversation, F+/-45, 2022)
 ཁ་ལག་ཡག་པོ་ཟ་རོགས་བྱེད་གྱི་མི་འདུག
 kʰāla jakpo sa-ro' tɕʰɛ-kimindu?
 food good eat-APL LV:NPFV-NPFV.NEG.SEN
 '[He] doesn't eat well [(even) to please me].'
- (40) Central Tibetic, Common Tibetan (Paris, Picture description, M+/-35, 2020)
 ལྷུ་གུ་དེ་ལ་གཤེགས་ཤེགས་གཞོན་བཏང་ན་འང་ཉལ་རོགས་བྱེད་གྱི་མི་འདུག
 pūku tɕʰɛ=la ēēce kʰatse tāŋ-nɛ: ŋɛ:-ro' tɕʰɛ-kimindu?
 child DEM=DAT scolding how_much LV-AVR sleep-APL LV:NPFV-NPFV.NEG.SEN
 'However much [I] scold this child, [he] doesn't want to go to bed [(even) for me/(even) though it would please me].'

This use is rare in absolute terms and is only attested in the modern spoken languages. However, this lack of attestation can be attributed to the very specific context it requires – typically, parents complaining about their disobedient children. In this discourse context, it is a very common use pattern.

As for wishes, in complaints too can we find inanimate first arguments of the verb phrase:

- (41) Central Tibetic, Common Tibetan (Paris, Elicited, M+/-40, 2023)
 མ་ཚ་འདི་ངག་རོགས་བྱེད་ཀྱི་མི་འདུག
 naṭsa di tʰaʔ-roʔ teʰe-kiminduʔ
 disease DEM heal-APL LV:NPFV-NPFV.NEG.SEN
 ‘This disease does not want to heal.’

4. Passive

A striking feature of the (*g*)*rogs byed* constructions in LitTib (at first sight unrelated to the grammaticalization and pragmaticization processes) is the disproportionately high rate of passive forms (v3) among them, as shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Distribution of verb forms across the constructions in LitTib

	OldLitTib				MidLitTib			
	v1	v2	v3	v4	v1	v2	v3	v4
<i>grogs byed</i>	1		1			1	2	
NP+GEN <i>grogs byed</i>	1	7	2					
RC+GEN <i>grogs byed</i>	1		2		2	2	1	
Applicative	1				2		1	
Imperative								6
Sum	4	7	5		4	3	4	6

The v3-stems of verbs, reconstructed in Bialek (2020a) as dynamic passive forms, are by far the least frequently used ones in any corpus of LitTib. For the (*g*)*rogs byed* constructions, however, their number exceeds that of imperfective (v1) in OldLitTib and equals it in MidLitTib: this remarkable proportion calls for an explanation.³⁰ Neither is this overrepresentation of passive encountered in any other clause of the type ‘X acts as Y’ (see 10). Unfortunately, the pragmatics of passive voice in LitTib is not yet well-understood, and the following notes should be taken as preliminary.

30. Only *bgyid* and *byed* have been counted; *mjad* has only one form in v1, v2 and v3 and is therefore difficult to assess.

Passive and applicative are valency-changing devices. Whereas in passive voice, an object argument is promoted to subject while the agentive subject is usually demoted, the applicative voice promotes an adjunct to so-called applied argument, a core argument in the applicative verb frame. The joint use of passive and applicative voices in one verb phrase would result in the promotion of an adjunct to applied argument, and the subsequent promotion of this applied argument to the subject position. But in LitTib the increased frequency of the passive is attested already for the (g)rogs *byed* constructions prior to their grammaticalization as applicative. Could it be that the use of the passive in these constructions facilitated their grammaticalization?

Examples (42) and (43) suggest that passivization in the respective constructions aimed at directing attention to *grogs*.

(42) MidLitTib (GLR 98v2)

ལྷུ་ལ་པོ་སྤྲིག་ཅན་གསོད་རན་ཁོ་མོས་གྲོགས་བྱ་ཡིས། ལྷིང་མ་ཚུང་ཅིག་ཟེར་རོ།
rgyal+po sdig=čan gsod ran kho+mos
 king+NMZ.M sin=POSS(ABS) NPFV:kill be_time 1SG+NMZ.F:ERG
grogs bya=yis / sñin ma=čhun=čig zer=ro //
 companion(ABS) do(DPASS)=ERG heart(ABS) NEG=be_small=IMP say=FNL
 “It is time to kill the sinful king. Because [your] companion will be made by me, do not despair!” [She] was saying.’

(43) MidLitTib (GLR 100v3)

བདག་གིས་ལྷུ་ལ་པོ་སྤྲིག་ཅན་བསད་པས་ང་ལ་སྤོམ་པ་མེད། ངས་གྲོགས་བྱ་ཡིས་གསུངས་ནས།
bdag=gis rgyal+po sdig=čan bsad=pas ña=la
 1SG.HML=ERG king+NMZ.M sin=POSS(ABS) PFV:kill=NMZ:ERG 1SG=DAT
sdom_pa med / ñas grogs bya=yis
 vow(ABS) NEG.EXIST 1SG:ERG companion(ABS) do(DPASS)=ERG
gsuñs=nas /
 say.HON:PFV=EL
 ‘[Lha-luñ Dpal-gyi Rdo-rje] said: “Since I killed the sinful king, I do not have [my] vow [anymore]. [But your] companion shall be made by me.”’

The passive verb in (43) is the last one in direct speech, indicating that passive voice was not used here to raise the direct object to topical prominence for the sake of topic continuity in discourse. In fact, but for one exception,³¹ all our passive examples from LitTib (including passive in applicative) come from direct

31. The exception concerns PT 1289: r2–8, a funerary ritual text that is extremely difficult to interpret.

speech. The passages emphasize that the addressees will receive assistance in their actions. Accordingly, passivization seems to secure a more central morphosyntactic status of *grogs* ‘companion’. By bringing the Assistance semantics to the fore, to the disadvantage of the Function role (cf. orig. X *byed* ‘to act as X’), the passive voice might have contributed to the development of the sociative meaning of the applicative construction (see Figure 2). However, as noted at the beginning of this section, these are but preliminary thoughts, and a much broader corpus would be necessary to shed more light on the problem.

5. Lexicalized constructions

The manifold development of the applicative construction is further complicated by several lexicalized constructions, based on the morpheme (*g*)*rogs*. They co-exist with the grammaticalized and pragmaticized constructions based on the same morpheme and influence the way these constructions are semantically interpreted in synchrony.

5.1 Noun incorporation

In OldLitTib, the frequent use of the verb phrase (*g*)*rogs byed* pragmatically strengthened its interpretation as one lexical unit. With the incorporation we also observe the semantic shift from the original ‘to act as a companion’ to ‘to help’:

(44) OldLitTib (ITJ 737–1: 230)

ལྷ་བོ་འི་འདབ་མ་ཉི་མས་ཚིག་ལ་ལྷུག་ནས། སྐར་ལོག་ནས་ལྷ་བོ་རོགས་བྱས་པ་དང་།
nu+bo=yi ydab_ma ñi_mas chig=la thug=nas /
 younger_brother+NMZ.M=GEN wing(ABS) sun:ERG (PFV)burn=ALL reach=EL
slar log=nas / nu+bo rogs+byas=pa=dan
 back turn=EL younger_brother+NMZ.M(ABS) companion+LV:PFV=NMZ=COM
 ‘The wing of [my] younger brother was on the point of being burned by the sun. [I] came back and helped [my] younger brother.’

The last clause in (44) has seemingly two elements in absolutive: *nu bo* ‘younger brother’ and *rogs* ‘companion’, but, in fact, *nu bo* stands in absolutive because it is the direct object of the verb *rogs byas*, thus indicating that *rogs* is not an independent noun with its own syntactic function but is incorporated into the verb. This construction has evolved from NP+GEN *grogs byed* (see §2.2 above):

*nu boyi rogs byas > nu bo rogs byas

The incorporation of *rogs* raised the possessor argument to the position of direct object. Our corpus includes only two respective examples from OldLitTib and none from MidLitTib, but the verb is still attested in modern Tibetic languages, for instance, as *rogs byed* in Amdo.

5.2 Light verb construction

In Lhasa and Common Tibetan (as well as a number of other modern Tibetic languages), another lexicalized construction meaning ‘to help’ can be found, based on the same string of morphemes. It consists in the nominalized form [rokpa] *rogs pa* ‘helper, companion’ and the light verb *byed* < ‘to do’. This light verb construction syntactically differs from the above mentioned OldLitTib (*g*)*rogs byed* construction insofar as the predicative noun *rokpa* is, at the same time, the internal object of the construction. It is marked in absolutive and can be modified by adjectives such as *manpo* ‘many, a lot’ in (46), while the beneficiary – ‘I’ in example (45) – is marked with dative:

- (45) Central Tibetic, Lhasa Tibetan (Elicited, F28, 2010)
 ལྷོགས་པོ། རང་གིས་ང་ལ་རོགས་པ་བྱེད་རོགས།
 [ʰokpo raŋ=gi ŋa=la rokpa tɕʰe-roʔ
 friend 2SG=ERG 1SG=DAT help LV-IMP
 ‘[My] friend, please help me!’

- (46) Central Tibetic, Lhasa Tibetan (Elicited, F28, 2010)
 ལྷོན་མ་ཁོང་ལ་དཀའ་ངལ་ཡོད་དུས་རོགས་པ་མང་པོ་བྱས་པ་ཡིན།
 ŋɔnma kʰoŋ=la kãŋɛː jø-dy rokpa manpo tɕʰe-pajin
 before 3SG.HON=DAT problem EXIST-CONR help many LV:PFV-PFV.EGO
 ‘When he had problems in the past, [I] helped [him] a lot.’

5.3 Nominal compound

Beside the VP *grog*s *byed*, in MidLitTib and modern languages we also encounter more lexicalized phrases of the form V+*grog*s *byed* in which V+*grog*s is a nominal compound; the verb loses its morphosyntactic properties and cannot take complements – a feature distinguishing this construction from the applicative V-*grog*s *byed*. Example (47) illustrates the compound *skyo grogs* ‘comforter’ that can be analyzed as a determinative compound **skyo bayi grogs*, lit. ‘friend in weariness’ where *skyo* means ‘to be sad’.

(47) MidLitTib (GLR 41v2)

རིགས་བཟང་ཡིད་འོང་མངོས་པའི་བུ་མོ་བཅུ།།

ཁྱིད་ཀྱི་སྐྱོ་གྲོགས་བྱེད་པའི་འཁོར་དུ་བརྒྱུངས།།

rigs+bzañ yid+yoñ mjes=payi bu+mo
family+good mind+come(NPFV) be_beautiful=NMZ:GEN child+NMZ.F

bču // khyod=kyi skyo+grogs byed=payi
ten(ABS) 2SG=GEN weariness+companion(ABS) LV:NPFV=NMZ:GEN

γkhor=du brjañs //
retinue=TERM PFV:send

‘Ten girls who are of noble birth, attractive, and beautiful, [I] sent [to you] as retinue which acts as your comforter.’

The same lexicalized compound is also found in modern spoken Tibetan, as illustrated by example (48):

(48) Central Tibetic, Lhasa Tibetan (Elicited, F28, 2010)

གཞས་འདིས་མོ་རང་ལ་སྐྱོ་རྒྱུ་གས་བྱས་པ་རེད།

œɛ t̪i mɔraŋ=la cō+roʔ tɛʰɛ=pare
song DEM:ERG 3SG=DAT weariness+companion LV:PFV-PFV.FACT

‘This song acted as a comforter to him/her.’

Other compounds formed according to the pattern *V+(g)rogs* which can be used with the light verb *byed* even in modern languages include *dgay rogs* ‘lover’, *phebs rogs* ‘travelling companion’, *skyyid rogs* ‘companion in happiness’, or *ñe grogs* ‘fellow’.

6. Discussion

Owing to the diachronic data available on Tibetic languages it is possible to examine the different stages and processes in the evolution of the *grogs byed* construction over time. The first stage involves lexicalization followed by grammaticalization: as early as in OldLitTib, *grogs byed* developed from a free syntactic construction towards a verb phrase meaning ‘to accompany’/‘to help’ and then to an applicative marker. The second stage, already documented from MidLitTib onwards, consists in a pragmaticization of the construction, which seems to rapidly become the most frequent use pattern for this construction in modern vernaculars. Despite this difference in frequency, sociative/beneficiary applicative derivation and pragmatic uses exist side-by-side in several modern Tibetic languages. Table 7 presents the frequency over time of *grogs byed* in the corpus as

estimated per 10,000 syllables.³² In general, the constructions are extremely rare, but we nonetheless observe an increase of the grammaticalized applicative and imperative as time passes.³³

Table 7. Frequency of *grog* *byed* in the corpus

	Verb phrase	Applicative	Imperative	Complaints	Sum	Rate
OTDO	12	1			13	0.63
GLR	3	1			4	0.57
ML	3	2	6		11	1.5
MTib		x	x	x		

Figure 2 sketches the reconstructed stages in the evolution of *grog* *byed* as they appear to emerge from our data, where *grog* *byed* followed different paths before but also after the grammaticalization of *-grog* as an applicative marker. The source verb phrase *grog* *byed* ‘to act as a companion’, formed after the ubiquitous pattern *X byed* ‘to act as X’, evolved in two directions: on the one hand, the noun *grog* ‘companion’ underwent incorporation (see §5.1) and, on the other hand, *grog* *byed* continued with its lexical meaning and displayed all the syntactic features of a verb phrase. The status of *grog* as a free morpheme in the verb phrase allowed it to take pre-posed modifiers in a construction which can be translated as ‘X acts as a companion of Y’. When the modifier was a relative clause, its agent was co-referential with the agent of *grog* *byed*: ‘X act as a companion who (= X) does sth.’ The original meaning of *grog*, still recognizable in the verb phrase and additionally strengthened in passive forms, facilitated the sociative reinterpretation of [*X V=payi*]_{RC} *grog* *byed* ‘to act as a companion who RC’ as ‘to do V with sb.’ – the major step towards grammaticalization as a sociative applicative construction.

Peterson’s (2007: 124ff) cross-linguistic investigation reveals that applicative markers most frequently grammaticalize from verbs and adpositions, with a very few, uncertain, examples of nouns denoting body parts adduced as potential sources. Our study is the first to demonstrate that applicative morphology can directly develop from free nouns.³⁴ In Tibetic, the applicative marker *-grog* gram-

32. Since modern Tibetan data are not drawn from a finite and consistent corpus but have been collected sporadically as they occurred during fieldwork or have been elicited, it is not possible to estimate their overall frequency.

33. Low frequency of applicative constructions has been observed for other languages as well; see, for example, Peterson (2007: 7, fn. 2) on Bukusu.

34. For Ainu, Bugaeva (2010: 792) speculates that “the applicative prefixes *e-* and *o-* originated in relational nouns meaning ‘head/top’ and ‘buttock/bottom’ via intermediate adpositional

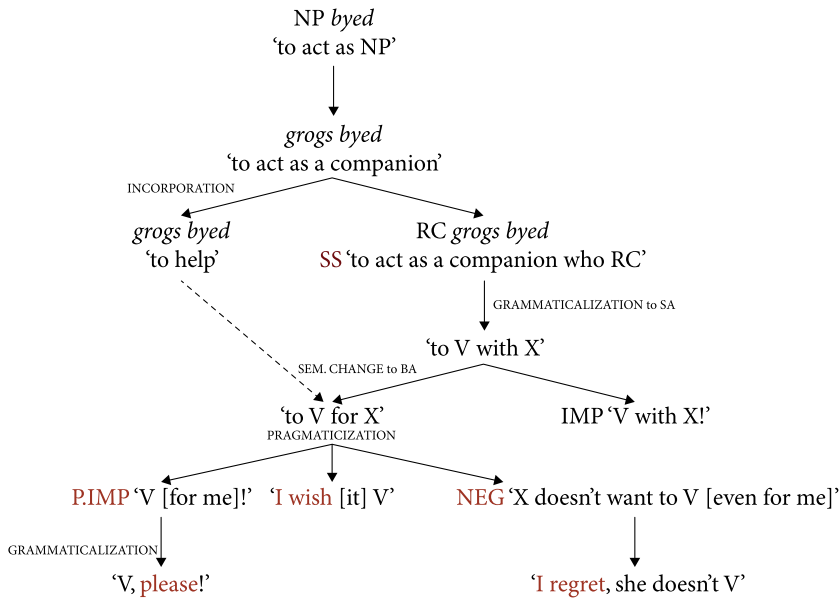


Figure 2. Evolution of *grogs byed*³⁵

maticalized from nominal lexeme *grogs* ‘companion’ – a lexical source not documented thus far for this type of construction. Moreover, against Peterson’s (2007: 141) objection that “in general it is impossible to show that a noun has not gone through an intermediate adpositional stage [...] on its way to becoming an applicative marker”,³⁶ the reconstructed grammaticalization path of Tibetic *grogs* proves that the path *noun* > *applicative* is possible without intermediate stage of either adposition or noun incorporation. It has been possible to prove the existence of this developmental pattern only because of the deep history of language documentation for Tibetic that allows us not only to demonstrate the ultimate source of the applicative marker but also to trace its path of grammaticalization through several historical stages.

Heine (2003: 578ff.) identifies four mechanisms that characterize grammaticalization: “extension”, “desemanticization”, “decategorization” and “erosion”. As

stage or without it”, but she admits that the direct source of the applicative morphology cannot be determined any more (Bugueva 2010: 762, 782).

35. Additional abbreviations introduced in Figure 2 are: SS ‘same subject’; SA ‘sociative applicative’; BA ‘benefactive applicative’; V ‘verb’; P.IMP ‘polite imperative’; NEG ‘negation’. Red color marks pragmaticized constructions.

36. See also Rose (2019: 459ff).

demonstrated in the following paragraphs, all four are clearly displayed in the Tibetic data.

“Extension”, defined as a frequency increase of a form, may not be so obvious if one considers the absolute numbers in Table 7 but the rates (last column) clearly indicate considerable increase in the use of *grog*s *byed* between OldLitTib (0.63) and the 15th c. (1.5) when the ML was composed.

“Desemanticization” occurs when the meaning of a form becomes more generic and abstract. As long as the predicate of the relative clause in RC+GEN *grog*s *byed* denoted an action whose agent can be physically accompanied by another person, its literal reading was admissible. However, opening up of this position to non-physical actions as in (17) necessitated a generalization of the meaning to the effect that the applicative *grog*s could be used with such abstract verbs like *yčhes* ‘feel sympathy’ in (21). The bridging context facilitating the reinterpretation might have come from the frequent use of light verbs *byed* ‘to do’ or *ydebs* ‘to throw’ (in the literal sense, denoting physical actions) in RCs to refer to more abstract events such as in *don byed* (17) ‘to promote the welfare’ (lit. ‘to do the welfare’) or *gsol ba ydebs* (18) ‘to request’ (lit. ‘to throw a request’). Finally, we do not observe any restrictions of the applicative or its pragmaticized extension to a particular class of verbs.³⁷ Table 8 provides an overview of all main verbs attested in our corpus, showing that intransitive, transitive and ditransitive verbs can receive the applicative marker. The use of this construction with verbs denoting non-controllable events (such as *yčhes*, *mñam*) seems to be possible in LitTib, but not in modern Central Tibetan, except for two specific pragmaticized uses: complaints and wishes or hopes.

The change from RC+GEN *grog*s *byed* to V-(g)*rog*s *byed* involved the loss of morphosyntactic properties of *grog*s as a noun; in the latter construction, *grog*s is not allowed to take pre- or post-posed modifiers anymore. This restriction has led to “decategorization” of the morpheme from a lexical unit to a grammatical marker. The decategorization of the construction *grog*s *byed* is also manifested by the fact that its argument frame is fused with that of the main lexical verb of the clause: they obligatorily share the same agent and the newly introduced beneficiary or co-agent is governed by the whole V-(g)*rog*s *byed* construction. The shift from RC+GEN *grog*s *byed* to V-(g)*rog*s *byed* might have been additionally facilitated by the existence of the compounds V+(g)*rog*s in a phrase with the light verb *byed* (see §5.3). The morphosyntactic structure of the applicative construction is similar to that of the compound: the lexical verb forms a complex unit with the applicative morpheme (g)*rog*s and syntactically, the light verb *byed* is the main

37. Such restrictions have been reported for some languages; see Peterson (2007: 61f.). In Japhug (Rgyalrongic, PRC), applicative derivation is only possible for intransitive verbs (Jacques 2013).

Table 8. Main verbs in applicative and commands

	OldLitTib	MidLitTib		Modern Central Tibetic			
	Applicative	Applicative	Command	Applicative	Command	Wishes	Complaints
INTR	<i>γches</i>	<i>mñam</i>	<i>γgro</i>	<i>lañs</i>	<i>bžugs</i>	<i>babs</i>	<i>drag</i>
					<i>thad</i>	<i>śar</i>	<i>ñal</i>
TR		<i>rcig</i>	<i>rcig</i>	<i>klog</i>	<i>žu</i>		<i>za</i>
		<i>γdebs</i>	<i>γchems</i>	<i>bris</i>	<i>btan</i>		
			<i>gtoñ</i>	<i>brten</i>	<i>gyar</i>		
				<i>bskos</i>			
DITR			<i>sprod</i>	<i>skur</i>			
			<i>ybul</i>				

verb of the construction. This is evidenced by the fact that adverbial modifiers (as in (49)) or focalized arguments (as in (50)) can occur between the string V-(g)rogs and the light verb.³⁸

- (49) Central Tibetic, Common Tibetan (Paris, Elicited, M+/-40, 2023)
 ཀན་ལགས་ཀྱིས་ང་ལ་ཡི་གེ་བྲིས་རྒྱུ་ལྷན་པུ་མེད་ཀྱི་འདུག
 kɛnla:=gi ŋa=la jike tʰi-roʔ jaŋse jaŋse
 professor.HON=ERG 1SG=DAT DEM:ERG write-APL often often
 tɕʰɛ-gituʔ
 LV:NPFV-NPFV.SEN
 ‘The professor often writes letters for me.’

- (50) Central Tibetic, Common Tibetan (Paris, Elicited, M+/-40, 2023)
 ང་ལ་ཡི་གེ་བྲིས་རྒྱུ་ཀན་ལགས་ཀྱིས་བྲིས་བྱུང་།
 ŋa=la jike tʰi-roʔ kɛnla:=ki tɕʰɛ-tɕuŋ
 1SG=DAT DEM:ERG write-APL professor.HON=ERG LV:PFV-PFV.EGO.REC
 ‘It was the professor who wrote letters for me.’

Phonetic erosion can be observed in the evolution from OldLitTib ‘grogs [grogs] + LV’ to [roʔ] + LV’ in Central and Common Tibetan. Since our LitTib corpus without exception attests to the form grogs in the applicative V-grogs byed the erosion must have taken place after the 15th century.

Finally, frequent use of the applicative in imperative mood already in MidLit-Tib (see Table 7) strengthened its pragmaticization towards the attitude holder

38. But contrary to the lexical light verb construction ‘to help’ described in §5.2, it seems impossible to modify the construction V-(g)rogs with an adjective.

marker. This shift has occurred by the 15th century. For this use, phonetic erosion went even further: in modern Tibetic languages, we observe that the light verb of the construction, *byed*, tends to get lost. The construction is thus reduced to a single morpheme [roʔ] that commutes with other imperative markers.

Despite its early grammaticalization in OldLitTib and pragmaticization in MidTib, *grog* *byed* as a plain verb phrase was long retained in the languages co-existing with forms more advanced on the grammaticalization and pragmaticization paths. This is in keeping with Hopper's (1991: 22ff, 24f) principles of "layering" and "divergence": older layers are not discarded from the language but rather remain to coexist with the new ones, whereas at the same time the original form may preserve its status as an independent lexeme. The timeline in Figure 3 illustrates the introduction and demise of various constructions as they can be retraced in our corpus.³⁹ The long co-existence of various constructions was facilitated and actually strengthened by the fact that the morpheme string (*g*)*rog* *byed* was present in the languages in other contexts as well, for instance, in noun incorporation, light verb constructions, or in the verb phrase *V+(g)rog* *byed*. This is in accord with the more general observation made by Heine and Reh (1984: 57) that "when a given linguistic unit undergoes a certain process then it does not do so in all its uses; it tends rather to be retained in its former status as well, so that there are two coexisting forms of that unit: One that still represents the old status and another that marks the new status resulting from grammaticalization." We believe that the presence of several distinct constructions involving the string (*g*)*rog* *byed* significantly contributed to the preservation of the source form side-by-side with the target applicative construction in the languages. Noun incorporation, light verb constructions and nominal compounds of the structure *V+grog* belonged to the same pool of forms oscillating around near-synonymous senses of accompaniment or assistance. The grammaticalization and the successive pragmaticization of *grog* *byed* have neither suppressed nor ousted the source constructions.

39. The question mark indicates that pragmaticization towards complaints has thus far been observed only in modern spoken languages, and so not even an approximate date for the inception of the process can be proposed yet.

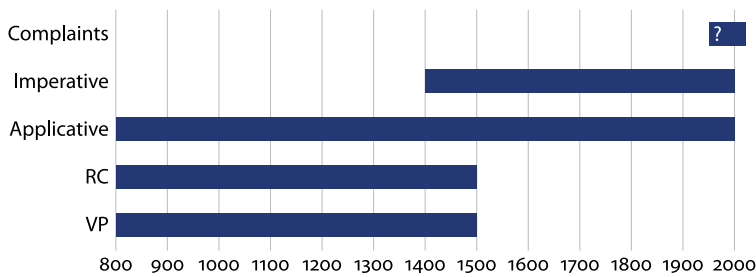


Figure 3. Timeline of *grogs byed* constructions

7. Conclusions

Over 1,300 years of documented history of Tibetic languages provide a unique corpus for studying diachronic changes across languages deriving from Old Tibetan. Based on a corpus of Old Literary, Middle Literary and spoken Common Tibetan, we have attempted to sketch the historical evolution of the verb phrase *grogs byed*, originally ‘to act as a companion’, through stages of grammaticalization and pragmaticization accompanied by its simultaneous lexicalization in noun incorporation, light verb constructions and nominal compounds. We have argued that at the first stage attested already in Old Literary Tibetan, the phrase grammaticalized to sociative applicative ‘to do sth. with’ that, possibly under the influence from the lexicalized noun incorporation ‘to help’, underwent semantic change to benefactive applicative ‘to do sth. for sb.’ The first traces of pragmaticization towards polite imperative have been documented already in Middle Literary Tibetan whereas in modern spoken varieties the semantic scope of the construction has extended to three use patterns: polite commands, wishes and complaints. Following pragmaticization, (*g*)*rogs byed* grammaticalized once again, but this time to an imperative marker.

Throughout the documented history of Tibetic languages, the morpheme string (*g*)*rogs byed* has remained extremely productive for introducing new morphosyntactic forms and meanings into the languages but simultaneously retaining the old ones. The layering and lexical persistence enabled pragmatic strengthening between various constructions that has led to exceptional complexity, creating an unparalleled playground for studying language dynamics at the intersection of syntax and pragmatics, in a diachronic perspective.

Our diachronic analysis has likewise demonstrated the marginal frequency of the constructions at all the examined stages of the languages, which observation is in agreement with former studies on applicative constructions cross-linguistically. However, against the previously expressed doubts on the potential lexical sources

of the applicative, our investigation has demonstrated that nouns can grammaticalize to applicative markers without the intermediary stage of adposition or noun incorporation. Since no similar patterns of development have been reported from other languages, the Tibetic data presented here enhance our understanding of voice derivation devices and their historical sources.

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Statement of authors' contributions


The alphabetically listed authors have contributed equally to this paper. The first draft of the paper was presented at an invited lecture at Université de Picardie Jules Verne on 27 February 2023.











Abbreviations






=	clitic boundaries	2PL	second person plural
-	affix boundaries	2SG	second person singular
+	morpheme boundaries	3SG	third person singular
:	segmentations in the metalanguage	ABS	absolutive
.	multiple metalanguage elements	ADD	additive
()	non-overt categories	ALL	allative
/	punctuation mark <i>shad</i>	APL	applicative
{}	text emendation	AUX	auxiliary
[]	¹ text reconstruction; ² phonetic representation	AVR	adversative
√	reconstructed verb root	CMPR	comparative
1SG	first person singular	COM	comitative
		COMP	complementizer
		COND	conditional

CONJ	conjunction	ITJ	IOL Tib J
CONR	connector	LitTib	Literary Tibetan
COP	copula	LOC	locative
CTib	Classical Tibetan	LV	light verb
DAT	dative	M	masculine; male
DEL	delative	MidLitTib	Middle Literary Tibetan
DEM	demonstrative	MidTib	Middle Tibetan
DEO	deontic	NEG	negation
DI	ditransitive	NMZ	nominalizer
DPASS	dynamic passive	NP	noun phrase
DU	dual	NPFV	imperfective
DUR	durative	OldLitTib	Old Literary Tibetan
EGO	egophoric	OldTib	Old Tibetan
EL	elative	PFV	perfective
EMPH	emphatic	PHAT	phatic marker
EPIST	epistemic	PL	plural
ERG	ergative	POSS	possessive
EXCLAM	exclamation	PRS	present
EXIST	existential	PST	past
F	female	PT	Pelliot tibétain
FACT	factual	QUOT	quotative
FNL	sentence-final marker	RC	relative clause
FOC	focus	RDP	reduplication
FUT	future	REC	receptive
GEN	genitive	SEN	sensory
GER	gerund	SG	singular
HML	humble	SPASS	stative passive
HON	honorific	TERM	terminative
HORT	hortative	TH	Trans-Himalayan
IMP	imperative	TR	transitive
INDF	indefinite	trslr.	transliteration
INESS	inessive	v1, v2, v3,	verb stems
INTR	intransitive	v4	

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Résumé

Cet article décrit les processus de grammaticalisation et de pragmatization d'une construction applicative dans les langues tibétiques. S'appuyant sur des données linguistiques s'échelonnant du 8^e siècle à la période contemporaine, nous montrons comment des changements linguistiques successifs ont permis de passer d'un syntagme verbal signifiant, à l'origine, 'agir en tant que compagnon (de qqn)' à une marque impérative, en passant par une construction applicative. Malgré la rareté des données, nous documentons les différentes étapes de l'évolution de cette construction: la lexicalisation du syntagme verbal, sa grammaticalisation comme construction applicative de type sociative-bénéfactive, la pragmatization de certains types d'usage de cette construction applicative comme marques de plainte, de souhait ou d'ordre, et finalement, une seconde grammaticalisation comme marque d'impératif. Au fur et à mesure de leur développement, les formes linguistiques résultant de la plupart de ces étapes ont été conservées dans les langues tibétiques actuelles, et coexistent avec des lexèmes construits avec les mêmes éléments morphologiques. Notre analyse contribue aux discussions typologiques récentes en montrant que les marques applicatives peuvent être grammaticalisées directement à partir de noms, sans passer par une étape intermédiaire d'incorporation nominale ou d'adposition. Nous montrons également que l'éventail des fonctions assumées par cette construction en synchronie ne peut être comprise sans prendre en compte son évolution en diachronie.

Zusammenfassung

Dieser Beitrag untersucht die Grammatikalisierung und die anschließende Pragmatisierung einer Applikativkonstruktion im Tibetischen. Auf der Grundlage von linguistischen Daten aus dem 8. Jahrhundert bis in die heutige Zeit zeigen wir, wie durch kontinuierlichen Sprachwandel eine Verbphrase mit der ursprünglichen Bedeutung 'als Begleiter (von jemandem) fungieren' über eine Applikativkonstruktion mit einem Imperativ in Verbindung gebracht werden kann. Trotz der Knappheit an Daten können wir die verschiedenen Entwicklungsphasen dieser Sonderkonstruktion dokumentieren: die Lexikalisierung einer Verbphrase, ihre Grammatikalisierung zu einem soziativ-benefaktivem Applikativmarker, die Pragmatisierung bestimmter Verwendungsmuster dieser Applikativkonstruktion zu Marker von Beschwerden, Wünschen und Befehlen und schließlich eine sekundäre Grammatikalisierung zu einem Imperativmarker. Im Laufe ihrer Entwicklung wurden die meisten dieser Phasen in den modernen tibetischen Sprachen beibehalten und koexistieren mit lexikalisierten Einheiten, die auf dem gleichen morphologischen Material basieren. Unsere Analyse ergänzt die bisher gesammelten sprachübergreifenden Daten, indem sie zeigt, dass Applikativmarker direkt aus Substantiven grammatikalisiert werden können, ohne eine Zwischenstufe der Substantivinkorporation oder Adposition. Wir zeigen auch, dass die Bandbreite der Funktionen, die diese Konstruktion in der Synchronie annimmt, nur durch die Betrachtung ihrer diachronen Entwicklung verstanden werden kann.

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