

# **Evidentiality and epistemicity in the language of Dolpo**

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# Dolpo

དོལ་པོ།

- located in the Northern part of Nepal on the Tibetan plateau
- the population is estimated to be between 9000 and 15000 people
- the language is closely related to the language spoken in Western areas of the Tibet Autonomous Region in the Ngari prefecture (*stod skad*)
- it is spoken in six Village Development Committees (VDC) in the Dolpa district of Nepal

# \* VERB INFLECTION AND VERB PARTICLES

## I. VERBS WITHOUT A POSTFIX

A. VERBS WITHOUT A POSTFIX WITH THE  
INHERENT VOWEL A

B. VERBS WITHOUT A POSTFIX WITH THE  
VOWEL *I*, *U*, *E* OR *O*

## II. VERBS WITH A POSTFIX

# I. VERBS WITHOUT A POSTFIX

## A. VERBS WITHOUT A POSTFIX WITH THE INHERENT VOWEL A

- a) The past stem is formed by adding the suffix *sa*
- b) The present stem is formed by adding the suffix *na*
- c) The future stem is formed by adding the vowel *o* (*na ro*) and the suffix *ra*

English	Past	Present	Future
watch	bltas	bltan	bltor
ill	nas	nan	nor
say	smras	smran	smror
eat	bzas	zan	bzor
say	zig	zin	zer

\* **VERBS WITHOUT A POSTFIX WITH THE INHERENT VOWEL A**

1. khu+s lab ci smras + song

he+ERG speech what say (PAS) + PFV+SENS

What did he say?

2. khong+skyas bod.skad smran + 'dug + gas

s/he+PL Tibetan speak (PRS) + PRS+SENS + QP

Do they speak Tibetan?/Are they speaking Tibetan?

3. kho ci smror + gyi.'dig

he what say (FUT) + FUT+FACT

What will he say?

\* VERBS WITHOUT A POSTFIX WITH  
THE VOWEL I, U, E OR O

English	Past	Present	Future
steal	brkus	rkun	brkur
hear	go	gun	gur
buy	nyos	nyun	nyur
write	bris	'brin	'brir
tell (h)	zhus	zhun	zhur
make	bzos	bzun	bzur
mix	bsres	bsren	bsrer

\* **VERBS WITHOUT A POSTFIX WITH THE VOWEL  
I, U, E OR O**

4. khyu+s nyod.pa ci **bzos** + po  
you+ERG food what make (PAS) + (PFV+EGO+QP)

What food did you make?

5. a.ma las **bzun** + 'od. 'dig  
mother work make (PRS) + PRS+FACT

Mother works.

6. nga nyod.pa **bzor** + gyi.yin  
I food make (FUT) + FUT EGO

I will make food.

# VERBS WITH A POSTFIX

English	Past	Present	Future
do	byas	gyin	bgyid
come	slebs	'un	'ongs
sit, live	bsdad	sdod	sdud
speak	bshad	shod	shor

## VERBS WITH A POSTFIX

7. khyu+s lab 'di kho + le ma + bshad + das

you+ERG speech this he + OBL NEG + say (PAS) + (PFV+EGO+QP)

Didn't you say it to him?

8. khyod lab ci shod + kyin.'od + do

you speech what say (PRS) + PRS+EGO + QP

What do you say?/What are you saying?

9. nga lab 'di kho + le shor + gyi.yin

I speech this he + OBL say (FUT) + FUT+EGO

I will say it to him.

## ORIGIN OF THE PRESENT VERB STEM

10. khong+skyas bod.skad smran + 'dug + gas  
s/he + PL Tibetan speak(PRS) + PRS+EGO + QP  
Do they speak Tibetan?

Originally: smra + gin + 'dug > smran + 'dug

11. nga chos nyun + 'od  
I books buy(PRS) + PRS+EGO  
I buy books.

Originally: nyu + gyin + 'od > nyun + 'od

## \* NEGATION AND NEGATIVE PARTICLES

12. nga slob.grwa + le mi + 'grun + 'od  
I school + OBL NEG + go (PRS) + PRS EGO  
I do not go to school.

13. kho slob.grwa + le mi + 'gro + 'od.'dig  
he school + OBL NEG + go (PRS) + PRS FACT  
He doesn't go to school.

## \* INTERROGATIVE PARTICLES

\*Interrogative particles in yes-no questions: *das, pas, gas, sas, ngas*

14. kho slebs + sas

he arrive + PFV & QP

Did he arrive?

\*Interrogative particles in wh-questions:

*do, go, po, 0*

15. khyu+s chos ci nyos + po

you+ERG book what buy (PAS) + (PFV+EGO+QP)

What book did you buy?



**\*EVIDENTIAL  
MARKING**

## \*Sensory markers in Dolpo

Tense	Affirmative	Yes-no questions	Wh questions
Perfective past	- song	- sas	- song
Present	V -n+ 'dug	V -n+'dug+ gas	V -n+ 'dug + go
	V - gin.'dug	V - 'gyig + gas	V - 'gyig + go
Future	-	-	-

## \*Sensory markers in Dolpo

16. kho+s    las    byas    + song  
    he+ERG work do (PAS) + PFV SENS

He worked.

17. kho ci    smror    + gyi.'dig  
    he what say (FUT) + FUT+FACT

What will he say?

## \*Egophoric markers in Dolpo

Tense	Affirmative	Yes-no questions	Wh questions
Perfective past	- di.yin = tin	- das	- to
	- yi	- pas	- po
Present	V -n.'od	V - n.'od + das	V - n.'od + do
	V - gin.'od	V - gin.'od + das	V - gin.'od + do
Future	V - gi.yin	V - gi.yin + das = gin + das	V - gi.yin + do = gin + do

+ the receptive egophoric *byung*

## \*Egophoric markers in Dolpo

18. nga khyim + le phin + tin

I home+OBL go(PAS) + PFV EGO

I went home.

19. khu+s nga+le ma + smras + byung

he+ERG I+OBL NEG + say (PAS)+ PFV REC

He didn't tell me.

## \* Factual markers in Dolpo

Tense	Affirmative	Yes-no questions	Wh questions
Perfective past	- di.'dig	- di + gas	- di + go
	- pa'i.'dig	- pa.'i + gas	- pa.'i + go
Present	V - n.'od.'dig	V -n.'o.'dig + gas	V -n.'o.'dig + go
	V - gin.'od.'dig	V - gin.'od.'dig + gas	V - gin.'od.'dig + go
Future	V - gi.yin.'dig	V - gi.yin.'dig + gas	V - gi.yin.'dig
	= gi.'dig		= gi.yi + go

\* Factual markers in Dolpo

20. kho slob.grwa + le phin + di.'dig  
he school+OBL go (PAS) + PFV FACT  
He went to school.

21. khong + skya snga.dro las bgyid + kyi.yin.'dig  
s/he+PL tomorrow work do (FUT) + FUT FACT  
They will work tomorrow.

## \*Inferential marker

22. kho phin + 'dug  
he go (PAS) + PERF+INFER

Why! He has gone.

23. kho nyi.ma yin.drag  
he Nyima be (INFER)

Oh, he is Nyima.

\* **The indirect type: Hearsay**

The quotative particle *zig*

24. kho khyim + le 'od.'dig + zig

he home + OBL exist (FACT) + HEARSAY

They say that he is at home.

**\*SYSTEM OF  
EPISTEMIC VERB  
ENDINGS**

Dolpo	Central Tibetan (Lhasa)	EPI + EVI meaning
<p>འོད་ཀྱི་འདིག་</p> <p>'od.kyi.'dig</p>	<p>ཡོད་ཀྱི་རེད་</p>	<p><b>factual</b></p>
<p>འོད་པི་བཀོད་པ་ར་འདུག་</p> <p>'od.pi.bkod.pa.ra.'dug</p> <p>འོད་དི་བཀོད་པ་ར་འདུག་</p> <p>'od.di.bkod.pa.ra.'dug</p>	<p>ཡོད་པ་འདྲ་</p>	<p><b>sensory inference</b></p> <p><i>ra</i> (derived from <i>dra</i> “similar”)</p>
<p>འོད་འགྲོ་</p> <p>'od.'gro</p>	<p>ཡོད་འགྲོ་</p>	<p><b>factual</b></p> <p>lower degree of probability</p>
<p>འོད་ཤག་</p> <p>'od.shag</p>	<p>ཡོད་ས་རེད་</p>	<p><b>sensory inference</b></p> <p>higher probability than 'od.kyi.'dig' (based on some evidence)</p>
<p>ཅང་འོད་དི་ན་</p> <p>cang.'od.di.na</p>	<p>ཅམ་ཡོད་</p>	<p><b>egophoric ?</b></p> <p>negative (high degree of the speaker's certainty of non actuality of the action in q.)</p>
<p>འོད་གྲས་</p> <p>'od.'gras</p>	<p>ཡོད་ན་</p>	<p><b>50% of probability</b></p>

## \* EXPRESSION OF TENSE-ASPECTS IN EPISTEMIC SENTENCES

25. khu+s nyod.pa de bzas + 'od.pi.bkod.pa.ra.'dug  
he+ERG food that eat (PAS) + PFV (EPI+SENS)

It seems he ate the food.

26. kho nyod.pa 'di zan + 'od.pi.bkod.pa.ra.'dug  
he food that eat (PRS) + PRS (EPI+SENS)

It seems he eats/will eat the food.

### NOT

27. \* kho nyod.pa 'di zor + 'od.pi.bkod.pa.ra.'dug  
he food this eat (FUT) + FUT (EPI+SENS)

Intended: It seems he will eat the food.

## \* NEGATION IN EPISTEMIC SENTENCES

28. khu+s nyod.pa de ma + bzas + 'od.pi.bkod.pa.ra.'dug  
he+ERG food that NEG + eat(PAS) + PFV (EPI+SENS)

It seems he didn't eat the food.

**NOT**

29. \* khu+s nyod.pa de bzas + med.pi.bkod.pa.ra.'dug  
he+ERG food that eat (PAS) + PFV (NEG+EPI+SENS)

Intended: It seems he didn't eat the food.

## \* CONCLUSION

- \*Verb inflection (past - present - future stems) - certain verbs have preserved all three forms
- \*Factual forms yin.'dig and 'od. 'dig (red and yod.red - not employed)
- \*Predominant preverbal negation
- \*Epistemic verb endings do not convey the tense-aspect. It is expressed by the stem of the preceding verb.

འོ་མ་ཚེ།

**Thank you**