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# Wutun

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2008  
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Published by LINCOM GmbH 2008.

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Photographs:  
Temple structures at Wutun (front cover, photograph by Erika Sandman, summer 2007).  
Young speakers of Wutun (back cover, photograph by Erika Sandman, summer 2007).

Die Deutsche Bibliothek - CIP Cataloguing-in-Publication-Data

A catalogue record for this publication is available from Die Deutsche Bibliothek (<http://www.ddb.de>)

Printed in E.C.  
Printed on chlorine-free paper

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## PREFACE

This is the first ever systematic grammatical description of the Wutun language, spoken by a small and compact population in a restricted locality in Qinghai Province, China, also known as the Amdo region of ethnic Tibet. Wutun is not completely new to general linguistics, for fragmentary information on it has been available since the early 1980s. On the basis of this information, Wutun has occasionally been quoted as an example of a 'mixed' language, perhaps even an actual 'creole'. We know today that it is best classified as an independent and highly aberrant variety of Northwest Mandarin. Its basic vocabulary and the material resources of its grammar are mainly of a Chinese origin, but structurally it has almost completely adapted to its current linguistic environment, in which various local varieties of Amdo Tibetan are the dominant oral idioms.

While the Wutun language is conspicuously 'mixed', the culture of its speakers is virtually identical with that of the surrounding Tibetans. For the Wutun speakers, cultural identity appears to be more important, and there is no doubt that most of them prefer to regard themselves as Tibetans, rather than as Chinese. In the official ethnic taxonomy of China they are, however, neither Tibetans nor Chinese, for they are classified as members of the diffuse category of the *Tu* (土) 'nationality', or 'local people'. What makes their ethnic environment even more interesting is that there is another group of 'local people' in the neighbourhood, speaking the Mongolic Bonan language. Wutun and Bonan may be regarded as 'step sisters', since both of them are originally non-Tibetan idioms that have undergone a process of secondary structural Tibetanization.

An important aspect of Wutun is that it still remains a living language. In spite of the small number of its speakers, it is supported by the whole local community of all generations. For the time being, its position as the oral language of its speakers does not seem to be threatened by the fact that it is accompanied in daily life by Tibetan (both Amdo and Written) as the language of education and higher culture, as well as by Chinese (Standard Mandarin) as the language of intercultural communication on a wider scale. Even so, it goes without saying that Wutun is a potentially endangered language, in the sense that its status is extremely vulnerable to any demographic or economic changes that might take place in its immediate environment. For the



Wutun speakers only the *status quo* would seem to offer relatively good prospects of continued survival.

The present work has been completed in the context of the project on “Patterns of Ethnic Adaptation and Interaction in Amdo Qinghai”, supported by the Academy of Finland and the Finnish Society of Sciences and Letters (*Societas Scientiarum Fennica*). Of the authors, Xiawu Dongzhou (currently at the Xining Office of Trace Foundation) is a native speaker of Wutun with an educational background in physics and computer science. He visited Finland as a project member in the spring of 2006. The other authors (all at the University of Helsinki), with a background in linguistics, have made recurrent field visits to Wutun since 1996. For practical help in the region they would like to express their most sincere gratitude to Dr. Kevin Stuart (Qinghai Normal University, Xining).

This book is the result of integrated cooperation between the four authors. The factual background and the linguistic database were supplied by Xiawu Dongzhou. Phonology (§§13-27) was analyzed mainly by Juha Janhunen, nominal morphology (§§29-38) by Erika Sandman, and verbal morphology (§§39-47) by Marja Peltomaa. The basic word list was prepared by Juha Janhunen in cooperation with Xiawu Dongzhou. The sample text was recorded and adapted by Xiawu Dongzhou and analyzed by Erika Sandman and Marja Peltomaa. The final editing and formatting of the volume was started by Juha Janhunen during his stay as a visiting fellow at the Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa (Tokyo University of Foreign Studies) during the spring of 2007 and completed at the Institute for Asian and African Studies (University of Helsinki) during the autumn of the same year.

December 2007  
Xining – Tokyo – Helsinki

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## SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

C	consonant	OBJ	objective
F	final	OBL	oblique
H	preinitial	ORD	ordinal
M	medial	PART	particle
V	vowel	PAUC	paucal
		PL	plural
1P	first person	PRF	perfective
2P	second person	PROGR	progressive
3P	third person	PROH	prohibitive
		PRON	pronoun
ABL	ablative	PROX	proximal
ADV	adverbial	QUOT	quotative
ASS	associative	REFL	reflexive
BEN	benefactive	RES	resultative
CAUS	causative	SER	serial
CL	classifier	SG	singular
COMP	comparative	SOC	sociative
COMPL	completive	SUBJ	subjective
COND	conditional	SUPER	superessive
CONSEQ	consequential	TERM	terminative
CONT	continuative	VOL	voluntative
DIST	distal		
DISTR	distributive	#	word boundary
DUR	durative	-	morpheme boundary
EQU	equative	/	optional element
EXEC	executive	*	reconstructed form
EXIST	existential	~	alternative form
FACT	factual	<	internally from
FOC	focus	>	internally to
GEN	genitive	←	externally from
INTERR	interrogative	→	externally to
LOC	locative	:	morphological relationship
NCOMPL	non-completive		
NEC	necessitative		
NEG	negative		
NMLZ	nominalizer		
NOM	nominative		

## INTRODUCTION

**§1. Definition.** *Wutun* is the technical term denoting the community language spoken by the native population of Wutun (五屯), a rural locality in Tongren County (*Tongren Xian* 同仁縣), Huangnan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (*Huangnan Zangzu Zizhi Zhou* 黃南藏族自治州), Qinghai Province (*Qinghai Sheng* 青海省), P. R. China. The locality of Wutun comprises two interjoining administrative villages, known as Upper Wutun (*Wutun Shangzhuang* 五屯上莊) and Lower Wutun (*Wutun Xiazhuang* 五屯下莊). A third village, known in Chinese by the name Jiancangma (加倉瑪), is located at some distance from the others. Altogether, the total settled area of the three villages is very small, covering hardly more than one square kilometer (excluding the outlying agricultural areas).

As a language, Wutun is a coherent entity, spoken only in its native location, and nowhere else. In terms of genetic taxonomy Wutun may be defined as a variety of Chinese, and it is therefore often referred to as the Wutun 'vernacular' (*Wutun Hua* 五屯話). More exactly, Wutun is a distinct local form of the Northwest Mandarin branch of the Sinitic group of languages (Sino-Tibetan family). Wutun is not a 'dialect' of Chinese, however, for it is unintelligible to the speakers of all other varieties of Chinese, including other forms of Northwest Mandarin. By both lexical and grammatical criteria, Wutun is best recognized as a separate Sinitic language.

The Sinitic status of the Wutun language is evident from its basic vocabulary and grammatical resources, which have unambiguous material cognates elsewhere in Mandarin Chinese. Much of the cultural vocabulary as well as most of the structural properties of Wutun are, however, atypical of Chinese, and can be explained as being due to the influence of the neighbouring non-Sinitic languages. Some of the specific features of Wutun are shared by other forms of Northwest Mandarin, but in many respects Wutun is unique. Clearly, Wutun has undergone a period of exceptionally rapid change under conditions of intensive contact with non-Sinitic languages, and in relative isolation from other forms of Chinese.

Although Wutun has up to the present day been an essentially undocumented language, it has not completely evaded the attention of general linguists. In this context, the specific combination of Sinitic material resources with non-Sinitic structural properties in Wutun has



been quoted as a potential example of 'creolization'. While there is no doubt that Wutun is a strongly 'creolized' variety of Chinese, it is important to stress that this does not indicate any disruption in the genetic lineage of the language. Like all 'creoles', Wutun remains a descendant of its genetic lineage, which forms the base of its material resources. In this respect, Wutun does not differ from its neighbours, which also represent local, though sometimes highly aberrant, developments of their respective genetic lineages.

**§2. Geographical setting.** The three Wutun-speaking villages are located on the right bank of the south-to-north flowing river Longwu (*Longwu He* 龍务河), ca. 30 kms. south of its confluence with the Yellow River (*Huanghe* 黄河) and ca. 120 kms. away from Xining (*Xining Shi* 西寧市), the provincial capital. In many places along its course, the Longwu runs in a deep canyon flanked on both sides by steep cliffs, but in the section in which Wutun is located the valley broadens to form a plain with a width of up to a few kilometres. The landscape is arid and with little higher vegetation, but both banks of the river are occupied by irrigated fields, which extend as man-made terraced constructions higher up the mountain sides. The general elevation varies between 2,500 meters (the river basin) and 3,000 meters (the mountain tops) above sea level.

Along the Longwu basin there runs a highway, which traverses Tongren County on its way from Jianzha County (*Jianzha Xian* 尖扎縣) in the north to Zeku County (*Zeku Xian* 澤庫縣) in the south. The county centre of Tongren, administratively known as Longwu Town (*Longwu Zhen* 龍务鎮), is located just about 5 kms. south of Wutun and offers a variety of urban services. It is also the location of the Longwu monastery (*Longwu Si* 龍务寺), a famous centre of Tibetan Buddhism and learning, with a history dating back to the 14th century. At a similar distance from Wutun to the north on the highway there is the smaller semiurban settlement of Baoan (保安). The rest of the population in the area lives in rural villages.

In a larger framework, Tongren County belongs to the context of the historical Amdo Province (Tibetan **xA.mdo**) of ethnic Tibet. The heartland of Amdo (Fig. 1) is formed by the areas around Qinghai Lake (*Qinghai Hu* 青海湖) and the Upper Yellow River basin, comprising also parts of the provinces of Gansu (*Gansu Sheng* 甘肅省) and Sichuan (*Sichuan Sheng* 四川省). On both sides of the confluence of the Longwu with the Yellow River there are important

lowlands, Guide (貴德) in the west, and Sanchuan (三川) in the east. Since ancient times these have attracted settled agriculturalists, while the surrounding highlands are traditionally inhabited by pastoral nomads and seminomads. In this ecological dichotomy, the Wutun speakers represent the settled agriculturalists.

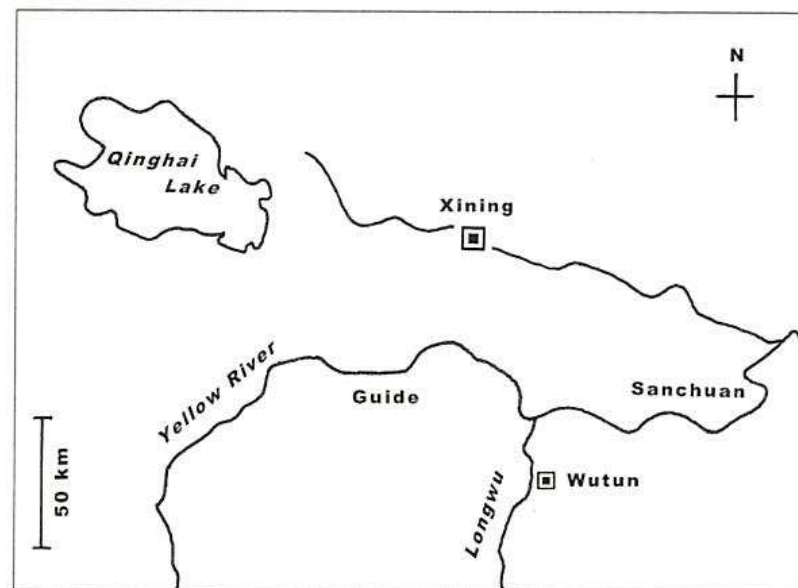


Fig. 1. Wutun in the context of Amdo.

**§3. Ethnic taxonomy.** The Amdo region, in general, and the immediate surroundings of the Wutun speakers, in particular, offer a considerable amount of ethnic diversity. This diversity covers all aspects of ethnic differences, including language, material culture, religion, and even physical type. Officially, the ethnic differences are supposed to be reflected by the division of the local populations into 'nationalities', but in practice the official 'nationalities' do not always correspond to the actual ethnic variation.

The three numerically largest 'nationalities' of the Amdo region today are the ethnic Chinese (*Hanzu* 漢族), the Chinese-speaking Moslems (*Huizu* 回族), and the Tibetans (*Zangzu* 藏族). In this framework, the Tibetans are distinguished both by an ethnospecific linguistic lineage (Bodic) and distinct forms of religious traditions



(Tibetan Buddhism). By contrast, the distinction between the ethnic Chinese and the Chinese-speaking Moslems is based only on religion (Islam), while the distinction between the Chinese-speaking Moslems and other Moslem groups is based on language. There are as many as three non-Chinese-speaking Moslem 'nationalities' in Amdo: the Turkic-speaking Salar (*Salazu* 撒拉族), the Mongolic-speaking Bonan (*Baoanzu* 保安族), and the likewise Mongolic-speaking Santa or Dongxiang (*Dongxiangzu* 東鄉族).

In terms of culture and religion, the Wutun speakers are more or less indistinguishable from the local Tibetans. For this reason, and in spite of their Chinese-based language, most Wutun speakers prefer to think of themselves as 'Tibetans'. In the official taxonomy, however, the Wutun speakers are classified neither as 'Tibetans' (by cultural identity) nor as 'Chinese' (by linguistic lineage), but as members of the Tu 'nationality' (*Tuzu* 土族). The category of Tu forms a generic class, which comprises all those populations that are not classified as 'Chinese', 'Moslems', or 'Tibetans'. Although the term has a historical basis, its use for the Wutun speakers may be regarded as synchronically arbitrary and inexact.

Among the populations classified as Tu, the Wutun speakers are the only group with a Sinitic language, while most other groups speak a Mongolic language. In the immediate neighbourhood of the Wutun speakers, there is another section of the Tu 'nationality', speaking the Mongolic Bonan language. Unlike the official Bonan 'nationality', these Bonan speakers are not Moslems, but Tibetan Buddhists. In spite of the linguistic difference, the Wutun speakers and the Tibetan Buddhist Bonan speakers of Tongren County are classified as members of the same Tu 'nationality'.

**§4. Ethnic environment.** Both historically and in modern times, the members of the Tu 'nationality' are culturally subordinate to other, more dominant populations. The traditionally dominant ethnic group in the Tongren area, including the immediate vicinity of the Wutun villages, is formed by the Tibetans, whose oral idioms belong to the context of the Amdo Tibetan language. The Amdo Tibetan speakers comprise both settled agriculturalists, living in villages in the Longwu basin and other local valleys, and highland nomads and seminomads, who occupy the surrounding mountains.

Both the Wutun-speaking and the Bonan-speaking sections of the Tu 'nationality' in the Tongren area represent today the *Gelukpa*

(*dGe.lugs.pa*) School, or 'Yellow Sect', of Tibetan Buddhism, to which also the Longwu Monastery adheres. Among the Tibetans in the region, the *Nyingmapa* (*rNying.ma.pa*) School, or 'Red Sect', is also current. Additionally, several villages follow other traditions, some of which are of an ancient local origin, while others represent local varieties of the Bon (*Bon.po*) School. In practice, all the extant directions of Tibetan Buddhism and related traditions coexist in harmony, but occasional conflicts have arisen in the past between them and the Moslem groups of the region.

The type locality of the Bonan-speaking Tu population in the Tongren area is located at Baoan, in a separate settlement known as Lower Baoan (*Baoan Xiazhuang* 保安下莊). Other Bonan-speaking settlements are located on the opposite (left) bank of the river Longwu. The Bonan-speaking Moslems, officially classified as a separate 'nationality', also used to live at Baoan, but moved in the mid 19th century to the Gansu side of the border. The main settlement of Baoan is today overwhelmingly inhabited by Chinese-speaking Moslems as well as Salar. Moslem communities and families are also present in many other settlements of the region.

People officially classified as ethnic Chinese are originally alien to the Tongren area. Stimulated by political developments, such as the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) and, more recently, the Western Regions Development Campaign (since 2000), considerable numbers of ethnic Chinese have, however, settled in the urban centres of Huangnan Prefecture, including Longwu Town. Many of the recent immigrants speak Standard Mandarin, while the more long-time Chinese inhabitants use varieties of Northwest Mandarin, also spoken by the Chinese Moslems. In spite of the changes that the increasing Chinese immigration is causing in the region, the immediate ethnic Chinese presence at Wutun remains minimal.

**§5. History.** The Upper Yellow River basin has in the course of history belonged to the context of a variety of political states and dynasties that have originated in the south (Tibet), north (Mongolia), east (China), and west (Turkestan). The fluctuation of the political boundaries and spheres has played an essential role in the ethnic and linguistic evolution of the region. The basic mechanism has always been language replacement, due to which the old local populations have recurrently changed their language, or languages, to correspond to the changing political situation. Therefore, while at least part of the



genetic composition of these populations is likely to have very old local roots, the languages today spoken by them date back to relatively recent historical periods.

Of today's linguistic groups in the region, the Amdo Tibetans seem to be the 'oldest', for the 'arrival' of their language may be connected with the northern expansion of the Tibetan empire (7th to 9th cc.). The languages of the Mongolic-speaking groups, including the Bonan speakers, apparently date back to the period of the Mongol empire (13th to 14th cc.) and its representative in China, the Yuan (元) dynasty (1279-1368). Very probably, the Mongol rulers of China were also responsible for attracting Turkic and Sinitic speakers, both Moslems and non-Moslems, to the region. Although Chinese trading posts and garrisons existed on the Upper Yellow River already at the times of the ancient 'Silk Road', no linguistic trace seems to remain of the pre-Yuan Chinese communities.

In the Ming (明) period (1368-1644), the Upper Yellow River region formed a borderland of China against the non-Chinese territory of Tibet. This was the time when the local Mongol and Chinese elements were organized into hereditary borderguard units, based in fortified settlements in various parts of the region. This system was continued in the Qing (清) period (1644-1911), when the borderguard units became definitively known as 'local people' (*Turen* 土人), an identification which lies as the basis of the modern ethnonym *Tu*. In this process, the Tu 'nationality' came to comprise speakers of both Mongolic and Sinitic forms of speech.

In the Tongren area, the borderguard system comprised four villages, of which Wutun and Baoan were two, while the other two were Nianduhu (年都乎) and Guomari (郭麻日) on the other side of the river Longwu. A fifth village, Gasari (尕撒日), was secondarily formed downriver from Guomari (Fig. 2). For reasons not known in detail, the villages of Nianduhu, Guomari, Gasari, and Baoan came to be dominated by speakers of a Mongolic idiom, the ancestor of today's Bonan language, while Wutun emerged as Sinitic speaking and became the locality of the Wutun language. The Wutun-speaking village of Jiancangma is obviously a historical outgrowth of the two principal Wutun villages (Upper and Lower).

**§6. Toponymy.** Most toponyms of the Tongren area are of a Tibetan origin or have, at least, an established Tibetan spelling. This is the case with the names Nianduhu (*gNyan.thog*), Guomari (*sGo.dmar*),

Gasari (*rKa.gsar*), Jiancangma (*rGya.tshang.ma*), and Longwu (*Rong.bo*). Wutun also has a Tibetan name, supposed to mean 'Lion Valley' (*Seng.ge.gshong*), used collectively for both Upper Wutun (*Ya.mgo*) and Lower Wutun (*Ma.mgo*). It is, in fact, this name that, in the oral form *sanggaixong* is used by the Wutun speakers when they refer to their native locality. The origin of this name is obscure. According to a local tradition, it might be based on the name of a person called 'Lion' (*seng.ge* 'snow lion'), but it might also involve a more complicated case of folk etymology.

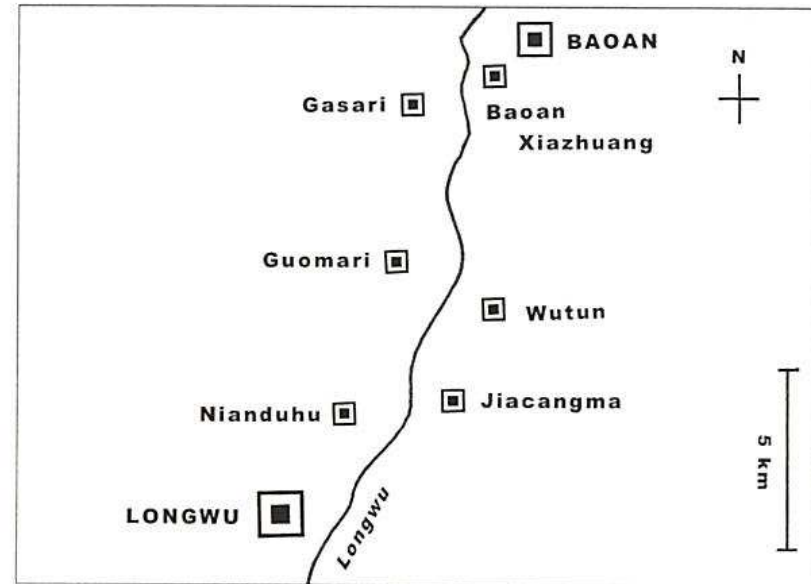


Fig. 2. The Tu villages of the Tongren area.

The Wutun speakers also have traditional language-specific names of their own for the other Tu villages in the Tongren area. They are: *jhijha* for Nianduhu, *tojha* for Baoan, *xhela* for Gomari, and *manyen* for Gasari. The names *jhijha* and *tojha* are based on the Chinese clan names *Jijia* (季家) and *Tuojia* (脱家), respectively (with *jia* 家 'house, clan'), while the name *xhela* contains a reference to the river Longwu (*xhe* 'river'), which separates Wutun from the Bonan-speaking Guomari village on the opposite bank. The name *manyen* may be of a Tibetan origin (*man* 'down', *yan* 'up')



The Chinese name *Wutun* (五屯) denotes literally 'five posts' (*wu* 五 'five', *tun* 屯 'post, station, village') and refers quite probably to the original military role of the Wutun settlement. Like many other toponyms in the region, *Wutun* has, however, several variant forms in Chinese, written with different characters and even with different Standard Mandarin phonetics. The most common variant form is *Wutong* (吾同), written with two phonetically used characters which mean literally 'ourselves' (*wu* 吾) and 'similar' (*tong* 同). The confusion of the syllables *tun* and *tong* is due to their actual phonemic merger all over Northwest Mandarin.

Of potential informative value is the form in which *Wutun* appears written with a character denoting the Chinese surname *Wu* (吴). This form (吴屯) is also attested in local historical documents, and it would seem to imply that the Wutun settlement was founded as a military colony led by a founding father bearing the surname *Wu*. This would be congruent with the village names *Jijia* and *Tuojia*, which are historically also attested as *Jitun* (季屯) and *Tuotun* (脱屯). On the other hand, Wutun is known to the Bonan speakers as (*w*)*uga*, which might imply a Chinese form \**Wujia* (吴家), rendering the three toponyms more or less parallel in structure. However, due to the overwhelming Tibetan cultural influence, which extends to the system of personal names, the historical surnames *Ji*, *Tuo*, and *Wu* are no longer used in the villages concerned.

It is difficult to determine which of the two written forms (五屯 or 吴屯) is historically more authentic, for both may have had a factual basis. A toponymic parallel is offered by a group of villages in the Guide area, collectively known as Santun (三屯) 'three posts', but individually identified according to their founding fathers as Liutun (刘屯), Wangtun (王屯), and Zhoutun (周屯). However, unlike the Tu villages of the Tongren area, the Santun villages of Guide are today Chinese (Northwest Mandarin) speaking, and their population is classified as ethnic Chinese (*Hanzu*).

**§7. Demography.** The three administrative villages (*xingzhengcun* 行政村) inhabited by Wutun speakers are divided into a total of eight 'natural villages' (*zirancun* 自然村), which function as the basic units of administration. Lower Wutun has four, Upper Wutun three, and Jiancangma one 'natural village'. This reflects the population figures of the three administrative villages, which are appr. 1,900 for Lower Wutun, 1,200 for Upper Wutun, and 800 for Jiancangma, making a

total of just about 4,000 inhabitants (2005). Population growth has been rapid after the Cultural Revolution, and in the last 25 years (since 1980) the population has more or less doubled. This, in turn, means that the population is overwhelmingly young, with more than half of the total being under the age of 25.

It is a general pattern in the Tongren area that the different ethnic and linguistic groups live in villages of their own. This has had a favourable effect on the preservation of the local languages, with each village having its own language or dialect. The Wutun villages are therefore also linguistically surprisingly vigorous, meaning that the population figure of ca. 4,000 corresponds closely to the number of actual Wutun speakers. Only Jiancangma is ethnically somewhat more heterogeneous, and it has recently also been losing the native language, while the two principal Wutun villages together form a limited but compact area where Wutun continues to be the community language for local inhabitants of all ages.

In the context of the Tu 'nationality', the Wutun speakers form only a small fraction. The total number of people registered as Tu in China is more than 241,000 (2000). Until only a couple of generations ago, most Tu people spoke local forms of Mongolic, conventionally known as 'Monguor', but today most of them have actually lost their original languages in favour of Chinese (Northwest Mandarin). In the Tongren area, the Tu people number over 10,000 individuals, of whom the Wutun speakers comprise less than one half, the others being speakers of the Bonan language.

**§8. Sociolinguistic status.** The linguistic division between the three Wutun villages and the Bonan-speaking Tu villages in the Tongren area is sharp, and almost no bilingualism between the two languages exists, although their speakers are classified as members of the same 'nationality'. Individuals are nevertheless occasionally exchanged between the two speech communities, as in cases of marriage. In such cases, the individuals concerned rapidly adapt to the linguistic conditions of their new village, and their individual bilingualism is rarely transmitted to the next generation.

The role of the local *lingua franca* is traditionally played by Amdo Tibetan, especially the Rekong dialect, as spoken in and around the county centre of Tongren (**Reb.gong** in Tibetan). In general, all Wutun speakers acquire some knowledge of Amdo Tibetan already in their early childhood, and this knowledge is gradually strengthened by



way of everyday contacts and formal studies. Adult individuals, with the exception of some older females, are fully fluent in oral Amdo Tibetan, while literate individuals also know Written Tibetan. Even so, Wutun remains the community language of its speakers.

The learning of Amdo Tibetan is made relatively easy for Wutun speakers by the fact that their language, like also the Bonan language, contains so many Tibetan lexical elements and grammatical features. At the same time, Wutun speakers can also relatively easily acquire various forms of Mandarin Chinese, especially Northwest Mandarin, which is the genetic context of the Wutun language and the source of its basic vocabulary. Northwest Mandarin is traditionally used by Wutun speakers especially in contacts with Chinese-speaking Moslem traders. Today, the knowledge of Standard Mandarin is also becoming increasingly common.

In the current system, most Wutun speakers get a primary school education in the local villages, while the middle school is completed in the Lower Wutun Middle School. All of these function in Tibetan, though Standard Chinese is studied as a subject, and Wutun is used as the language of oral instruction in the lower grades. It happens that cadres send their children to the Chinese middle school at Longwu, but due to the cultural prestige status of Tibetan, most Wutun speakers still seem to prefer education in Tibetan. For written communication, both Tibetan and Chinese are commonly used. No attempts have ever been made to write Wutun for any purposes.

Due to their diffuse taxonomic status, the Wutun speakers have no actual name for their ethnic group and language. When necessary, the Wutun language is referred to as *ngan-de-hua* 'our speech'. Other language names used by the Wutun speakers are *suan-hua* 'Tibetan' and *ha-hua* 'Chinese', while the Bonan speakers are only identified by their village names. Due to the dominant role of Tibetan culture in the area, most Wutun speakers seem to be hardly aware of the special historical and linguistic status of their language. For many of them, it seems to represent just another local variety of 'Tibetan'.

**§9. Material culture.** The material culture of the Wutun speakers follows the local patterns shared by other ethnic and linguistic groups in the Tongren area and elsewhere in Amdo. These patterns involve, among other things, the organization of the villages into densely built complexes of houses with square courtyards, separated by narrow lanes and the occasional irrigation channel. The walls of the houses

are built of mud and sunburnt bricks, with the bearing constructions being supported by wooden pillars. The roofs are flat, and are often used for storing firewood. Each courtyard has only one entrance, and the arrangement of the rooms around the courtyard follows a standard pattern, with certain spaces assigned also for domestic animals. Most houses are inhabited by two or three generations.

Both Upper Wutun and Lower Wutun have important temple complexes with a history dating back to the 16th century (allegedly 1534), if not earlier. Both complexes also contain monastery sections with permanently resident monks. Before the introduction of the current school system, the monasteries functioned as the basic places of learning, and even today they retain their status as centres of local religious activities. The working language of the temples is Tibetan, but almost all monks are local Wutun speakers.

Apart from agriculture, the most important economic activity of the Wutun speakers is the painting of Tibetan Buddhist images, or *thangkas* (*thang.ka*). Although this tradition, known as the 'Rekong School of Tibetan Art', comprises also other villages and monasteries of the area, Wutun is its foremost representative. The *thangkas* are traditionally painted by both monks and laymen, and they are marketed all over ethnic Tibet. Since most Wutun households have at least one *thangka* painter, the total number of this professional category in Wutun reaches a few hundred, and the economic revenue from the activity is considerable.

Historically, the temples, monasteries, and the *thangka* painting tradition represent the Tibetan cultural component in Wutun, while the Sinitic language and the original military function of the population represent the Chinese component. The coexistence and mixture of the two components is obvious in all aspects of Wutun life. It is for the time being difficult to tell which of the two components has more ancient local roots, for both the Tibetan Buddhist activities and the Chinese borderguard function in Wutun seem to date back several hundred years. Ultimately, the Wutun language may be seen as a product of the close interaction between the Chinese and Tibetan political, cultural, and linguistic spheres.

**§10. Areal context.** The structural properties of the Wutun language allow it to be classified as an integral member of a larger areal union of languages which may be termed the *Amdo Sprachbund*. The core area of the Amdo Sprachbund comprises Eastern Qinghai (*Haidong*



海東) and Southern Gansu (*Gannan* 甘南), where the position of dominant regional languages is held by various forms of Northeast Mandarin and Amdo Tibetan, with Mongolic and Turkic being spoken at a more local level. The total number of mutually unintelligible forms of speech in the region is between 10 and 15. Due to their areal proximity and history of contacts, all languages of the region have, however, been approaching a common typological goal, which may be termed the *Amdo Language Type*.

The Amdo Language Type incorporates properties of three distinct linguistic spheres, which may be termed Sinitic (Chinese), Bodic (Tibetan), and Altaic (Turko-Mongolic). These spheres may also be observed in the Wutun language, which, in a very simplified framework, might be characterized as a Tibetanized form of Chinese with Altaic features. It is the specific combination and historical layering of features from the three spheres that distinguishes the Wutun language from its neighbours.

In the context of the Amdo Sprachbund, Wutun is not the only typologically transformed form of Chinese. Two other aberrant and localized varieties of Northwest Mandarin are Gangou (甘溝), spoken at Gangou Township (*Gangou Xiang* 甘溝鄉) of Minhe Hui and Tu Autonomous County (*Minhe Huizu Tuzu Zizhixian* 民和回族土族自治縣), Qinghai, and Tangwang (唐汪), spoken at Tangwang Township (*Tangwang Xiang* 唐汪鄉) of Dongxiang Autonomous County (*Dongxiang Zizhixian* 東鄉自治縣), Gansu. As compared with Wutun, the latter two may, however, be characterized as less strongly 'Tibetanized' and more strongly 'Altaicized'.

Elsewhere in the Sino-Tibetan borderland, there are other cases of close interaction between Chinese and Tibetan. An example which in some respects resembles Wutun is offered by the Dao language, or Dao 'vernacular' (*Daohua* 倒話), spoken by a small local population in Yajiang County (*Yajiang Xian* 雅江縣) of Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (*Ganzi Zangzu Zizhizhou* 甘孜藏族自治州), Sichuan. There is, however, no direct genetic connection between the Wutun and Dao languages, and areally, also, Dao remains outside of the Amdo Sprachbund.

**§11. Internal variation.** Due to the small size and geographical coherence of the Wutun-speaking population, there seems to be no significant variation within the Wutun language. The situation may be compared with that of the neighbouring Bonan language, which, even

in the Tongren area, shows conspicuous differences between distinct village dialects. In principle, it cannot be ruled out that there exist minor differences of this type also in the Wutun language, especially between Jiancangma and the two principal Wutun villages. It seems, however, that any such differences are historically shallow and synchronically of little consequence.

There is certainly more variation between the different gender and age groups, though this variation is still unknown in the details. In view of the numerical predominance of the young generation among today's Wutun speakers, it may be presumed that the language has evolved rapidly during the past couple of decades. To some extent, this is also suggested by the extant published data, which extend just about one generation (25 years) back in time.

A source of internal variation is also contained in the different patterns of bilingualism, which characterize the different sections of the population. Although bilingualism in Amdo Tibetan is today the rule for all Wutun speakers, the level of knowledge of Amdo Tibetan varies, being lowest among elderly females and highest among young adult males, especially in certain professional categories (as among monks). Similar differences can be observed in the levels of fluency in Chinese (both Standard and Northwest Mandarin). The impact of both Amdo Tibetan and Chinese is most likely to affect the lexical and phonological properties of individual speech (idiolects), but there may also be larger groups involved (sociolects).

**§12. History of research.** Systematic data on the Wutun language were first collected only after the Cultural Revolution during a survey of the Mongolic languages of China. In this connection, the Chinese linguist Chen Naixiong, who basically worked on the Bonan language (Chen 1986a), prepared a preliminary sketch of Wutun, published in both Written Mongol and Chinese (Chen 1981, 1982). Subsequently, he worked out an expanded version of his description (Chen 1986b), a vocabulary (unpublished and possibly lost), and two specific studies of phonology and the verbal system (Chen 1988, 1989). Up to the present day, these remain the most professional and reliable sources of information on Wutun. Most importantly, Chen arrived at the correct conclusion that Wutun is genetically a Sinitic language which has been structurally and lexically influenced by Tibetan.

The only other published works containing independent primary data from Wutun are the relatively large but less professional general



description by Xi Yuanlin (1983), and the more theoretically oriented treatise by Yixiweisa Acuo (2004), which, though basically focussed on the Dao language, discusses also the Wutun case. In addition, the local encyclopedic handbook of Huangnan Prefecture contains a brief section on the Wutun language, as well as on the other languages spoken in the prefecture (Huangnan Zangzu Zizhizhou Zhi Bianzuan Weiyuanhui 1999: 1465-1502). An entirely secondary work, based mainly on the publications of Chen Naixiong, is that by Mei W. Lee-Smith & Stephen A. Wurm (1996).

There exists a somewhat more extensive literature on the other Sinitic languages and dialects of the Amdo region. A general survey of Chinese in Amdo (Qinghai) is offered by Keith R. S. Dede (2003), who has also produced more specialized papers on selected features of a specific variety of Northwest Mandarin (Dede 1999ab). Similar discussions, from the point of view of a different variety of Northwest Mandarin, have been published by Arienne M. Dwyer (1992, 1995). The only data published on the Gangou language are contained in Feng Lide & Kevin Stuart (1992), as well as in Zhu Yongzhong & Üjyediin Chuluu & Keith Slater & Kevin Stuart (1997). The Tangwang language is discussed on the basis of primary field material by A. Ibrahim (1985), complemented by the secondary comments of Mei W. Lee-Smith (1996).

Amdo Tibetan is also a relatively well-documented language. The Amdo Tibetan dialect of most immediate importance for Wutun is that of Rekong, as described by Georges de Roerich (1958). A more detailed phonological analysis is offered by Juha Janhunen & Kalsang Norbu (2000). Both the general context and selected specific features of the Amdo Sprachbund, with examples from various languages, are discussed by Stephen A. Wurm (1995), Keith W. Slater (2001, 2003), and Juha Janhunen (2006). Charles N. Li (1983, 1984, 1986) has also worked on the region and mentions Wutun. On the basis of Li's material, Wutun is also discussed by Sarah Thomason and Terence Kaufman (1988: 91-92) as an example of a strongly restructured, but technically not necessarily 'creolized' language.

Very little systematic research has been done on the history and culture of the Wutun speakers. The historical knowledge possibly preserved in the libraries of the local temples still remains to be collected, published, and analyzed. A brief introduction to the topic has been published in Tibetan by Xiawu Dongzhou (2004). The complex ethnic taxonomy of the Tu 'nationality', including the Wutun

speakers, is discussed in Juha Janhunen & Lionel Ha Mingzong & Joseph TshedPag dNam rGyal (2007). Literature on the other groups of the Tu 'nationality', and on the ethnic environment of the Amdo region is, of course, more abundant.

## PHONOLOGY

**§13. Phonological setting.** Due to the status of Wutun as a specific form of Northwest Mandarin strongly influenced by Amdo Tibetan, Wutun phonology exhibits both Sinitic and Bodic features. Both the Sinitic origin of the language and its continuing interaction with various other forms of Chinese (both standard and non-standard) tends to promote the preservation of the Sinitic features in Wutun, while the virtually complete bilingualism of all adult Wutun speakers in the local (Rekong) variety of Amdo Tibetan favours the adoption of Bodic features. The question is how Sinitic Wutun phonology remains, and how Bodic it has become.

For many reasons, the issue is difficult to assess. However, since the bulk of the Wutun basic vocabulary is Sinitic in origin, Wutun speakers cannot avoid being aware of the phonological compatibility of their language with other forms of Chinese. Although this does not mean that the phonological composition of the Chinese elements in Wutun would not involve language-specific idiosyncracies, there exists a set of systematic correspondences between Wutun and other forms of, in particular, Northwest Mandarin. On the other hand, the Tibetan elements in Wutun are, as a rule, pronounced as close to their local Tibetan equivalents as possible.

The situation is complicated by the fact that both Chinese and Tibetan elements occur in Wutun in several different layers. Thus, in addition to the inherited Sinitic vocabulary Wutun also has later Chinese elements adopted as loanwords, especially recent ones borrowed from Standard Mandarin. On the other hand, in the Tibetan part of the Wutun lexicon there are also items that were borrowed from dialects either geographically or chronologically distinct from the one that dominates the region today. The relationship of these elements to the village dialects of Amdo Tibetan still spoken in the neighbourhood remains to be investigated.

As it is, the descriptions made previously of Wutun phonology, although based on material covering only a very brief period of time,



show considerable differences in the details. Some of these differences are clearly due to misunderstandings and misinterpretations, but others may reflect real idiolectal, sociolectal, or generational variation within the Wutun language. Therefore, it cannot be ruled out that whatever kind of phonological system is postulated for Wutun, it may not be valid for all speakers of the language.

**§14. Syllable structure.** Since both Chinese and Tibetan have a syllable-oriented phonological structure, Wutun phonology is also best described with the syllable as the basic syntagmatic entity. The Wutun syllable combines features of Chinese and Amdo Tibetan and is composed of a main vowel (V), surrounded by up to four optional non-syllabic segments: an initial (C), a medial (M), a preinitial (H), and a final (F). In practice, Wutun syllables seem to have only a maximum of four segments, including either a medial (CMVF), normally in Chinese lexical items, or a preinitial (HCVF), normally in Tibetan lexical items. The Tibetan and Chinese components of the Wutun lexicon show also differences as to which segments can occur in each slot of the syllable. These differences are, however, likely to be synchronically irrelevant for the speakers.

As in most forms of modern Chinese and Tibetan, the actual lexicon in Wutun consists predominantly of bisyllabic words, though both monosyllabic and polysyllabic items are also present. Although most bi- and polysyllabic words are diachronically composed of lexically independent monosyllables, they normally tend to function as synchronically indivisible entities. There is no structural difference between initial and non-initial syllables, but the segments at syllable boundaries can be subject to processes of simplification, which may perhaps be analyzed as involving synchronic morphophonological alternations. Such processes (sandhi phenomena) can also take place at word boundaries, and their occurrence is probably connected with variations in the tempo of speech.

An important feature that separates Wutun from idioms with a more regular Sinitic phonology is the absence of tones. Like several other forms of Chinese in the Sino-Tibetan borderland, Wutun seems to have lost the tones it originally had at some relatively early stage of its development, and there is also no evidence suggesting that the original tonal patterns would have been replaced by any other types of suprasegmental distinctions, or that they would be synchronically reflected by functional differences at the segmental level. The absence

of tones is historically quite certainly an areally conditioned feature, which makes Wutun phonology more compatible with both Amdo Tibetan and Bonan, neither of which has tones.

There are, however, prosodic patterns relevant at the phonetic level. In particular, bi- and polysyllabic words pronounced in isolation exhibit a prosodic prominence on the second syllable (and, possibly, on other even-numbered syllables). This prominence is phonetically probably best characterized as a higher pitch, though it may also involve a stronger stress. A similar prosodic pattern is also present in Amdo Tibetan and Bonan. In previous descriptions of Wutun (Chen) it has been proposed that in some lexical items the prominence might also be located on the initial syllable, making it a distinctive prosodic feature (accent). This proposal seems, however, difficult to validate, and it is more likely that the deviations from the normal prosodic pattern involve non-phonological factors.

**§15. Notation.** For purposes of phonetic description, Wutun language material is probably most conveniently recorded using the symbols of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). Unfortunately, previous work on Wutun (Chen) has relied on a non-standard (Chinese) version of this system, in which, especially, the consonantal correlations based on voice (voiced vs. voiceless) and aspiration (unaspirated vs. aspirated), especially in the stop obstruents, are confused. In the discussion below, the standard version is followed.

In a functional analysis, however, it is convenient to replace the phonetic transcription by a system of simplified phonemic notation. The choice of a phonemic notation for Wutun is a difficult task, since it inevitably means emphasizing either the primary Sinitic or the secondary Tibetan component of the language. Thus, in order to make Wutun look more like Chinese, it can be written in the Chinese Pinyin system, as also used for Standard Mandarin. On the other hand, in order to make it look more like Tibetan, it can be written by using the conventions current in Tibetan studies. Either option will distort the appearance of some part of the Wutun lexicon, and for etymological comparisons, for instance, it would be practical to have two separate systems of transcription for Wutun.

Without attempting to arrive at a definitive solution of the issue, both Wutun and Amdo Tibetan language material below will be transcribed according to a mixed system, in which the notation of the initials and medials is mainly based on the principles of the Pinyin



system for Chinese, while the preinitials, main vowels, and finals are rendered more in line with the traditions of Tibetan studies. Even so, deviations from these principles will be inevitable. In particular, the Wutun system of initial consonants includes several segments not present in other forms of Chinese, and for the transcription of these segments special conventions will have to be introduced.

**§16. Basic vowels.** The largest number of vocalic distinctions (the maximal paradigm of vowels) in Wutun is attested in open syllables (without a final). For this syllable type, it seems relatively safe to postulate a paradigm of six basic vowels. These may be transcribed by the single letters *a e i o u* and the digraph *ai*. Each of these vowels stands in a fairly transparent relationship of correspondence with one or more vocalic nuclei or syllable-final sequences (either medial + vowel or vowel + final) in other forms of Chinese, including Standard Mandarin (SM). All of these vowels can also occur in the Tibetan part of the Wutun lexicon, representing the corresponding Amdo Tibetan (AT) segments and their diachronic sources, as recorded in Written Tibetan (WT).

- *a* [a] ~ [ɑ], unrounded low vowel with a somewhat varying position on the palato-velar axis, but normally pronounced rather to the front, as in *da* [ta] ‘big’ = SM *dà* (大). In Tibetan items, this vowel corresponds to Amdo Tibetan *a* (< \**a* & \**al*), as in *da* [ta] ‘now, then’ ← AT *da* (WT **da**), *ta* [tʰa] ‘ashes’ ← AT *ta* (WT **thal**).
- *e* [ə], unrounded mid central vowel (schwa), as in *xhe* [ʃə] ‘river’ = SM *hé* (河). As in other forms of Mandarin Chinese, this vowel can be slightly diphthongized, e.g. *ge* [kə] ~ [kʰə] ‘horn’, cf. SM *jué* ~ *jiǎo* (角), and after labial initials the diphthongization can involve a rounded vowel element, as in *pe* [pʰuə] ‘thin’ = SM *bó* ~ *báo* (薄). In Tibetan items, this vowel corresponds to Amdo Tibetan *e* (< \**i* & \**u*), as in *dde* [də] ‘together’ ← AT *vde* (WT **vdu**).
- *i* [i], unrounded high front vowel, as in *ni* [ni] PRON 2P.SG = SM *nǐ* (你). This vowel can also correspond to the final sequence *ei* /ey/ (vowel + final) of Standard Mandarin, as in *xhi* [ʃi] ‘black’ = SM *hēi* (黑), as well as to the rounded high front or central vowel *ü*, as in *li* [li] ‘donkey’ = SM *lú* (驢). In Tibetan items, this vowel occurs, under certain conditions, as representing an original combination of a vowel (\**a* \**e* \**i* \**u*) with a subsequently lost final (\**s* \**l* \**i*), as in *ci* [tʰi] ‘fat’ [noun] ← AT *ci* (WT **tshil**).

- *o* [o], rounded mid back vowel, which in Chinese items seems always to derive from a sequence of two segments, corresponding to both *ao* /aw/ (vowel + final) and *uo* /we/ (medial + vowel) in Standard Mandarin, as in *sho* [ʃʰo] ‘few’ & ‘to say’ = SM *shǎo* (少) resp. *shuō* (說). It would be tempting to postulate a distinction between the correlates of *ao* vs. *uo* also for Wutun, assuming, for instance, an opposition between two grades of opening (open [ɔ] vs. closed [o]), but it is difficult to find systematic support for this. Although *o* is often slightly diphthongized (either ascending or descending), this does not seem to correlate with its diachronic origin, cf. e.g. *mo* [mo] ~ [moʷ] ~ [mʷo] ‘hair’ = SM *máo* (毛). In Tibetan items, this vowel corresponds to *o*, as in *co* [tʰo] ‘lake’ ← AT *co* (WT **mtsho**), cf. also *co* [tʰo] ‘to sit’ = SM *zuò* (坐).
- *u* [u], rounded high back vowel, which normally corresponds to *u* of Standard Mandarin, as in *tu* [tʰu] ‘earth’ = SM *tǔ* (土). In Tibetan items, this vowel represents an original combination of a vowel (always \**u*) with a subsequently lost final (\**l* \**u*), as in *ddu* [du] ← AT *ddu* ‘dust’ (WT **rdul**).
- *ai* [e], unrounded mid front vowel, which basically stands for the final sequence *ai* /ay/ (vowel + final) of Standard Mandarin, as in *pai* [pʰe] ‘white’ = SM *bái* (白). Diachronically, *ai* is a front parallel to *o*, and it is therefore likely that it should also be viewed as the regular counterpart of Standard Mandarin *ie*, as in *tai* ‘iron’ = SM *tiě* (鐵). As in the case of *o*, it would be tempting to postulate a distinction between two grades of opening (open [ɛ] vs. closed [e]), but the factual evidence does not seem to support this. In Tibetan items, Wutun *ai* also corresponds to two vowels, the original \**e*, as in *maidok* ‘flower’ ← AT *maidok* (WT **me.tog**), and the original \**a* which has been palatalized and raised under the influence of a lost final (\**d* \**s*), as in *lai* [le] ‘upon’ ← AT (*h*)*lai* (WT **klad**), cf. *lai* [le] ‘to come’ = SM *lái* (來). Although the two vowels are distinct in several varieties of Amdo Tibetan, they are not so in Wutun and probably also not in the specific Amdo Tibetan dialect(s) from which Wutun has received its Tibetan vocabulary.

All the basic vowels are well attested both in monosyllabic items (examples above) and in any syllable of bi- and polysyllabic words, cf. e.g. *galamala* ‘child’, *gejhai* ‘oneself’, PL *gu-dera* ‘those’, *liba* ‘tail’, OBJ *do-li* ‘many’, *dolo* ‘head’, *agu* ‘girl’, *haipa* ‘to fear’, CL *yegai-ge* ‘letter’. It may, however, be noted that, although the Chinese



and Tibetan elements of Wutun are synchronically integrated into a single lexicon, the high vowels *i* and *u* are conspicuously frequent in words of a Chinese origin, while they are rare in Tibetan items, in which they always presuppose a complex origin (lost final). Even if this might be irrelevant for monolingual native speakers, for bilingual individuals *i* and *u* actually serve as diagnostic markers of a group of words that lack counterparts in Tibetan.

**§17. Vowel allophony.** All vowels are to some extent influenced by their consonantal environment, including the immediately preceding initial consonant. This influence is most conspicuous in the case of the vowel *e*, which, probably due to its central position in the system, can acquire special properties depending on the type of the preceding segment. These properties remain, however, allophonic, although in previous descriptions of Wutun phonology they have been mistaken for representing phonemic distinctions.

After consonants of the palatal range (laminals and palatals), including both continuants (sibilant fricatives) and non-continuants (affricates), *e* normally becomes slightly raised and fronted, acquiring the quality of an unrounded raised fronted central vowel [ə], and approaching the quality of an unrounded high front vowel [i], e.g. *je* 'this' [tʰə] ~ [tʰi] = SM *zhè* (这). There is, however, no neutralization taking place between *e* and *i*, and consonants of the palatal range can also be followed by a distinctive *i* [i], as in *xi* [çi] 'to wash' = SM *xǐ* (洗), *qhi* [cʰhi] 'to go' = SM *qù* (去).

After dental (alveolar) and retroflex sibilants, also including both continuants (fricatives) and non-continuants (affricates), *e* can acquire a slightly fricative or 'apical' quality. After dental sibilants, *e* can therefore approach the value of the apical vowel [ɿ] of Standard Mandarin, as in *se* [sʰə] ~ [sʰɿ] 'four' = SM *sì* (四). After retroflex sibilants, correspondingly, *e* can approach the value of the apical vowel [ʅ] of Standard Mandarin, as in *she* [ʂʰə] ~ [ʂʰɿ] 'ten' = SM *shí* (十). In both positions, it is a question of an allophonic representation, and there are no examples of *e* contrasting with the the apical vowels. There are, however, examples in which *e* and *i* do contrast after sibilant consonants, as in *zzhe* 'female yak' ← AT *vzhe* (WT **vbri**) vs. *zzhi* 'rice' ← AT *vzhi* (WT **vbras**).

In this context, it has to be noted that while the apical vowels of Standard Mandarin after sibilants are represented as *e* in Wutun, the vowel *e* of Standard Mandarin after the retroflex continuants *sh r* is

normally represented as *ai* [e] in Wutun, as in *shai* [ʂʰe] 'snake' = SM *shé* (蛇), *rai* [ɹe] 'warm' = SM *rè* (热). For diachronic reasons, this normally allows Wutun to preserve the same distinctions as Standard Mandarin, cf. e.g. *shetek* 'stone' = SM *shítou* (石頭) vs. *shaitek* 'tongue' = SM *shétou* (舌頭).

**§18. Complex vowels.** In addition to the six basic vowels, as listed above, Wutun has two further entities with relevance to the vowel paradigm. These entities are here identified as 'complex' vowels and transcribed by the digraphs *ii uu*. The notation should not be taken at face value, for the exact nature of the underlying phonemic structures remains open to alternative interpretations.

- *ii* [i:] ~ [ii] ~ [ij], an unrounded high front vowel which, in contrast to *i* [i], is pronounced rather long and tense, as in *tii* [tʰi:] ~ [tʰii] ~ [tʰij] 'to carry' & 'to kick' = SM *tí* (提) resp. *tī* (踢) vs. *tí* [tʰi] 'field' = SM *dì* (地). Compared with the regular vowel *i*, the 'complex' vowel *ii* is much less frequent, and it seems to occur only in Sinitic items, in which it always corresponds to Standard Mandarin *i*. This is a difference with regard to the regular vowel *i*, which can also correspond Standard Mandarin *ei*.
- *uu* [u:] ~ [uu] ~ [uw], the corresponding rounded back vowel which, in contrast to *u* [u], is pronounced rather long and tense, as in *luu* [lu:] ~ [luu] ~ [luw] 'green' = SM *lǜ* (綠) vs. *lu* [lu] 'road' = SM *lù* (路). Again, as in the case of *ii*, the 'complex' vowel *uu* is less common than its regular counterpart *u*, and it seems to occur only in Sinitic items, in which it always corresponds to Standard Mandarin *u* (which in some cases can also be represented as *ü*). In this case, however, there is no difference with regard to the regular vowel *u*, which also always corresponds to Standard Mandarin *u*. Other examples of minimal pairs include *gu* PRON SG:3P (local Mandarin item) vs. *guu* 'drum' = SM *gǔ* (鼓), *ku* 'bitter' = SM *kǔ* (苦) vs. *kuu* 'to cry' = SM *kū* (哭).

From the phonetic point of view, the entities *ii uu* could be identified as 'long' or 'stretched' vowels. However, vowel length as such is not a distinctive feature in the Wutun system. In practice, all vowels can occasionally, especially in stressed monosyllables, be phonetically lengthened, e.g. *la* [la] ~ [la:] 'to pull' = SM *lā* (拉). The distinctive quality of the vowels *ii uu* must therefore be connected



with some other feature, such as tenseness. In fact, many Amdo Tibetan dialects have a pair of 'tense' high vowels, phonetically ending in a fricative phase and diachronically deriving from sequences of a high vowel (*\*u \*i*) with a lost final (*\*s \*l \*i \*u*). It seems, however, that these 'tense' vowels, or their counterparts in the local Amdo Tibetan dialects, are identified by Wutun speakers with the regular high vowels *i u* of Wutun, and not with the 'complex' vowels *ii uu*, which are only attested in Sinitic items.

Alternatively, the phonetic length of *ii uu* might imply that they consist of two segments each. It would not be a question of simple vowel sequences or 'double' vowels, however, since none of the other vowels in the Wutun system can form similar sequences. More probably, there is a connection with the fact that the high vowels *i u*, and only they, can occur in a non-syllabic function as medials. The possibility of a biphonemic analysis of the 'complex' vowels is diachronically suggested by examples like *ti* 'field' (< *\*di*) vs. *tii* 'to carry' (< *\*diey*), in which the 'complex' vowel would seem to imply an originally more complex structure of the rhyme. The diachronic evidence is, however, not perfectly consistent, and the chronology of the phenomenon remains to be investigated. In any case, it seems certain that the correlation of *i u* vs. *ii uu* does not reflect any original tonal contrast. A connection with tones is also made unlikely by the fact that the distinction between regular and 'complex' segments in Wutun is present only in the high vowels.

**§19. The vowel system.** The addition of the 'complex' vowels *ii uu* to the vowel paradigm gives a total system of eight distinct vowels in Wutun open syllables (Fig. 3).

<i>uu</i>		<i>ii</i>
<i>u</i>		<i>i</i>
<i>o</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>ai</i>
	<i>a</i>	

Fig. 3. Wutun vowels.

The system is symmetric and has two central vowels (*a e*), three rounded back vowels (*o u uu*), and three unrounded front vowels (*ai i*

*ii*). Obviously, the rounded back vowels and the unrounded front vowels form two parallel sets with two grades of opening and one additional pair of 'complex' vowels. The central vowels are located one grade lower and have no 'complex' member. Although this is a synchronically plausible vowel paradigm, the possibility remains that the 'complex' vowels should actually be analyzed as sequences. Their position should be reconsidered in the context of other actual and possible sequences containing medials.

**§20. Initials.** The largest number of consonantal distinctions (the maximal paradigm of consonants) in Wutun is attested in the initial position. It is probably correct to say that the skeleton of the initial system is formed by the oral non-continuants (stops and affricates), which, considering both their place and manner of articulation, can be divided into seven distinct series: the labials *b p*, the dental stops *d t*, the dental affricates *z c*, the retroflexes *zh ch*, the laminals *j q*, the palatals *jh qh*, and the velars *g k*. The corresponding oral continuants are considerably more difficult to organize, but with a view on their basic articulatory and acoustic properties they can preliminarily be divided into the sonorants *w l r y gh*, the non-sonorants *f lh h*, and the sibilants *s sh x xh*. Among the sonorants, the segments *l r* could perhaps also be identified as 'liquids', while the segments *w y* might qualify as 'glides'. The nasal system is much simpler and has basically only the three segments *m n ng*, corresponding to the labial, dental, and velar series of the oral stops.

- *b d g* [p t k], the basic weak (minimally marked) stops, labial vs. dental (alveolar) vs. velar, pronounced without voice and aspiration, as in *ba* [pa] 'eight' = SM *bā* (八), *da* [ta] 'to hit' = SM *dǎ* (打), *ga* [ka] 'small' (local Mandarin item).
- *p t k* [p<sup>h</sup> t<sup>h</sup> k<sup>h</sup>], the corresponding strong stops, pronounced with aspiration, as in *pize* [p<sup>h</sup>it<sup>h</sup>ə] 'leather' = SM *pízi* (皮子), *ta* [t<sup>h</sup>a] [subject of indirect report] = SM *tā* PRON SG:3P (他 她 它), *kan* [k<sup>h</sup>ɛ̃] 'to see' = SM *kàn* (看). It has to be noted that the occurrence of weak and strong stops in Wutun does not always correlate with the situation in Standard Mandarin. For diachronic reasons, Wutun strong stops, in particular, often correspond to Standard Mandarin weak stops, as in *pai* [p<sup>h</sup>e] 'white' = SM *bái* (白).
- *m n ng* [m n ŋ], the corresponding nasals (nasal stops), always pronounced with voice, as in *ma* [ma] 'horse' = SM *mǎ* (馬), *naize*



[net<sup>ə</sup>] ‘milk’ = SM *nǎizi* (奶子), *ngu* [ŋu] PRON 1P:SG = SM *wǒ* (我). It is important to note that the velar nasal *ng* corresponds to zero (vowel or labial medial anlaut) in Standard Mandarin. Words which actually begin with a vowel (*a e*) in Wutun are typically loanwords or secondary regional innovations, e.g. *ana* ‘mother’, *a-* [interrogative stem]: CL *a-ge* ‘who’, LOC *a-li* ‘where’.

- *w l* [w l], the corresponding voiced continuants of the labial and dental series. Of these, the segment *w* is basically a bilabial (or labiovelar) approximant [w], but it can also be realized as a dentilabial (labiodental) fricative [v], as in *wa* [wa] ~ [va] ‘young male’ (of unknown origin). The segment *l* is pronounced as a dental (alveolar) lateral, as in *la* [la] ‘to pull’ = SM *lā* (拉).
- *f lh* [f ʎ], the corresponding voiceless continuants of the labial and dental series. Both of these are only attested in loanwords, but may probably be regarded as fully nativized marginal phonemes in Wutun. The segment *f* is pronounced as a dentilabial (labiodental) fricative [f], and it occurs only in recent technical borrowings from Standard Mandarin, many of which are shared by Amdo Tibetan, e.g. *fenlan* [fɛlɛ] ‘Finland’ ← SM *fēnlán* (芬蘭) → AT *fenlan* (WT **hphin.lan**). The segment *lh* is pronounced as a voiceless dental (alveolar) fricolateral [ʎ], which may or may not be followed by a brief phase of aspiration [ʎ<sup>h</sup>]. It occurs in Tibetan loanwords, in which it represents Amdo Tibetan *lh* (< \**lh* & \**sl*), as in *lhakang* [ʎak<sup>h</sup>ɑ̃] ~ [ʎ<sup>h</sup>ak<sup>h</sup>ɑ̃] ‘temple’ ← AT *lhakang* (WT **lha.kang**), *lhoma* [ʎoma] ~ [ʎ<sup>h</sup>oma] ‘student’ ← AT *lhoma* (WT **slob.ma**).
- *gh* [ɣ ʁ], a voiced velar to postvelar continuant, mainly realized as a velar or uvular fricative (spirant), but also as a uvular trill [ʀ]. In native words, *gh* is always followed by a labial medial (\**u*) and the vowel (\**a*). Diachronically, it is a question of the (labio)velarized reflex of the medial \**w* in initial position (with zero anlaut), as in *ghua* [ɣ<sup>h</sup>ɑ] ‘to dig’ = SM *wā* (挖), *ghong* [ɣō] ‘net’ < \**ghuang* = SM *wǎng* (網). An analogous development of a voiced labial continuant into a (labio)velar (\**w* > *gh*) has taken place in Amdo Tibetan (WT **w db**), where also a new *w* has been formed from the original weak labial stop (\**b* > *w*). However, it should be noted that the Amdo Tibetan borrowings containing initial *gh* in Wutun do not show a labial medial, cf. e.g. *gha* ‘fox’ ← AT *gha* (WT **wa**). This probably reflects the status of the segment in the local Amdo Tibetan dialects, for elsewhere in Amdo Tibetan a labial medial is often present in these cases. Wutun also has some Sinitic items involving a synchronic

initial *w*, but these are likely to be borrowings from other forms of Mandarin, e.g. *wan* [wɛ̃] ~ [vɛ̃] ‘to play’ = SM *wán* (玩).

- *h* [x h], the corresponding voiceless continuant, realized as a velar to glottal (laryngeal) fricative (spirant). In some varieties of Amdo Tibetan the segments [h] and [x] function as separate phonemes, but in Wutun they seem to be in a complementary distribution. The velar realization is common before the vowel *a*, in which position Wutun *h* stands for Standard Mandarin *h*, as in *han* [xɛ̃] ‘sweat’ = SM *hàn* (汗). Before other vowels Wutun *h* corresponds to Standard Mandarin *f* and is normally pronounced in the glottal area with little velar friction, as in *hi* [hi] ‘to fly’ = SM *fēi* (飛). The development of (\**f*) to *h* in Wutun has a close analogy in Amdo Tibetan (\**p* & \**ph* > *h*), and it may also be seen as a parallel to the (labio)velarization of (\**w*) to *gh* in both languages. The tendency to replace [f] with [h] is synchronically active and is often applied even to modern Standard Mandarin borrowings, as in *fenbi* [fɛ̃mpi] ~ *henbi* [hɛ̃mpi] ‘chalk’ ← SM *fēnbǐ* (粉筆). In native words, the segment *h* also represents an earlier sequence of a velar initial and a labial medial, as in *ho* [ho] < \**fo* < \**hwe* ‘fire’ & ‘to live’ = SM *huǒ* /*hwe*/ (火) resp. *huó* (活). A labial medial was probably also initially present in cases in which an original (\**f*) was followed by the vowel (\**a*), as in *hongze* [hōnt<sup>ə</sup>ə] ‘house’ < \**huangze* = SM *fángzi* (房子).
- *z zh j jh* [t<sup>s</sup> t<sup>ʃ</sup> t<sup>s</sup> c<sup>s</sup>], the basic series of weak affricates, here labelled as dental vs. retroflex vs. laminal vs. palatal. All of these are pronounced without voice and aspiration, but with a fricative release involving a varying amount of sibilant noise and preceded by a homorganic closure. The place of articulation of the dental (alveolar) affricate *z*, as in *ze* [t<sup>s</sup>ə] ‘seed’ = SM *zǐ* (子), is close to that of the dental stops. The retroflex affricate *zh* is pronounced with the tip of tongue turned back, though some of its realizations could perhaps better be described as simple palatoalveolar affricates, e.g. *zhai* [t<sup>ʃ</sup>ɛ̃] ~ [tʃɛ̃] ‘narrow’ = SM *zhǎi* (窄). The remaining two segments belong to the palatal range, their difference being that *j* is pronounced laminally against the alveolar ridge, as in *je* [t<sup>s</sup>ə] ‘direct’ = SM *zhí* (直), while *jh* is pronounced dorsally against the hard palate, as in *jho* [c<sup>s</sup>o] ‘leg’ = SM *jiǎo* (腳). For diachronic reasons, the segmental correspondences with Standard Mandarin are rather complex.
- *c ch q qh* [t<sup>sh</sup> t<sup>sh</sup> t<sup>ch</sup> c<sup>ch</sup>], the corresponding strong segments, pronounced with aspiration, as in *ca* ‘to rub’ = SM *cā* (擦), *che* [t<sup>sh</sup>ə] ‘ten thousand’ ← AT *che* (WT **khri**), *qe* [t<sup>ch</sup>ə] ‘to eat’ = SM *chī* (喫),



*qhi* [c<sup>h</sup>i] ‘vapour’ = SM *qi* (汽氣). In some words before the vowel *i*, possibly due to the influence of Standard Mandarin, there seems to be free variation between the segments *c* (dental) and *q* (laminal), as in *ci* [c<sup>h</sup>i] ~ *qi* [t<sup>h</sup>i] ‘seven’ = SM *qī* (七).

- *s sz* [s<sup>h</sup> s], two voiceless dental (alveolar) sibilants, functioning as the continuant counterparts of the affricates *c z*, and distinguished from each other by the presence or absence of aspiration. However, the unaspirated sibilant *sz* has a very limited distribution, occurring only in a few Tibetan borrowings, for which reason it seems to be losing its phonemic status in Wutun, although it remains a distinctive segment in most varieties of Amdo Tibetan, as well as in Bonan. The opposition can potentially be illustrated by cases like *sakang* [s<sup>h</sup>ak<sup>h</sup>ā] ‘clay house’ ← AT *sakang* (WT **sa.khang**) vs. *szaghang* [səkā] ‘restaurant’ ← AT *szakang* (WT **za.khang**), but in Wutun it can also be neutralized in favour of *s*, which is the normal counterpart of Standard Mandarin *s*, as in *san* [s<sup>h</sup>ɛ̃] ‘three’ = SM *sān* (三).

- *sh* [ʃ<sup>h</sup>], the retroflex counterpart of the aspirated dental sibilant *s* and a continuant counterpart of the affricates *ch zh*, as in *sha* [ʃ<sup>h</sup>a] ‘to kill’ = SM *shā* (殺). This segment corresponds to the retroflex sibilant *sh* of Standard Mandarin. It also occurs as a secondary phoneme in Amdo Tibetan (WR **hr**), where it, as also in Wutun, lacks an unaspirated sibilant counterpart in the system.

- *x* [ç], the laminal counterpart of the unaspirated dental sibilant *s* and a continuant counterpart of the affricates *q j*, as in *xo* [ço] ‘to laugh’ = SM *xiào* (笑). The segment *x* is also frequently attested in Tibetan items (< \**zh* & \**gsh* & \**by*), as in *xawa* ‘work’ ← AT *xawa* (WT **bya.ba**).

- *xh* [ʃ], a dorso-palatal approximant with a central constriction extending from the alveolar to the velar region, and with considerably reduced sibilant noise, making the general sound often approach that of a palatal or a velar fricative [ç x]. The corresponding segment in Amdo Tibetan (WT **sh**) functions paradigmatically as the aspirated pair of *x* (WT **zh**) and is therefore originally pronounced as an aspirated palatal sibilant [ç<sup>h</sup>], though the dorso-palatal approximant is today the common realization in most Amdo Tibetan dialects. In the Tibetan items of Wutun, *xh* stands for this segment, as in *xha* [ʃa] ‘deer’ ← AT *xha* (WT **sha**). It also corresponds to Standard Mandarin *sh* and *x* in a few items with an original medial, as in *xhui* [ʃ<sup>h</sup>i] ‘to sleep’ = SM *shuì* (睡), *xhen* [ʃ<sup>h</sup>ɛ̃] ‘to go’ = SM *xíng* (行). However, most importantly, the segment *xh* has absorbed the original velar

fricative \**h* in the native Sinitic vocabulary of Wutun before vowels other than (\*)*a*, as in *xhek* [ʃɛ̃] ‘thick’ = *hòu* (厚).

- *r* [ɹ], a retroflex approximant, as in *rek* [ɹɛ̃] ‘meat’ = SM *ròu* (肉). Like its counterpart in Amdo Tibetan, this segment seems to have a rather broad margin of articulatory space, allowing it to be realized also as an alveolar approximant [ɹ], an alveolar trill [r], an alveolar tap [ɾ], or a retroflex tap [ɽ].

- *y* [j], a relatively weak palatal ‘glide’ or approximant, as in *yang* [jā] ‘sheep’ = SM *yáng* (羊).

The segments listed above make a total paradigm of 30 initial consonants. Additionally, at the phonetic level, Wutun also has a palatal nasal sound, as in *nio* [ɲo] ‘to urinate’ = SM *niào* (尿). A similar sound is also present in Amdo Tibetan (WT **ny**), where it functions as a separate phoneme. However, in the Wutun system it should probably be analyzed as a sequence of a dental nasal (*n*) and a palatal medial (*i*). This analysis is corroborated by the fact that there seems to be no contrast between a dental and a palatal nasal in the position before the high front vowel *i*. Rather, a dental nasal in this position is often allophonically palatalized, as in PRON SG:2P *ni* [ni] ~ [ɲi] = SM *nǐ* (你).

**§21. The initial system.** To illustrate their systematic correlations and the underlying distinctive features, the initial consonants established so far may tentatively be placed in a grid consisting of seven vertical columns and six horizontal rows (Fig. 4).

<i>m</i>	<i>n</i>					<i>ng</i>
<i>b</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>zh</i>	<i>j</i>	<i>jh</i>	<i>g</i>
<i>p</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>c</i>	<i>ch</i>	<i>q</i>	<i>qh</i>	<i>k</i>
<i>f</i>	<i>lh</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>sh</i>	<i>xh</i>		<i>h</i>
		<i>sz</i>		<i>x</i>		
<i>w</i>	<i>l</i>		<i>r</i>		<i>y</i>	<i>gh</i>

Fig. 4. Wutun initial consonants.

The vertical columns correspond to the classes of labials (*m b p f w*), non-sibilant dentals (*n d t lh l*), sibilant dentals (*z c s sz*),



retroflexes (*zh ch sh r*), laminals (*j q xh x*), palatals (*jh qh y*), and velars (*ng g k h gh*). The horizontal rows, on the other hand, correspond to the classes of nasals (*m n ng*), weak stops (*b d z zh j jh g*), strong stops (*p t c ch q qh k*), strong (voiceless) continuants (*f lh s sh xh h*), weak (voiced) continuants (*w l r y gh*), and the special class of unaspirated (voiceless) sibilants (*sz x*).

It is immediately obvious that there are several potential gaps in this system, which allow alternative interpretations for a number of segments. In a diachronic context, these gaps can also serve as resources for the restructuring of the system, if required. Thus, the correlation between laminals and palatals is relevant only for the stop obstruents (*j q* vs. *jh qh*), which means that the three remaining segments of the palatal range (*xh x y*) are strictly speaking unspecified with regard to this parameter. In view of its special phonetic characteristics, the position of the segment *xh* (here classified as a strong laminal continuant) is particularly ambivalent. On the other hand, the classes of the weak continuants (*w l r y gh*) and unaspirated sibilants (*sz x*) are in a complementary distribution, allowing them also to be viewed as a single class (*w l sz r x y gh*), though this class would be phonetically heterogeneous, containing both weak (voiced) and strong (voiceless) segments.

It may also be noted that the phonetic classes of sonorants, liquids and glides do not work at the phonological level in Wutun. The segments that could be classified as glides (*w y*) or liquids (*l r*) are thoroughly integrated in the general system of continuants, and all continuants in the Wutun system may functionally be identified as obstruents. In this respect, the Wutun system is identical with that of Amdo Tibetan and very different from that of most forms of Chinese. This picture is, however, only based on the paradigmatic relationships of the consonant segments. The status of glides (*w y*), in particular, is open to discussion, for in a syntagmatic framework the non-syllabic occurrences of the high vowels (*u i*) as medials can possibly be used as a basis for restoring a separate class of glides.

**§22. Preinitials.** Together with a virtually unlimited number of Amdo Tibetan loanwords, Wutun has borrowed the Amdo Tibetan system of preinitials. However, unlike the neighbouring Mongolic language of Bonan, Wutun has not developed preinitials in the inherited (Sinitic) part of its vocabulary. Preinitials occur, consequently, only in items borrowed from Amdo Tibetan. Since the basic vocabulary of Wutun is

predominantly of a Chinese origin, the actual text frequency of items with preinitials is not particularly high. Even so, the preinitials have a significant structural impact on Wutun.

There are considerable differences among the dialects of Amdo Tibetan as to how large a repertoire of preinitials they possess. The original system of six preinitials (WT **b d/g s r m v**) has widely been reduced to a system of four (WT **b d/g s/r m/v**), three (WT **b/d/g s/r m/v**), or two (WT **b/d/g/s/r m/v**), but there are apparently also idioms with a single preinitial. From the Amdo Tibetan and Qinghai Bonan dialects spoken in the Tongren area, systems of both three and two preinitials have been recorded. Since the system is undergoing a process of reduction, the possibility of generational differences cannot be ruled out. This is also true of Wutun. On the other hand, it may be assumed that Wutun speakers of any single generation use the same number of distinct preinitials irrespective of whether they speak Amdo Tibetan or their actual Wutun vernacular.

In a system with two preinitials, the two segments occupying the preinitial slot in the syllable may be identified as an archiphonemic nasal and an archiphonemic laryngeal (glottal), respectively. The nasal preinitial (WT **m/v**) is realized as a brief prenasalization segment [<sup>m</sup> <sup>ʷ</sup>], homorganic with the following initial. The laryngeal preinitial (WT **b/d/g/s/r**) is realized as a brief preglottalization segment, which is either voiceless [<sup>h</sup>] or voiced [<sup>ɦ</sup>], depending on the following initial. In idioms with a third preinitial, the latter functions as an archiphonemic retroflex, and is realized either as a brief voiced retroflex approximant [<sup>ʳ</sup>] or as the corresponding unvoiced retroflex sibilant [<sup>ʃ</sup>], again depending on the following initial.

There are also differences between the dialects of Amdo Tibetan concerning the positions in which the preinitials can occur. In most dialects, the nasal preinitial can only occur before one series of stops (including affricates), which are then always pronounced with voice, yielding a set of prenasalized voiced stops. The laryngeal preinitial, on the other hand, can occur before two series of stops. One of these series is pronounced with voice, while the other is pronounced without voice. For reasons of convenience, these three series are here transcribed as *vb vd vz vzh vj vjh vg* (prenasalized voiced) vs. *bb dd zz zzh jj jjh gg* (preglottalized voiced) vs. *hb hd hz hzh hj hjh hg* (preglottalized voiceless). Additionally, the laryngeal preinitial can occur before the nasals *m n ng*, as well as before some of the weak continuants (with diachronically determined exceptions), yielding a



selection of preglottalized voiced continuants and nasals, here transcribed as *hm hn hng hl hy ss xx*.

Earlier materials on Wutun (Chen) suggest that Wutun may have had a full range of initial sequences with two contrasting preinitials. It cannot be ruled out that this situation is still valid for some speakers of the older generation. Generally, however, the preinitial system has undergone a series of simplifications. In view of the bilingualism of the Wutun speakers in Amdo Tibetan, these simplifications very probably reflect the tendencies also present in the local Amdo Tibetan dialects. Most importantly, it seems that the laryngeal preinitial has been systematically lost before continuants and nasals. The relevant cases can be divided into three categories depending on whether the actual initial segment is a nasal (*m n ng*), a non-nasal sonorant continuant (*l y*), or a sibilant (*sz x*).

- *\*h-m \*h-n \*h-ng > m n ng*, as in *maka* ‘wound’ ← AT (*h*)*maka* (WT **rma.kha**), *nama* ‘carefulness’ ← AT (*h*)*nama* (WT **rnal.ma**), *nguanbo* ‘blue’ ← AT (*h*)*ngonbo* (WT **sngon.po**).
- *\*h-l \*h-y > l y*, as in *la* ‘leg’ ← AT (*h*)*la* (WT **brla**), *yak* ‘yak bull’ ← AT (*h*)*yak* (WT **gyag**).
- *\*h-sz \*h-x > ss xx [z z]*, pronounced as a voiced dental resp. laminal sibilant continuant, as in *ssanxhan* [zẽfjẽ] ‘monk’s clothes’ ← AT *ssanxhan* (WT **gzan.shan**), *xxanba* [zẽmpa] ‘other’ ← AT *xxanba* (WT **gzhan.pa**).

It is important to note that the loss of the preinitial before nasals and non-nasal sonorants has led to a neutralization between the initial sequences *\*hm \*hn \*hng \*hl \*hy* and the corresponding plain initials *m n ng l y*. In the case of the original sibilant initials *\*sz \*x*, however, the impact of the preinitial is preserved in the distinctive voice of the new entities *ss xx [z z]*. Synchronically, the latter are apparently best identified as new monophonemic segments, diachronically based on initial sequences with a laryngeal preinitial.

The rest of the initial sequences are all composed of a stop initial preceded by either a nasal or a laryngeal preinitial. There are three types of sequences, and it may tentatively be assumed that all of them are preserved by at least some speakers of Wutun:

- *vb vd vz vzh vj vjh vg* [<sup>m</sup>b <sup>n</sup>d <sup>ŋ</sup>dʒ <sup>h</sup>dʒ <sup>h</sup>ʃ <sup>h</sup>g], a series of prenasalized stops, composed of a voiced stop preceded by a hom-

organic nasal onset. Examples: *vbakge* ‘statue’ ← AT *vbak(h)ge* (WT **vbag.sku**), *vdong* ‘lance’ ← AT *vdong* (WT **mdung**), *vzo* ‘male yak’ ← AT *vzo* (WT **mdzo**), *vzhe* ‘female yak’ ← AT *vzhe* (WT **vbri**), *vje* ‘to breathe’ ← AT *vje* (WT **vjib**), *vjhok* ‘quick’ ← AT *vjhok* (WT **mgyogs**), *vgolok* [Golok] ← AT *vgolok* (WT **mgo.log**).

- *bb dd zz zzh jj jjh gg* [<sup>h</sup>b <sup>h</sup>d <sup>h</sup>dʒ <sup>h</sup>dʒ <sup>h</sup>ʃ <sup>h</sup>g], a series of preglottalized stops, composed of a voiced stop preceded by a voiced laryngeal onset. Examples: *bbawa* ‘toad’ ← AT *bbawa* (WT **sbal.ba**), *dda* ‘to spread’ ← AT *dda* (WT **rdal**), *zzok* ‘to finish’ ← AT *zzok* (WT **rdzogs**), *zzhok* ‘to inform’ ← AT *zzhok* (WT **sgrog**), *jjan* ‘barefoot’ ← AT *jjan* (WT **rjen**), *jjhawo* ‘king’ ← AT *jjhawo* (WT **rgyal.po**), *ggawa* ‘love’ ← AT *ggawa* (WT **dgav.pa**).

- *hb hd hz hzh hj hjh hg* [<sup>h</sup>p <sup>h</sup>t <sup>h</sup>tʃ <sup>h</sup>tʃ <sup>h</sup>ʃ <sup>h</sup>cʃ <sup>h</sup>k], a series of preaspirated stops, composed of a voiceless stop preceded by a voiceless laryngeal onset. Examples: *hbakba* ‘cover, skin’ ← AT *hbakba* (WT **lpags.pa**), *hdongwa* ‘empty’ ← AT *hdongwa* (WT **stong.pa**), *hzaba* ‘root’ ← AT *hzaba* (WT **rtsa.pa**), *hzhhan* ‘to spread’ ← AT *hzhhan* (WT **bkram**), *hjiba* ‘dear (child)’ ← AT *hjiba* (WT **gces.pa**), *hjhong* ‘to take care of’ ← AT *hjhong* (WT **skyong**), *hgangtang* ‘walk’ ← AT *hgangtang* (WT **rkang.thang**).

The separate status of these three types of initial sequences is being eroded by two processes. On the one hand, there is a tendency to neutralize the distinction between the prenasalized stops (*vb vd vz vzh vj vjh vg*) and the preglottalized voiced stops (*bb dd zz zzh jj jjh gg*). The phonetic contrast between these two series is very small, being contained in the nasality vs. non-nasality of the onset, and it can also be reduced by contextual factors. It therefore seems obvious that many modern speakers of Wutun have only one series of voiced stops, which may or may not be preceded by a diffuse onset segment. On the other hand, the distinction between the preaspirated stops (*hb hd hz hzh hj hjh hg*) and the corresponding plain stops (*b d z zh j jh g*) also seems to be disappearing, leaving only one basic series of unaspirated and phonetically voiceless weak stops, which contrast with the corresponding (post)aspirated strong stops.

Since preinitials can only occur in the Tibetan part of the Wutun lexicon, and since Tibetan functions as the principal Written language for the Wutun speakers, it is possible that the realizations of the preinitials are occasionally influenced by the normative speaking and reading practices of Amdo Tibetan (reading pronunciations). It goes



without saying that such interference of other norms or registers of pronunciation should be judged as marginal from the point of view of the actual spoken language.

**§23. The obstruent system.** The analysis of the preinitials as separate segments is diachronically motivated on the Tibetan side, and it therefore also remains a synchronic possibility for Wutun. However, the segmental identity of the preinitials has become weaker with time, and their presence in the syllable is synchronically also signalled by other phenomena. This is especially true of the preglottalized voiced stops (*bb dd zz zzh jj jjh gg*), which are phonetically distinguished not so much by the presence of a preinitial segment as by the voice that contrasts them against the corresponding plain stops (*b d z zh j jh g*), always pronounced without voice.

Irrespective of what their synchronic status is, the preinitials make a significant contribution to the total obstruent system of Wutun. In fact, they complete the consonant matrix in a way which, ideally, leaves no gaps in the system (Fig. 5).

<i>hb</i>	<i>hd</i>	<i>hz</i>	<i>hzh</i>	<i>hj</i>	<i>hjh</i>	<i>hg</i>
<i>vb</i>	<i>vd</i>	<i>vz</i>	<i>vzh</i>	<i>vj</i>	<i>vjh</i>	<i>vg</i>
<i>bb</i>	<i>dd</i>	<i>zz</i>	<i>zzh</i>	<i>jj</i>	<i>jjh</i>	<i>gg</i>
<i>b</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>zh</i>	<i>j</i>	<i>jh</i>	<i>g</i>
<i>p</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>c</i>	<i>ch</i>	<i>q</i>	<i>qh</i>	<i>k</i>
<i>f</i>	<i>lh</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>sh</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>xh</i>	<i>h</i>
<i>w</i>	<i>l</i>	<i>ss</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>xx</i>	<i>y</i>	<i>gh</i>

Fig. 5. Wutun obstruents.

The postulation of a separate segmental identity for the preinitials is especially defensible in a system that really has two (or more) contrasting preinitials before two contrasting series of stops. However, in a system in which these contrasts have been partially lost, the original preglottalized weak stops are best analyzed as monophonemic entities, constituting a new series of distinctively voiced stops. The development is the same as can be assumed to have taken

place in the voiced sibilants (*ss xx*), which by all likelihood have been restructured as monophonemic segments.

It may be concluded that in a minimal version of the system, which is probably a reality for many Wutun speakers of the younger generation, the language has three series of monophonemic stops, which may be phonetically described as plain (*b d z zh j jh g*), voiced (*bb dd zz zzh jj jjh gg*), and (post)aspirated (*p t c ch q qh k*). In a maximal version, which may still be present in the speech of the older generation, there are two additional series, which may be described as voiceless preaspirated (*hb hd hz hzh hj hjh hg*) and voiced prenasalized (*vb vd vz vzh vj vjh vg*). Even the latter two series could, in principle, be analyzed as involving monophonemic segments, though the biphonemic analysis can also be defended.

The new monophonemic voiced sibilants *ss xx* complete the series of weak (voiced) continuants, which thus has a member in each column (*w l ss r xx y gh*). It is also reasonable to assume that the paradigmatic status of the two originally laminal sibilants *x xh* has been restructured so that they take positions in the laminal and palatal columns of the series of strong (voiceless) continuants, which, then, also has a member in each column (*f lh s sh x xh h*). In this system, there is no place for the dental sibilant *sz* (without a preinitial), whose phonetic distinction with regard to the corresponding strong sibilant *s* is contained in the absence of a brief segment of (post)aspiration. It is therefore obvious that *sz* is no longer a true member of the Wutun synchronic paradigm. A similar restructuring may well be taking place in the neighbouring dialects of Amdo Tibetan, although the segment *sz* may occasionally resurrect under the influence of the written language (reading pronunciations).

**§24. Nasal finals.** Both Chinese and Tibetan originally had a system with three nasal finals (*\*m \*n \*ng*), still reflected in Written Tibetan (reading pronunciations) and several archaic Amdo Tibetan dialects (WT **m n ng**). Most forms of Mandarin Chinese and Amdo Tibetan have reduced this to two (dental vs. velar), while Northwest Mandarin has only one nasal final. Wutun seems to represent the latter type, and it cannot be ruled out that some of the local Amdo Tibetan dialects also have only one distinctive nasal final.

In a system with one nasal final, the nasal typically functions as an archiphonemic or even suprasegmental entity with an indistinct quality. Normally, the nasal merges with the preceding vowel into



what is phonetically best described as a nasalized vowel segment. Whether such nasalized vowels are phonologically to be analyzed as monophonemic units or as biphonemic sequences remains a matter of interpretation, but in a language that has also other types of finals the biphonemic analysis is probably to be preferred. The main question concerns the paradigmatic organization of the vocalic distinctions that are allowed before the nasal final.

<i>un</i>		<i>in</i>
<i>ong</i>	<i>en</i>	<i>an</i>
	<i>ang</i>	

Fig. 6. Wutun nasal finals.

At the phonetic level, Wutun seems to have six different sequences of a vowel and a nasal final. It would be theoretically possible to identify these sequences simply with the six members of the basic vowel paradigm (*a ai e o i u*), but, for both diachronic and synchronic reasons, the transcriptions *ang an en ong in un* will here be preferred (Fig. 6). It is important to stress that the use of two distinct graphic representations (*n ng*) for the archiphonemic final nasal is a practical device which should not be misunderstood as implying a phonemic contrast in this segment.

- *ang* [ã] = *a* + *n*, realized as an unrounded nasalized low back vowel, which corresponds to the sequence *ang* of Standard Mandarin, as in *qang* [tʰã] ‘long’ = SM *cháng* (長). Diachronically, it is a question of a velarized allophone of the low vowel \**a* in combination with the velar nasal final \**ng*.
- *an* [ɛ̃] = *ai* + *n*, realized as a nasalized unrounded lower mid front vowel, which corresponds to the sequence *an* of Standard Mandarin, as in *gan* [kɛ̃] ‘liver’ = SM *gān* (肝). Diachronically, it is a question of a palatalized allophone of the low vowel \**a* in combination with the dental nasal final \**n*.
- *en* [ɛ̃] = *e* + *n*, realized as a nasalized unrounded mid central vowel, which corresponds to the sequences *en eng* of Standard Mandarin, as in *ren* [ɿ̃] ‘person’ = SM *rén* (人), *hen* [hã̃] ‘wind’ = SM *fēng* (風). As can be seen, the distinction between the sequences \**en* vs. \**eng* has been neutralized in Wutun, while in the sequences

\**ang* vs. \**an* the diachronic distinction is preserved but has been moved over to the vowel segment.

- *ong* [õ] = *o* + *n*, realized as a nasalized rounded mid back vowel, which corresponds to the sequence *ang* of Standard Mandarin after an original labial medial or initial, as in *hong* ‘yellow’ < \**huang* = SM *huáng* (黃). An irregular correspondence seems to be present in cases like *chong* ‘heavy’ < (?) \**chuang* = SM *zhòng* (重).
- *in* [ĩ] = *i* + *n*, realized as a nasalized unrounded high front vowel, which corresponds to the sequences *in ing* of Standard Mandarin, as in *lin* [lĩ] ‘forest’ = SM *lín* (林), *tin* [tʰĩ] ‘to hear’ = SM *tīng* (聽).
- *un* [ũ] = *u* + *n*, realized as a nasalized rounded high back vowel, which corresponds to the sequences *un ong* of Standard Mandarin, as in *gun* [kũ] ‘stick’ = SM *gùn* (棍), *dun* [tũ] ‘cold’ = SM *dòng* (凍). A special case is present in *hen* ‘red’ < \**feng* = SM *hóng* (紅), homonymous with *hen* ‘wind’ = SM *fēng* (風).

The sequences *an ang ong en* also occur in the Tibetan part of the Wutun lexicon (WT *an/am ang/eng/ing ong/ung un/um/in/im*), as in *wandai* ‘novice’ ← AT *wandai* (WT *ban.de*), *zang* ‘Central Tibet’ ← AT *hzang* (WT *gtsang*), *dong* ‘thousand’ ← AT *hdong* (WT *stong*), *jhende* ‘usually’ ← AT *jhende* (WT *rgyun.du*). The sequences *in un* have, however, no counterpart in Amdo Tibetan and remain one of the few non-Tibetan features of Wutun phonology. This suggests that they are very possibly connected with other non-Tibetan features of the language, notably the medial system.

**§25. Non-nasal finals.** Although Chinese originally had a number of non-nasal consonantal finals, it may be assumed that they had already been lost without a trace in the forms of Northwest Mandarin that served as the basis for Wutun. The two (semi)vocalic (glide) finals \**w* \**y* were also lost in the general context of Northwest Mandarin, and they have no direct segmental traces in Wutun, cf. e.g. *gi* ‘to give’ = SM *gěi* (給), *ho* ‘good’ = SM *hǎo* (好).

Non-nasal finals were, however, reintroduced to Wutun from the dialects of Amdo Tibetan, which preserve a varying set of Tibetan finals. Originally, Tibetan had as many as six non-nasal consonantal finals (WT *b d g s l r*) and two (semi)vocalic finals (WT *vi vu*), but even the most archaic Amdo Tibetan dialects preserve only four of these. These four finals, which diachronically represent the segments \**b* \**d* \**g* \**r* (WT *b d g r*), but which synchronically are realized with



the weak (voiced) continuant values [w l ɣ r], may also occur in the normative speech of Wutun speakers (reading pronunciations). In the actual Amdo Tibetan dialects surrounding Wutun, however, the finals *\*b \*d \*r* have been segmentally lost, their only trace being that a preceding low vowel *\*a* has been fronted and raised to the value of Wutun *ai* [e]. This leaves *\*g* as the single non-nasal final that still survives in both local Amdo Tibetan and Wutun.

Paradigmatically, the final *\*g* is probably best understood as an archiphonemic velar obstruent, here transcribed as *k*. Both in Amdo Tibetan and in Wutun this final can only be combined with three vowel qualities, here written as *a o e* (Fig. 7).

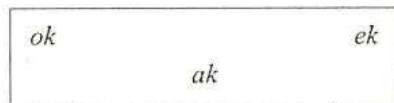


Fig. 7. Wutun non-nasal finals.

Since the velar obstruent final *k* is a Tibetan feature in Wutun, it naturally occurs in the Tibetan part of the Wutun lexicon. This is, in particular, the case with the sequences *ak ok*, which are only attested in Tibetan items. The sequence *ek*, however, has expanded its distribution into the Sinitic part of the Wutun lexicon, taking over the distinctive status of a high central vowel that once represented the monophonemic counterpart of the Standard Mandarin sequence *ou /ew/* (vowel + final). This restructuring has substantially increased the relevance of the velar obstruent final *k* in Wutun.

- *ak* [eʰ], an unrounded back vowel of a rather indefinite quality and often slightly raised, followed by a relatively weak voiced velar fricative, as in *zhak* [tʰeʰ] ‘rock’ ← AT *zhak* (WT **brag**). The velar final can also move towards the uvular position [ʁ], and it can be positionally devoiced [x].
- *ok* [oʰ], a rounded mid or higher mid back vowel followed by a relatively weak voiced velar fricative, as in *yok* [joʰ] ‘down’ ← AT *yok* (WT **yog**). The velar final has a similar range of phonetic variation as in the case of the sequence *ak*.
- *ek* [əʰ], a rounded mid or higher mid central vowel followed by a relatively weak voiced velar fricative, as in *ssek* [zəʰ] ‘to see’ (honorific) ← AT *sseg* (WT **gzigs**), *shek* [ʂʰəʰ] ‘hand’ = SM *shǒu* (手).

The vowel in this sequence can vary between the values [ə] ~ [i], but it is generally higher than the mid central vowel [ə], and it is also distinguished from the latter by the transition towards the following final. The final itself has a similar range of phonetic variation as in the case of the sequences *ak ok*, except that it tends to be even weaker, possibly due to the quality of the preceding vowel. In syllables with a velar initial, the final velar can even be audibly absent, but the distinctive status of *ek* with regard to *e* is retained by the higher position of the vowel in *ek*, as in *gek* [ki] ‘dog’ = SM *gǒu* (狗). In previous descriptions of Wutun (Chen), this vowel has also been characterized as rounded [ɤ], which may occasionally be the case, but even so, it shows no tendency of merging with *u*.

Diachronically, the expansion of *ek* into the Sinitic part of the Wutun lexicon is relatively easy to explain in the context of the general Tibetanization of Wutun phonology. The segmental loss of the original (semi)vocalic finals *\*w \*y* in Northwest Mandarin was accompanied by the raising of the preceding main vowel. In the case of the main vowel *\*a*, the result was a new set of mid high vowels *o* [o] (< *\*aw*) resp. *ai* [e] (< *\*ay*). In the case of the main vowel *\*e*, one of the results was *i* [i] (< *\*ey*), which merged with the regular *\*i* (< *\*i*), while the other result was the corresponding back vowel *\*[i]* (< *\*ew*), which did not merge with *u* (< *\*u*) but remained a distinct vowel phoneme. In Wutun, this was the only vowel that did not have a counterpart in Amdo Tibetan, which is why it was replaced by the Amdo Tibetan sequence *ek*.

The sequence *ek* also seems to have regularly replaced the syllabic retroflex segment represented as *er* in Standard Mandarin. In this case, there is no initial consonant, and the auditive impression would often suggest a metathesis of the vowel and the final, as in *ekdo* [əʰto] ~ [ʲəto] ‘ear’ = SM *ěrduo* (耳朵). Most probably, this has no consequences to the phonological segmentation.

**§26. Medials.** Another feature that sets Wutun phonology apart from Amdo Tibetan is the relatively wide use of medials. The medials are best defined as optional non-syllabic (semi)vocalic segments that can be present between the consonantal initial and the main vowel of a syllable. Basically, Wutun retains the Chinese system of two medials, labial (*\*w*) vs. palatal (*\*y*), here transcribed as *u* vs. *i*. The labial medial is synchronically present also in Amdo Tibetan, but normally



only after velar consonants, which can then possibly be analyzed as monophonemic labialized velars (labiovelars). In Wutun, the two medials have a much wider distribution, though their occurrence is also regulated by a number of phonotactic rules connected with both synchronic and diachronic restrictions.

- The labial medial is pronounced as a brief high rounded back vowel segment [ʷ] or the corresponding glide [w]. For dissimilatory reasons, it does not occur after labial initials, but it is well attested after all other types of initials, which can to a varying extent be labialized under its impact. Typically, it precedes the vowels *a* and *ai* (< \**ay*), as in *hua* [h<sup>h</sup>a] ‘speech’ = SM *huà* (話), *kuai* [k<sup>h</sup>u<sup>h</sup>e] ‘quick’ = SM *kuài* (快). It can also occur in syllables with an original dental nasal final, as in *duan* [t<sup>h</sup>ɛ̃] ‘short’ = SM *duǎn* (短). In syllables with an original velar nasal final the medial has either been incorporated into the surrounding segments (initial and main vowel), as in *hong* ‘yellow’ = SM *huáng* (黃), or the distinction against the dental nasal final has been neutralized, as in *kuan* [k<sup>h</sup>ɛ̃] ‘wide’ = SM *guǎng* (廣). An exceptional merger of the labial medial with the main vowel is present in *hu* ‘flower’ < \**hwa* = SM *huā* (花).

- The palatal medial is pronounced as a brief high unrounded front vowel segment [j] or the corresponding glide [j]. Again, for dissimilatory reasons, it does not occur after initials of the palatal range (laminals and palatals). It is also not combinable with retroflex and velar initials, which means that it only occurs after labial or dental initials, which can to a varying extent be palatalized under its impact. Typically, it precedes the vowels *a* and *o* (< \**aw*), as in *nia* [n<sup>h</sup>a] ~ [n<sup>h</sup>a] OBL of *ni* PRON 2P:SG = SM *nǐ* (你), *pio* [p<sup>h</sup>io] ‘ticket’ = SM *piào* (票). It can also occur in syllables with an original nasal final, both \**n*, as in *tian* [t<sup>h</sup>ɛ̃] ‘sky’ = SM *tiān* (天), and \**ng*, as in *liang-ge* [l<sup>h</sup>ɛ̃ŋkə] ‘two’ CL = SM *liǎng ge* (兩個).

There are indications that the sequences *uan* and *ian* also occur, with some restrictions, as the Wutun substitutes for Tibetan syllables containing a mid high vowel and a non-velar nasal final (WT **on/om en/em**), e.g. *gguan* ‘temple’ ← AT *ggon* (WT **rgon**), *tian* ‘to draw’ ← AT *ten* (WT **vthen**). Even so, medials are a basically non-Tibetan feature, and it is tempting to assume that other non-Tibetan features in Wutun phonology are also connected with them. In particular, the final sequences *in un* should possibly be analyzed as containing a

hidden main vowel *e*, preceded by a medial and followed by a nasal final. The only problem in this context is that the vowel *e* does not seem to be otherwise combinable with the medials.

It might, however, be possible to analyze also the ‘complex’ vowels *ii uu* as containing a sequence of a medial followed by the main vowel *e*, i.e., *i + e* resp. *u + e*. In this interpretation, the ‘complex’ vowels *ii uu* would be parallels to *ia ua*, with the difference that the latter contain the main vowel *a*. There is, indeed, no serious synchronic argument against this analysis. Diachronically it may be noted, however, that the synchronic sequences *i + e* resp. *u + e* would not be ‘original’ in any sense, for the corresponding diachronic sequences, which once existed in the language, have been restructured into the vowels *ai* (< \**ye*) resp. *o* (< \**we*).

Irrespective of how these problems of synchronic segmentation are solved, there is one additional sequence in Wutun which has to be analyzed in terms of a medial:

- *ui* [ʷi] ~ [y], realized as a high unrounded front vowel preceded by a brief rounded vowel segment, occasionally monophthongized into a more or less uniform rounded high front vowel, as in *xhui* [ʃʷi] ~ [ʃy] ‘to sleep’ = SM *shuì* (睡). In this type of word, it is probably correct to assume an original sequence containing the main vowel *e* preceded by a labial medial and followed by a palatal final (\**wey*). The sequence of the main vowel and the final developed regularly into the monophonemic segment *i*, which is still synchronically preceded by the original labial medial. The same type of sequence can also occur in Tibetan items, in which it represents an original rounded mid back vowel (\**o*) in combination with a lost sibilant or palatal final (\**s* \**i*), as in *qui* [t<sup>ch</sup>ʷi] ~ [t<sup>ch</sup>y] ‘religion’ ← AT *qui* (WT **chos**). In many dialects of Amdo Tibetan the labial medial in this type of sequence has been lost, but in the local dialects surrounding Wutun it is apparently still preserved.

The sequence *ui* raises the question as to whether there also might exist a corresponding sequence of the type *i + u*. This is not likely, however, for the relevant original sequence (\**yew*) would regularly contain the final sequence *ek* in Wutun. It seems, indeed, that at least items of the type *jhek* ‘nine’ = SM *jiǔ* (九), involving an initial consonant of the palatal range, are best analyzed as ending in the sequence *ek* with no medial segment. It is more difficult to



determine whether a medial segment can be present after other types of initial consonant. There are indications that some speakers make a distinction between items like *lek* [lɔʷ] ‘sheep’ ← AT *lek* (WT **lug**) and *lik* [lʰɔʷ] ‘six’ = SM *liù* (六). If this is so, the sequence *ik* (with a non-nasal final) will have to be understood as a parallel to *in* (with a nasal final), and ultimately both sequences may be analyzed in terms of a palatal medial (*i-e-k* vs. *i-e-n*). On the other hand, there are indications that the phonetic qualities of the sequence *ek*, especially after a dental initial, can give the impression of a palatal medial even if no actual medial segment is present, as in the element *-tek* [tʰɔʷ] in items like *gutek* ‘bone’ = SM *gūtou* (骨頭).

Diachronically, the two Chinese medials were glides (\**w* \**y*), which used to form a class functionally separate from the regular consonants. Syllables beginning with a medial had originally no initial consonant (zero anlaut). This is no longer the case in Wutun, for the segments *w y*, which could be classified as glides, function as regular members of the obstruent system. Moreover, the original labial glide \**w* has been variously eliminated (by adding the consonantal initials *gh ng*). It is therefore rather difficult to establish any synchronic connection between the medials *u i* and the consonants *w y* in Wutun. More probably, the medials are, indeed, to be understood simply as non-syllabic uses of the high vowels *u i*.

In this connection it has to be noted that the segments *w y* do not seem to contrast with the absence of an initial consonant (zero anlaut) before the high vowels *u* resp. *i*. It is therefore possible to rewrite the vowels *u i* in syllable-initial position (#V) as the sequences *wu yi*. Although both phonetically and phonologically questionable, this notation has the advantage of being in line with the transcriptional tradition of Chinese (including the Pinyin system). For this reason, items like *wu* [u] ‘five’ = SM *wǔ* (五) and *yi* [i] ‘one’ = SM *yī* (一) are here written with an initial consonant, though at the level of pronunciation no consonantal element can be heard. A comparison with Amdo Tibetan, in which all vowel qualities can occur in syllable-initial position, would also suggest that it is a question of simple vowels with no preceding consonantal initial.

Finally, it has to be noted that Chinese has diachronically also sequences with two medials, palatal and labial (\**yw*), a combination that technically could also be interpreted as representing a separate third medial segment (high rounded front vowel). In Wutun, the labial element has been lost in these cases, leaving only an initial palatal

consonant, as in *xai* ‘snow’ = SM *xuě* (雪), *yan* ‘round’ & ‘smoke’ = SM *yuán* (圓) vs. *yān* (烟).

**§27. Sandhi phenomena.** Although the syllable in Wutun is the basic domain of segmental phonology, there are certain sandhi phenomena that affect the status of segments, especially consonants, at syllable boundaries. Such phenomena can be present either within a word or also across word boundaries. Since a large part of the Wutun lexicon consists of bi- and polysyllabic words, the phonology of the syllable boundary has, in fact, considerable potential relevance also for the lexicon. Even so, most of the phenomena concerned seem to be rather trivial and tend to remain at the phonetic level.

Since syllables with an initial vowel (zero anlaut) are, for a number of reasons, very rare in Wutun, and since such syllables are virtually absent as non-initial components of bi- or polysyllabic words, the following will only focus on some phenomena that affect the juncture of two syllables belonging to the same word and of which the latter begins with a consonant.

- Final vowel + initial consonant. There do not seem to be any systematic morphophonological or even phonetic processes that would affect intervocalic consonants in Wutun. In a few lexicalized cases, however, intervocalic consonants are ‘weakened’, as in *kang* ‘house’ ← AT *kang* (WT **khang**) : *sa-ghang* ‘restaurant’ (also *sza-ghang* with the reading pronunciation of the marginal phoneme *sz*) ← AT *sza-kang* (WT **za.khang**), literally: ‘eating house’.
- Nasal final + initial consonant. Although the nasal finals are in general realized as the nasalization of the preceding vowel, an actual nasal segment can also be present when a consonant immediately follows. This is especially the case, when the following consonant is a stop, to which the nasal final is assimilated, forming a homorganic cluster. Even so, the preceding vowel tends to remain nasalized to a varying extent, as in *hongba* [hõmpa] ‘arm’ ← AT *hongba* (WT **dpung.ba**), *minze* [mĩntʰə] ‘name’ = SM *míngzi* (名字), *san-ge* [sʰɛŋkə] ‘three’ CL = SM *sān ge* (三個). The nasal assimilation remains an entirely phonetic phenomenon, and it seems best not to incorporate it into the phonological transcription.
- Final consonant + preaspirated initial. Preaspiration, produced by the laryngeal preinitial (*h*), seems to be regularly lost at a syllable boundary after another consonant, as in *ghangga* ‘destiny’ ← AT



*ghang(h)ga* (WT **dbang.skal**). In such cases, it is a question of clusters of three consonants (*ng-h-g*) with the preinitial occupying the middle position. This positional loss of an interconsonantal laryngeal preinitial is probably present also in those idiolects that otherwise still preserve the preinitial segment as intact.

- Final vowel + nasal preinitial. Although the nasal preinitial also tends to be segmentally lost in Wutun, historical nasal preinitials often appear at syllable boundaries in the middle of words, resulting in clusters composed of a stop preceded by a homorganic nasal. In such cases, the nasal preinitial can be preserved even before a strong stop, in which position it is otherwise never synchronically attested. This results in diachronically motivated morphophonological alternations between zero (lost preinitial in initial position) and a nasal segment (preserved preinitial in medial position). However, it seems that in such cases the syllable boundary has moved backwards, so that the nasal segment synchronically forms the final of the preceding syllable, as in *co* 'lake' ← AT *co* (WT **mtsho**) : *jjhang-co* 'ocean' < \**jjha-vco* ← AT *jjhavco* (WT **rgya.mtsho**).

All of these phenomena have a background in the local Amdo Tibetan dialects, and Wutun has apparently received them together with the general Amdo Tibetan lexical and structural influence. The study of syllable-boundary phenomena is, however, one of the most difficult challenges of Amdo Tibetan phonology, and it cannot be ruled out that some of the phenomena discussed above turn out to be more complex than they appear. In particular, the original distinction between a nasal final and a nasal preinitial, both of which can form synchronic homorganic clusters with a following stop, might still be signalled at the phonological level by some qualitative detail of the vowels and/or consonants involved.

## MORPHOLOGY

§28. **Typological position.** In terms of morphological typology, Wutun may be characterized as an agglutinative language in which most grammatical relations are expressed by postpositional markers suffixed to the stem. The morphological system of the markers and their morphosyntactic functions exhibit a close similarity with Amdo Tibetan, which means, among other things, that Wutun has suffixally

marked forms for categories such as nominal number and case and verbal tense-aspect. Some categories, such as negation, can also be marked by prefixes. Most of the actual markers are etymologically of a native Sinitic origin, though there are also some markers directly transmitted to Wutun from Amdo Tibetan.

An important and typologically diagnostic category of a Tibetan origin in Wutun is that of verbal perspective, which to some extent compensates for the absence of a system of predicative personal conjugation. On the other hand, a major difference between Wutun and Amdo Tibetan is that Wutun, like most other forms of Chinese, is a language with a nominative-accusative strategy, while Amdo Tibetan, like most other forms of Tibetan, has a well-developed ergative system. There are also some differences in word order, especially as far the noun phrase is concerned. These differences mean that Wutun sentences are not always completely isomorphic with their Amdo Tibetan equivalents.

An important question relevant to both Wutun and Amdo Tibetan concerns the strength of the affixal bond. In both languages, most morphological markers have originated as postpositional particles, which syntactically used to function as separate words. Due to the scarcity of morphophonological alternations at the morpheme boundary, it is often difficult to determine where the distinction between postpositional particles and morphological suffixes goes. It could also be argued that the Wutun morphological markers remain 'clitics', implying a state between particles and suffixes or, in some cases, prefixes. An argument supporting this interpretation could be that many markers, including the case suffixes, can be attached to entire phrases, rather than to individual words. On the other hand, the stem and the marker(s) normally form a separate accentual group, suggesting that it is a question of a single word-level prosodic entity. This is the main reason why Wutun morphological markers are analyzed below as affixes, albeit the bond between the stem and the affix (-) tends to remain rather weak.

The only true examples of morphophonological alternation at the segmental level in Wutun are present in the declension of the personal pronouns. Here, we find occasional vowel alternations, as in PRON 1P:SG *ngu* : OBL *nga* = *ng-a*, but also consonant alternations as in PRON 1P:ASS *nga-mu* : GEN *ngan-de* = *nga-n-de*. There are also examples in which a segment functioning as the main vowel of a stem in one form is turned into a medial in another form. as in PRON 2P:SG *ni*



[ni] ~ [ni] : OBL *nia* [n<sup>1</sup>a] ~ [na] = *ni-a*. Incidentally, examples of the latter type seem to confirm that sequences of a medial and a main vowel are biphonemic entities, in which the two segments can even be separated by a morpheme boundary.

**§29. Parts of speech.** By their basic formal and functional properties, Wutun words can be divided into nominals, verbals, and invariables. Further criteria allow each class to be divided into a number of subclasses. It is, however, important to note that all these classes and subclasses are to some extent diffuse, and their boundaries are fuzzy. As in other Sinitic languages, the word classes in Wutun are best understood as emergent categories, the precise nature of which can vary considerably depending on the discourse context. For instance, nominals can in some cases function as verbals and take verbal markers, and vice versa. For some purposes it is relevant to speak of prototypical nominals and prototypical verbals.

Nominals include the subclasses of nouns, pronouns, numerals, and classifiers, as well as most of the words functioning as quantifiers (nominal quantifiers). Prototypical nominals may be identified with the subclass of nouns, though pronouns, further divided into personal and reflexive pronouns, demonstratives, and interrogatives, also follow closely the prototypical patterns of nominal behaviour. In terms of distribution, nominals function either as arguments in the clause or as modifiers of the head noun in the noun phrase, with some differences of preference between the subclasses. Morphologically, nominals can be inflected in number and case. The case suffixes indicate the roles of nominals in the clause, though the unmarked basic form also has a range of grammaticalized functions. Apart from the basic semantic-syntactic roles of subject, agent and patient, an essential place in Wutun morphosyntax belongs to the pragmatically motivated notions of topic and focus.

Verbals include the subclasses of verbs, complement verbs, auxiliaries, and adjectives, as well as some of the words functioning as quantifiers (verbal quantifiers). In terms of distribution, verbals typically function as predicates (both finite and non-finite) in the clause. Prototypical verbals may be identified with the subclass of verbs (proper), though it is important to note that adjectives in Wutun are also basically verbal words (static verbs) and can take the normal verbal markers. The morphologically marked categories of verbals include a variety of semantic, syntactic, and epistemic properties. The

meaning of a particular verbal marker often depends on the level of structural relationship. It is therefore useful to analyze the verbal morphosyntax in terms of three structural levels, here termed basic-level, equi-level, and clause-level, depending on whether interlinked verbs belong to a single structural unit (core) or not, and whether they share their argument structures or not.

Complement verbs and auxiliaries are partly grammaticalized subclasses of verbals that modify the main verb in the verb phrase. Their morphosyntactic status is somewhere between full verbs and grammatical markers. Complement verbs can be further divided into the functional groups of voice complements, aspect complements, and modal complements. Auxiliaries have an even less distinct semantic profile, but they remain syntactically more independent.

Invariables include all the words that share no distributional or morphological properties with either nominals or verbals. In practice, this means that invariables have no morphology. In terms of distribution, they can occur as modifiers to verbs and nouns, but also as independent entities. The three most important subclasses of invariables are adverbs, conjunctions, and interjections. Adverbs can further be divided according to their meaning into temporal, spatial, and modal adverbs. Interjections occur as independent utterances and express affirmation, negation, or emotion.

**§30. Nominal number.** Number marking for nouns is optional in Wutun. Therefore, unmarked nominal stems can have both a singular and a plural reference, e.g. *ren* 'person; people', *nek* 'cow; cows', *pigo* 'apple; apples', *lhakang* 'temple; temples'. Number marking is also absent in combination with numerals (1) and quantifiers (2-3):

- (1) *nga-ha*                      *ma*   *liang-ge*   *yek*  
 1P:SG:OBL-FOC              horse two-CL   EXIST  
 'I have two horses.'
- (2) *guda*              *lhakang*      *do-li-a*  
 there              temple      many-OBJ-INTERR  
 'Are there many temples there?'
- (3) *ren*              *yidaze*      *lai-gu-lio*                      *ze-li*  
 person      all              come-COMPL-PRF              EXEC-OBJ  
 'All the people have arrived.'



There are, however, also suffixal number markers in Wutun for as many as three numbers: singular, paucal, and plural (Fig. 8). These markers can be attached to all nouns denoting countable objects. The system is similar to the one present in the Bonan language, though the markers are etymologically different.

SG	PAUC	PL
-ge	-jhege	-dera

Fig. 8. Wutun number markers

The singular marker is *-ge*, as in *adia* 'monk' : SG *adia-ge* 'a monk', *daijhe* 'knife' : SG *daijhe-ge* 'a knife', *huaiqa* 'book' : SG *huaiqa-ge* 'a book'. Diachronically, this marker is identical with the Chinese classifier *ge* (個) 'piece', which is also attested as a classifier in Wutun. The use of the singular marker in Wutun has close parallels in both Bonan and Amdo Tibetan. The Amdo Tibetan equivalent is *-sseg* 'one' (WT *gzig*). In all these languages, singularity also implies indefiniteness, and it might be possible to analyze the singular marker also as an indefinite article.

The paucal marker is *-jhege*, which apparently represents a grammaticalized reflex of the quantifier *jhige* 'some' = SM *jige* (幾個). The paucal indicates small numbers of countable objects, as in *ha* 'Chinese person' : PAUC *ha-jhege* 'some Chinese people', *lhoma* 'student' : PAUC *lhoma-jhege* 'some students', *huaiqa* 'book' : PAUC *huaiqa-jhege* 'some books'. A functionally similar paucal marker is present in Bonan, but not in Amdo Tibetan.

The plural marker is *-dera*. The etymology of this marker is unclear, and its functional distinction with regard to the paucal marker is often somewhat fuzzy. Even so, the plural marker is basically used to refer to large numbers of countable objects (more than 'several'), as in *ren* 'person' : PL *ren-dera* '(the) persons, people', *lhakang* 'temple' : PL *lhakang-dera* '(the) temples'. It seems that the plural marker often also tends to convey a notion of limitedness or definiteness (definite plural), while the paucal marker is more commonly used to refer to an unlimited or indefinite group (indefinite plural).

**§31. Nominal case.** As a result of the intensive typological interaction with the neighbouring non-Sinitic languages, Wutun has developed a

relatively elaborate system of nominal case declension. Apart from the unmarked basic form, which may also be viewed as representing the nominative case, nominals can be marked for seven other cases, which may be termed: genitive, locative, superessive, distributive, ablative, sociative, and comparative. Some nominals, notably the personal pronouns, have additional features and idiosyncracies, but basically all nominals follow the same pattern of case declension.

The case markers may be formally divided into monosyllabic and bisyllabic entities (Fig. 9). While the monosyllabic markers are clearly suffixes, the status of the bisyllabic markers is somewhat ambiguous, and they could possibly also be analyzed as postpositional structural particles. Even so, they also tend to form a single accentual group with the preceding stem. It is important to stress that the case markers, although typically added to nominals and noun phrases, can under certain conditions also follow verbals.

GEN	-de
LOC	-li
SUPER	-she
DISTR	-na
ABL	-la
SOC	-liangge
COMP	-kanla

Fig. 9. Wutun case markers.

**§31.1. Genitive.** The genitive is marked by the suffix *-de*, the formal and etymological counterpart of the Standard Mandarin structural particle *de* (的). The basic function of this marker is to indicate possessor (possessive genitive), e.g. PRON SG:1P *ngu* : GEN *ngu-de* in *ngu-de huaiqa* 'my book', PRON SG:2P *ni* : GEN *ni-de* in *ni-de quandi* 'your clothes', *mize* 'younger sister' : GEN *mize-de* in *mize-de yang* 'the sheep of the younger sister'. The genitive can, however, also express non-possessive association (associative genitive), e.g. *gu(-)da* 'there' : GEN *guda-de* in *guda-de tianqhi* 'the weather there' (literally: 'the weather of there'), *zang* '(Central) Tibet' : GEN *zang-de* in *zang-de lu* 'the road to Tibet' (literally: 'the road of Tibet').



A marker formally identical with the genitive suffix *-de* also occurs in the verbal conjugation, where it is used, among other things, to nominalize verbal phrases (NMLZ). In some of its uses, it comes very close to the genitive (associative) function and could possibly be analyzed as a verbal genitive (GEN), as in (4):

- (4) *xhe-de*            *kun*            *yek*  
 drink-GEN          free:time        EXIST  
 '[You would] have [had] time to eat [the breakfast].'

**§31.2. Locative.** The locative is marked by the suffix *-li*, the formal and etymological counterpart of the Standard Mandarin locative particle *li* (裏) 'inside'. The locative basically indicates the location where an action takes place (inessive), as in (5-6):

- (5) *ngu*            *ya-li*            *xhen-di-yek*  
 1P:SG            yard-LOC        walk-PROGR-SUBJ  
 'I am walking in the yard.'
- (6) *ggaiggan*    *lhokang-li*    *huaiqa*        *kan-di-li*  
 teacher          classroom-LOC    book            read-PROGR-OBJ  
 'The teacher is reading books in the classroom.'

The locative can, however, also indicate the location towards which an action or movement is directed (lative), as in (7):

- (7) *gu*            *congkang-li*    *qhi-gu-lio*  
 3P:SG            shop-LOC        go-COMPL-PRF  
 'S/he went to the shop.'

It may be noted that the locative suffix can also be attached to proper nouns (place names), e.g. *rongbo* 'Longwu' : LOC *rongbo-li* 'at/ to Longwu', *zang* '(Central) Tibet' : LOC *zang-li* 'in/to Tibet'.

The use of the locative suffix is often optional. This is especially the case in clauses that contain locational or directional verbs like *co* 'to sit; to stay' or *do* 'to arrive', as in (8-9):

- (8) *gu*            *zhungo*            *co-di-yek*  
 3P:SG            China            sit-PROGR-SUBJ  
 'S/he lives in China.'

- (9) *gu*            *jhang*            *rongbo[-li]*        *do-lio*        *ze-li*  
 3P:SG            today            Longwu[-LOC]    arrive-PRF    EXEC-OBJ  
 'S/he arrived at Longwu today.'

**§31.3. Superessive.** The superessive is marked by the suffix *-she*, which represents an irregularly shortened counterpart of the Standard Mandarin superessive particle *shang* (上) 'upon'. Like the locative, the superessive serves as a local case, but while the former indicates location 'at' or 'in', the latter indicates location '(up)on', as in *lu* 'road' : SUPER *lu-she* 'on the road'. Due to its more specific function, the superessive is somewhat less commonly used than the locative. Also, the locative has a distinct suffixally marked equivalent in Amdo Tibetan *-na* (WT *la*), while the function of the superessive in Amdo Tibetan is normally expressed by a more complex postpositional construction (WT *thog.na* 'on the surface [of]').

The superessive can also be combined with the genitive into a double-declension form, in which the genitive suffix connects the superessive form with a following nominal phrase, as in (10). Similar constructions are also possible, but probably less common, with the other local case forms (locative and ablative).

- (10) *xhi-ban-she-de*                    *yegai*            *da-li*  
 black-board-SUPER-GEN            letter            big-OBJ  
 'The letters on the blackboard are big.'

**§31.4. Distributive.** The distributive is marked by the suffix *-na*. This is a case with a rather limited occurrence. Its basic function is to indicate the temporal duration and distribution of an activity (temporal distributive). The distributive marker is typically attached to nouns denoting units of time, as in (11-12). Formally, the suffix is identical with the Amdo Tibetan locative marker *-na*, and it possibly represents a specialized borrowing from the latter.

- (11) *san*    *nian-na*    *jhayek*    *jhang-la-gu-lio*            *ze-li*  
 three    year-DISTR    Chinese    study-NCOMPL-COMPL-PRF    EXEC-OBJ  
 '[S/he] has studied Chinese for three years.'
- (12) *liang*    *tian-na*    *sama*    *mi-qe-lio*            *ze-li*  
 two        day-DISTR    food        NEG-eat-PRF            EXEC-OBJ  
 '[S/he] has not eaten anything for two days.'



§31.5. **Ablative.** The ablative is marked by the suffix *-la*, which also has the variant *-ra*. The choice between the two variants is probably connected with idiolectal, sociolectal, or generational differences. The ablative indicates the origin, source, or starting point of a movement or an action ('from'), as in (13-14):

- (13) *aga dadada gguan-la lai-lio*  
 elder:brother just:now temple-ABL come-PRF  
 'Elder brother just came from the temple.'

- (14) *gunse-la ha-lai-gu-ge-lio ze-li*  
 company-ABL come:down-come-COMPL-CAUS-PRF EXEC-OBJ  
 '[S/he] was dismissed from the company.'

§31.6. **Sociative.** The sociative is marked by the element *-liangge*, which may be analyzed either as a suffix or, possibly, as a separate postposition. This marker is formally and etymologically identical with the numeral *liang-ge* 'two (together)' = SM *liǎng-ge* (兩個), containing the classifier *-ge*. A functionally very similar and formally analogous sociative case, also based on the numeral 'two', is present in several Mongolic languages of the Amdo region, including Bonan. Also, the etymological cognates of *liang(-ge)* function as case markers in several other varieties of Northwest Mandarin.

The sociative case covers the functions of both an instrumental, denoting instrument ('by', 'with'), and a comitative, denoting accompaniment ('together with'), as in (15-16):

- (15) *gu agu shetek-liangge zhaze da-pe-lio ze-li*  
 that girl stone-SOC window hit-break-PRF EXEC-OBJ  
 'That girl broke the window with a rock.'

- (16) *ngu ngu-de tixang-liangge qhi-zhe*  
 1P:SG 1P:SG-GEN younger:brother-SOC GO-CONT  
 'I will go together with my younger brother.'

The function of a comitative can also be expressed by the postposition *yida* 'together' = SM *yīdā* (一搭), which requires the preceding noun to be marked by the genitive suffix, as in (17). The constructions *-de yida* and *-liangge* are more or less synonymous. The presence of the genitive suffix before *yida* seems, however, to confirm

that it is a question of a separate word (regular postposition), while the absence of a genitive suffix before *-liangge* implies that it is a question of a suffix (case marker).

- (17) *ngu ni-de yida qhi-gu-qhe-de re*  
 1P:SG 2P:SG-GEN together GO-COMPL-able-NMLZ FACT  
 'I can go together with you.'

The sociative can also indicate the causee agent of a clause, as in (18-20). In such clauses, it is always a question of an inanimate force that cannot act intentionally or control the action.

- (18) *qho-ha qelok-liangge gang-gu-lio ze-li*  
 bridge-FOC flood-SOC flush-COMPL-PRF EXEC-OBJ  
 'The bridge was flushed away by the flood.'

- (19) *qhiqhek-ha hen-liangge qui-qhi-lio ze-li*  
 balloon-FOC wind-SOC blow-go-PRF EXEC-OBJ  
 'The balloon was blown away by the wind.'

- (20) *nga zhenqhak-liangge zhowa mi-li*  
 1P:SG-OBL flu-SOC appetite EXIST-NEG-OBJ  
 'Because I got a flu, I lost my appetite.'

Apart from noun phrases, the sociative marker can be attached to nominalized verb phrases, as in (21). In such cases the verb phrase functions as a causee, and the entire sequence of suffixes (NMLZ-SOC) may be understood as a complex converbial marker indicating a relationship of causal or temporal subordination.

- (21) *dak jhan-lio-de-liangge*  
 tiger see-PRF-NMLZ-SOC  
 'When [they] saw a tiger,

*ren yidaze haipa-gu-lio ze-li*  
 person all be:frightened-COMPL-PRF EXEC-OBJ  
 all the people were frightened.'

§31.7. **Comparative.** The comparative is marked by the suffix *-kanla*, which also has the variant *-kanra*. The segmental difference between



the two variants (-*l* ~ -*r*-) is the same as in the ablative marker, and is probably determined by similar factors. Like the sociative marker, the comparative marker can also be analyzed either as a suffix or, possibly, as a separate postposition. Formally, it is a question of the verb *kan* 'to see, to look, to watch' = SM *kàn* (看) in combination with the conditional converb marker -*la* ~ -*ra* (COND). The complex marker -*kan-la* ~ -*kan-ra* 'looking at' > 'in view of' > 'compared to' has an exact structural parallel in the Amdo Tibetan postpositional comparative particle *hdi-na* (WT **bltas.na**), also based on the verb 'to see, to look, to watch' (WT **lta**).

Since adjectives are verbal words in Wutun, they function as predicates in the sentence. In the comparative construction, the comparative marker is therefore attached to the nominal word serving as the point of comparison, as in (22):

- (22) *je-ge*    *jjhakai*    *zhungo-kanla*    *xaige*    *ga-li*  
 this-CL    country    China-COMP    very    small-OBJ  
 'This country is much smaller than China.'

**§32. Grammatical focus.** A conspicuous feature of the Wutun case system, as can be established for prototypical nouns, is the absence of any marking on those nominal parts of the sentence that fill the semantic-syntactic roles of the agent (or subject) and patient (or object). It is mainly the absence of any marker on the agent of transitive predicates that allows Wutun to be classified as a language with a nominative-accusative strategy.

Wutun does, however, have an element that in some of its functions comes close to an accusative marker. This element has the shape *-ha*, and it has formal and functional analogies in several other forms of Northwest Mandarin. In these other idioms, the cognates of Wutun *-ha* have been analyzed variously as markers of an accusative, dative, dative-accusative, or also anti-ergative. It remains unclear to what extent the relevant structures in the various forms of Northwest Mandarin are identical. However, in Wutun, at least, the element *-ha* does not fully qualify as a syntactically motivated accusative case marker. Rather, it is probably best identified as a discourse-oriented, pragmatically motivated focus marker.

An examination of the uses of the focus marker reveals that it typically highlights selected constituents of the sentence and makes them more prominent in the discourse. Functionally, the focus marker

is in some respects reminiscent of the Standard Mandarin focus particle *bǎ* (把), and it is even possible that the two elements are etymologically related. Like its counterpart in Standard Mandarin, the focus in Wutun denotes definite or generic referents that are supposed to be known to the listener. This type of focus may also be called *grammatical* focus, and it is important to distinguish it from the concept of *information* focus, which typically involves information that is supposed to be new to the listener.

The focus marker can be attached to nominals with a variety of semantic and syntactic functions. Even so, the most typical examples involve either a patient (direct object) or a recipient (indirect object), as in (23-24):

- (23) *gek*            *shai-ha*            *nio-se-lio*            *ze-li*  
 dog            snake-FOC            bite-die-PRF            EXEC-OBJ  
 'The dog bit the snake to death.'
- (24) *ngu*            *aba-ha*            *je*    *huaigq*            *ka-gu-lio*  
 1P:SG            father-FOC            this    book            give-COMPL-PRF  
 'I gave this book to father.'

The focus marker can also be attached to nominals expressing experiencer (25), possessor (26), or location (27):

- (25) *gu-ha*            *e-di-li*  
 3P:SG-FOC            hungry-PROGR-OBJ  
 'S/he is hungry.'
- (26) *aba-ha*            *nek*            *do*            *yek-li*  
 father-FOC            cattle            many            EXIST-OBJ  
 'Father has many cattle.'
- (27) *gu*            *selang-ha*            *lhojjhong*    *qhi-de*            *re*  
 3P:SG            Xining-FOC            study            GO-NMLZ            FACT  
 'S/he will go to Xining for study.'

The examples show that the marking of the grammatical focus in Wutun has a distinct preference for those parts of the sentence that in other languages with case declension would be marked for the accusative or the dative. Even the examples involving an experiencer



(25) or a possessor (26) are within the functional range of a typical dative case, while the examples involving a location (27) could also be analyzed as containing accusative marking, assuming that the verbs in these examples are transitive. It may be concluded that, although grammatical focus in Wutun is a category distinct from case, the focus marker could be characterized as a kind of proto-case marker, which could easily develop into an actual accusative or dative-accusative case marker with a broad range of functions.

The assumption of at least an indirect connection between the categories of case and grammatical focus is confirmed by the fact that the focus marker can replace the case suffixes, but it cannot co-occur with them. The only exception seems to be formed by the singular first and second person personal pronouns, which have a distinct oblique case form, also functioning as a dative-accusative, to which the focus marker is added, i.e., PRON 1P:SG *ngu* : OBL *nga* : OBL-FOC *nga-ha*, PRON 2P:G *ni* : OBL *nia* : OBL-FOC *nia-ha*. Focus marking on these pronouns, as on any nominals, seems to be optional, and there are examples of identical, or almost identical, sentences with and without the focus marker, as in (28-29):

(28) *ya ngu nia din-yek*  
 ok 1P:SG 2P:SG:OBL wait-SUBJ  
 'Ok, I will wait for you.'

(29) *ngu nia-ha din-di-yek*  
 1P:SG 2P:SG:OBL-FOC wait-PROGR-SUBJ  
 'I am waiting for you.'

It may be concluded that the focus marker indicates which nominal constituent is in the focus of attention. When there is no focus in the sentence, or when there is no need to emphasize it, there is no focus marker. A need to use the focus marker often arises in a wider discourse context when, for instance, there is a sudden change of focus, as in the following dialogue (30-32). The focus marker is here used to indicate that the roles of speaker and listener are reversed when moving from one question (30) to the other (32):

(30) A: *nia dun-li-a*  
 2P:SG:OBL cold-OBJ-INTERR  
 'Are you feeling cold?'

(31) B: *en zaige dun-li*  
 yes little cold-OBJ  
 'Yes, [I am feeling] a little cold.'

(32) B: *nia-ha dun-li-a*  
 2P:SG:OBL-FOC cold-OBJ-INTERR  
 'And how about you, are you feeling cold?'

§33. **Personal pronouns.** The personal pronouns (Fig. 10), all of which are of a Sinitic origin, form a coherent subclass of nominals in Wutun. The vowel representation in PRON 1P:SG *ngu* appears irregular and may be due to the analogy of PRON 3P:SG *gu*, which itself is a local Northwest Mandarin item also functioning as a distal demonstrative pronoun. Earlier materials on Wutun (Chen) also contain the 'regular' shape *ngo* = SM *wǒ* (我). Wutun also has the alternative third person pronoun *ta* = SM *tā* (他 她 它), but it is mainly used to refer to the subject of indirect report. It may be noted that Wutun has no gender distinction for the third person pronoun/s ('s/he'), although a gender distinction is present in Amdo Tibetan.

	SG	PAUC	ASS
1P	<i>ngu</i>	<i>ngu-jhege</i>	<i>nga-mu</i>
2P	<i>ni</i>	<i>ni-jhege</i>	<i>ni-mu</i>
3P	<i>gu</i>	<i>gu-jhege</i>	<i>gu-mu</i>

Fig. 10. Wutun personal pronouns

Non-singular personal pronouns are formed from the singular stems by the markers *-jhege* and *-mu*. The marker *-jhege* is identical with the paucal marker of nouns, and the relevant pronominal forms are therefore formally 'paucals', though they seem to function simply as plurals. The marker *-mu* is probably identical with the Standard Mandarin plural particle *men* (们), but in Wutun it forms associative plurals with the meaning 'the person and his/her associates'. An additional feature of the first person pronominal stem is that the vowel exhibits the morphophonological alternation *u* : *a*, with the stem variant *nga-* appearing before the associative marker.

Both the unmarked singular pronouns and the marked paucal and associative forms can take case suffixes. Particularly common are



the genitives, also used as possessive pronouns, which are formed by adding the regular genitive suffix *-de* to the pronominal stems, e.g. PRON 1P:SG-GEN *ngu-de* 'my, mine', 2P *ni-de* 'thy, thine', 3P *gu-de* 'his, her/s'. In the associative forms, however, the suffix *-mu* is changed to *-n-* before the genitive marker, i.e., PRON 1P-ASS-GEN *nga-n-de* 'our/s', 2P *ni-n-de* 'your/s', 2P *gu-n-de* 'their/s'.

The paucal and associative forms of the personal pronouns can sometimes be used interchangeably, as in (33-34):

(33) *nga-mu yidaze zhungo bozhe kan-hai-yek*  
 1P-ASS all China newspaper read-can-SUBJ  
 'We all can read Chinese newspapers.'

(34) *ngu-jhege yidaze zhungo bozhe kan-hai-yek*  
 1P-PAUC all China newspaper read-can-SUBJ  
 'We all can read Chinese newspapers.'

Normally, however, the two forms show a functional distinction, the associative being used for groups with and the paucal for groups without internal cohesion. There are indications that the marker *-mu* can, at least in some idiolects, also be added to regular nouns denoting persons, e.g. *aba* 'father' : ASS *aba-mu* 'father and his associates'. The genitives of the associative forms are often used in reference to family members, e.g. *ngan-de ana* 'our mother', *ngan-de mize* 'our little sister' = 'the little sister in our family', *gun-de awu* 'their little boy' = 'the little boy in their family', or also local identities, e.g. *ngan-de hua* 'our language' = 'the Wutun language', *ngan-de ti-she* 'in our place' (with *ti* 'place' : SUPER *ti-she*). In practice, the first person associative form also functions as an exclusive pronoun ('our group without you'), while the paucal form functions as an inclusive pronoun ('we and ycu'). The distinction between exclusive and inclusive plurals is present in both Amdo Tibetan and Bonan.

An important feature of the first and second person singular pronouns is that their declension includes a special multifunctional oblique case, which could also be termed dative-accusative. This case is marked by the element *-a*, which is merged with the preceding pronominal stem to yield the synthetic forms PRON SG:1P-OBL *ng-a* = *nga* resp. 2P *ni-a* = *nia*, to which the focus marker *-ha* can also be added. Both with and without the focus marker, the oblique forms are used whenever the pronouns concerned occur in roles other than

agent. The typical roles of the oblique case include those of patient (35), recipient (36), experiencer (37), and possessor (38).

(35) *ngu nia sha-zhe*  
 1P:SG 2P:SG-OBL kill-CONT  
 'I will kill you.'

(36) *gu nga-ha yo-de ka-lio*  
 3P:SG 1P:SG-OBL-FOC lend-NMLZ BEN-PRF  
 'S/he lent [it] to me.'

(37) *enhen nga zaige-ra be-dun-li*  
 no 1P:SG-OBL little-EMPH NEG-cold-OBJ  
 'No, I don't feel cold at all.'

(38) *nia zang jja-la-de laighang mi-li*  
 2P:SG-OBL Tibet visit-NCOMPL-NMLZ destiny EXIST:NEG-OBJ  
 'It is not your destiny to visit Tibet.'

The fact that it is exactly the first and second person singular pronouns that have a special oblique form has a background in the universal agentivity hierarchy. However, in a more restricted areal context it is no coincidence that a closely analogous pronominal oblique case is also present in Bonan.

It is also interesting to note that the pronominal oblique forms are occasionally used as separately standing emphatic pronouns, as in (39), an example involving an imperative sentence.

(39) *nia ni bai-ghi sho-ma*  
 2P:SG-OBL 2P:SG PROH-go say-SER  
 'You, you should not go, [he] said [and].'

§34. **Demonstratives.** Wutun has two basic demonstrative stems, *je(-)* 'this' for proximal functions and *gu(-)* 'that' for distal functions. The former corresponds to Standard Mandarin *zhè* (這), while the latter is the same Northwest Mandarin item that is also used as the third person personal pronoun. Both stems can be combined with the general classifier *-ge*, yielding the forms *je-ge* resp. *gu-ge*, as well as with the regular nominal number and case markers (Fig. 11). The local case forms of the demonstratives serve also as demonstrative adverbs.



These are formed regularly in the proximal series, yielding LOC *je-li* 'here; hither' : ABL *je-la ~ je-ra* 'from here', while in the distal series the stem *gu-* is replaced by *wu-* in the locative, but not in the ablative, yielding LOC *wu-li* 'there; thither' : ABL *gu-la ~ gu-ra* 'from there'. The locative function can also be expressed by the special adverbial forms *je-da* resp. *gu-da*, marked by the suffix *-da*.

	PROX	DIST
NOM	<i>je</i>	<i>gu</i>
CL	<i>je-ge</i>	<i>gu-ge</i>
PAUC	<i>je-jhege</i>	<i>gu-jhege</i>
PL	<i>je-dera</i>	<i>gu-dera</i>
LOC	<i>je-li</i>	<i>wu-li</i>
ADV	<i>je-da</i>	<i>gu-da</i>
ABL	<i>je-la</i>	<i>gu-la</i>

Fig. 11. Wutun demonstratives.

When functioning as modifiers of a noun, the demonstrative pronouns, either with or without the classifier, normally precede the noun they modify, e.g. *je joze ~ je-ge joze* 'this table', *gu joze ~ gu-ge joze* 'that table'. The demonstrative pronouns can, however, also follow the noun they modify, e.g. *lhoma je* 'this student', *dondak gu-ge* 'that matter'. The latter word order (headword + modifier) is borrowed from Amdo Tibetan.

In this context, it may be recalled that the adverbial forms *je-li* resp. *wu-li* and *je-da* resp. *gu-da* can also function as basic forms and take additional case markers, notably the genitive marker *-de*. The resulting complex forms can modify nouns, as in *wu-li-de adia* 'the monk of that place' (literally: 'the monk of there').

The use of the paucal and plural forms of the demonstrative pronouns seems to depend mainly on the parameter [ $\pm$ human]. Thus, the paucal forms *je-jhege* resp. *gu-jhege* tend to occur only with [+human] nouns, while the plural forms *je-dera* resp. *gu-dera* can also be used with [-human] nouns. This is in line with the fact that the distal demonstrative pronoun, when functioning as a third person plural personal pronoun, is normally in the paucal form *gu-jhege* 'they', which, in turn, also correlates with the first and second person

pronominal forms *ngu-jhege* 'we' resp. *ni-jhege* 'you'. Obviously, the distinction of the paucal and plural markers involves several levels of differentiation, including not only the size of the group (several vs. many) and, possibly, its definiteness (indefinite vs. definite), but also, at least in some cases, the parameter [ $\pm$ human].

The plural form *gu-dera* is also used in the indefinite function of 'other/s', as in (40). The meaning of 'other' can also be expressed by the Amdo Tibetan word *xxanba* (WT **gzhan.pa**), as in (41).

(40) *qhichai-da gu-dera-she kuai-di lamenna*  
 car-and other-PL-SUPER fast-PROGR instead  
 '[People] go quickly by car and other [vehicles] instead.'

(41) *ni jjhakai xxanba-li ghi-li-a*  
 2P:SG country other-LOC go-OBJ-INTERR  
 'Have you visited foreign countries?'

§35. **Interrogatives.** Wutun has two interrogative stems, *a-* and *ma(-)*, both of which are local Northwest Mandarin items. The stem *a-* is only attested in compounds and inflected forms, while the stem *ma* can also be used alone. The form CL *a-ge* 'who', containing the classifier *-ge*, refers to [+human] nouns and forms the interrogative counterpart of the personal pronouns, as in (42). This reference is preserved when *a-ge* is followed by case markers, as in the genitive form *a-ge-de* 'whose' (43). By contrast, the forms *ma* 'what' : CL *ma-ge* 'what, which', either with or without the classifier, refer to [-human] nouns and function as the interrogative counterparts of the demonstrative pronouns, as in (44).

(42) *a-ge huanlan-di-li*  
 who make:noise-PROGR-OBJ  
 'Who is making noise?'

(43) *gu-ge joze a-ge-de yek*  
 that-CL table who-CL-GEN EXIST  
 'Whose is that table?'

(44) *ni-de minze-li ma sho-yek*  
 2P:SG-GEN name-LOC what say-SUBJ  
 'What is your name?'



Other forms based on the stem *a-*, but not containing the classifier, function as general interrogatives, corresponding mainly to the adverbial forms of the demonstratives. Relevant interrogative adverbs include LOC *a-li* 'where; whither' and ABL *a-la* ~ *a-ra* 'from where', as well as *a-menzai* 'how', incorporating the noun *menzai* 'way how to'. A form based on the stem *ma-* is *ma-shema* 'why' (45), which possibly contains a counterpart of Standard Mandarin *shénme* (甚麼) 'what'.

- (45) *ni*            *mashema*            *kuu-lio-zhe*  
 2P:SG        why                    cry-complete-CONT  
 'Why did you start crying?'

All interrogative pronouns can have an indefinite function. For instance, *ma-ge* 'what' can also be used in the meaning 'something', which, in turn, can also have the adverbial meaning of 'somewhat, somehow', as in (46):

- (46) *zhawa*    *ma-ge*    *tin-qhe-lio-de*            *re*  
 disciple    what-CL    get:ill-start-PRF-NMLZ    FACT  
 'The disciple began feeling somehow ill.'

**§36. Reflexive pronoun.** The Wutun reflexive pronoun is *gejhai* 'oneself' = SM *gè* (個) + *jiā* (家). This pronoun has three commonly used forms: the unmarked basic form (nominative), the genitive in *-de*, and an oblique form (dative-accusative) in *-na*. The unmarked basic form refers to the agent, as in (47), while the genitive functions as a modifier and means 'one's own', as in (48):

- (47) *xxanxhan*            *yidaze*            *to-gu-ge-ma*  
 monk's:clothes    all            take:off-COMPL-CAUS-SER  
 '[The monk] took off all the clothes [of the disciple]

*gejhai*    *tai-she-ma*  
 one:self    fold-get-SER  
 and folded them [by] himself.'

- (48) *je*    *agu*    *gejhai-de*            *ana*            *pa-ze-lio*  
 this    girl    one:self-GEN    mother    help-do-PRF  
 'This girl helps her [own] mother.'

In all other roles, the oblique form in *-na* is used. In practise, this typically means the roles of patient (object) or recipient (indirect object), as in (49). The oblique form of the reflexive pronoun thus corresponds to the first and second person oblique forms *nga* resp. *nia*. The marker *-na* may also be etymologically connected with the synthetic element *-a* in the personal pronouns concerned, though the diachronic connection remains unclear.

- (49) *gejhai-na*            *xen*    *hai-ge*            *yo-di-li*  
 one:self-OBL    new    shoes-CL    want-PROGR-OBJ  
 'S/he wants to have a new pair of shoes for him/herself.'

**§37. Numerals and classifiers.** The Wutun cardinal numerals for the basic digits are all of a Sinitic origin (Fig. 12).

		CL
1	<i>yi/zek</i>	<i>yi-ge</i>
2	<i>ek</i>	<i>liang-ge</i>
3	<i>san</i>	<i>san-ge</i>
4	<i>se</i>	<i>se-ge</i>
5	<i>wu</i>	<i>wu-ge</i>
6	<i>lek</i>	<i>lek-ge</i>
7	<i>ci</i>	<i>ci-ge</i>
8	<i>ba</i>	<i>ba-ge</i>
9	<i>jhek</i>	<i>jhek-ge</i>
10	<i>she</i>	<i>she-ge</i>

Fig. 12. Wutun basic numerals.

All the basic numerals can be used in combination with the general classifier *-ge* = SM *ge* (個), which indicates the unit of objects counted. This remains the only classifier in the language. Apparently, the simplification of the classifier system, a feature well-known from Standard Mandarin, but especially prominent in Northwest Mandarin, has been completed in Wutun under the impact of the neighbouring non-Sinitic languages. Even so, there are some other nominal words which are reminiscent of classifiers, and which, therefore, are not



combinable with the general classifier *-ge* when counted. These include certain units of time, especially *tian* 'day' and *nian* 'year', and units of occurrence, notably *tang* 'time', e.g. *san tian* 'three days', *san nian* 'three years', *san tang* 'three times'. Of special interest is *rang* 'person/s, people', which represents a phonologically aberrant and functionally distinct variant of *ren* 'person' = SM *rén* (人). While the latter form is used as an independent noun, as well in compounds and with markers, the former is used with numerals, e.g. *yi-ge rang* 'one person'. It is, however, not a question of a classifier, since the numeral before *rang* bears the regular classifier *-ge*.

There are also some minor differences between the numeral series, as used with and without the classifier *-ge*. In the case of the numeral for 'two', the basic stem *ek* = SM *èr* (二) is replaced by *liang* = SM *liǎng* (兩) before the classifier. Also, when used without the classifier, the numeral for 'one' occurs in two alternative shapes, the basic shape *yi* = SM *yī* (一) and the extended shape *yi-zek* (with the etymologically obscure element *-zek*).

The multiple decades are expressed by adding the numeral for 'ten' *she* = SM *shí* (十) to the basic digits (multiplication): 20 *ek-she*, 30 *san-she*, 40 *se-she*, 50 *wu-she*, 60 *lek-she*, 70 *ci-she*, 80 *ba-she*, 90 *jhek-she*. The intermediate numerals combine the tens with the digits (addition), e.g. 15 *she-wu*. Both the tens and the intermediate numerals can also be combined with the classifier *-ge*.

The higher powers of ten are expressed by a mixture of Sinitic and Bodic elements. For 'hundred', the Mandarin item *-bai(-ge)* = SM *bǎi* (百) is used, always in combination with a preceding modifying digit, as in 100 *yi-bai(-ge)*, 300 *san-bai(-ge)*. For 'thousand' and 'ten thousand', the Amdo Tibetan items 1,000 *dong* < *hdong* (WT **stong**) and 10,000 *che* (WT **khri**) are used, to which the classifier *-ge* can also be added. The latter two numerals remain morphosyntactically Tibetan nouns, and the modifying digits are placed after them, as in 10,000 *che yi-zek*, 20,000 *che liang(-ge)*. In such cases, the numeral *dong* can also have the extended shape *dong-co* (WT **stong.tsho**), as in 3,000 *dong san(-ge) ~ dong-co san(-ge)*.

Although numerals, both with and without the classifier *-ge*, can precede the noun they modify, especially when used in combination with units of time, e.g. *san-ge yai* 'three months', *she-wu tian* 'fifteen days', it is more common that they follow the noun, as also in Amdo Tibetan, e.g. *dico yi-zek* 'one hour', *ma liang-ge* 'two horses'. Obviously, the use of the classifier as a singular marker (or as an

indefinite article) is also based on this word order, e.g. *huaiqa-ge* 'a book' < *huaiqa yi-ge* 'one book'. Other numerals, especially *liang-ge* 'two', can indicate the number of individuals in a group, as in *adia-da zhawa liang-ge* 'the monk and the disciple [the two] together'. From this usage, the numeral *liang-ge* has developed further into the sociative case marker.

The ordinal numerals are formed by placing the ordinal prefix *di-* = SM *dì* (第) before the cardinal numerals, e.g. *di-yi* 'first', *di-ek* 'second', *di-san* 'third', etc. Alternatively, the corresponding Amdo Tibetan ordinal numerals can be used, incorporating the prefix *ang-* 'number' and the suffix *-wo ~ -wa ~ -ba*. The ordinal numerals for the first decade are, then: *ang-dang-wo* 'first' (WT **xang.dang.po**), *ang-ni-wa* 'second' (WT **xang.gnyis.pa**), *ang-sen-ba* 'third' (WT **xang.gsum.pa**), *ang-xxe-wa* 'fourth' (WT **xang.bzhi.pa**), *ang-nga-wa* 'fifth' (WT **xang.lnga.pa**), *ang-zhek-ba* 'sixth' (WT **xang.drug.pa**), *ang-dden-ba* 'seventh' (WT **xang.bdun.pa**), *ang-jjhai-ba* 'eighth' (WT **xang.brgyad.pa**), *ang-gge-wa* 'ninth' (WT **xang.dgu.pa**), *ang-je-wa* 'tenth' (WT **xang.bcu.pa**).

**§38. Quantifiers.** Quantifiers in Wutun are either nominal or verbal words. The nominal quantifiers are functionally and grammatically reminiscent of indefinite pronouns and numerals. They include items like *jhi ~ CL jhi-ge ~ yi-jhi-ge* 'some, a few, several' = SM *yī* 'one' (一) + *jīge* 'some' (幾個), *zai ~ CL zai-ge ~ zai-zai-ge* 'some, a little' ← AT (*zai-zai(-sseg)*) (WT **tse.tse.gzig**) and *yida-ze* 'all' < *yida* 'together' = SM *yīdā* (一搭) + *zi* (子).

Some nominal quantifiers, especially *jhi ~ CL jhi-ge*, are used before the noun (or classifier) they modify, e.g. *jhi tang* 'several times' (with *tang* possibly to be understood as a classifier), *jhi-ge rang* 'several people' (with *rang* not to be understood as a classifier). In some cases they can also be used as independent headwords without a noun, e.g. *yi-jhi-ge* 'some (people)'. More often, however, nominal quantifiers stand between a noun (agent or patient) and a verb (predicate), in which position they may be understood as modifying either the former (in the capacity of an attribute) or the latter (in the capacity of an adverb), as in (50):

- (50) *danzhen-ha jhenze zai-ge tian-la-lio*  
 [name]-FOC gold a:little-CL draw-NCOMPL-PRF  
 'Danzhen found a little gold.'



The two basic verbal quantifiers are *do* 'many' = SM *duō* (多) and *sho* 'few' = SM *shǎo* (少). Functioning as predicates, these take markers typical of the verbal morphosyntax, as in (51):

- (51) *jeda jjhakai xnanba-de lhakang do-li*  
 there country other-GEN temple many-OBJ  
 'There are many foreign churches here.'

The primary verbal quantifier *do* serves as the basis for the secondary nominal quantifier *do-do-de* 'many, much, a lot of', which represents a reduplication of the stem *do* augmented by the nominalizer (or genitive suffix) *-de*. The quantifier *dodode* is normally placed between a noun and a verb, as in (52):

- (52) *hura-li hu dodode zhun-ma-li*  
 garden-LOC flower many grow-RES-OBJ  
 'There are a lot of flowers growing in the garden.'

Finally, it has to be noted that the quantifier *do* 'many' can also be used as an interrogative word in the meaning 'how many'. An adverbial form based on this usage is *do-xige* 'when' (53).

- (53) *ni do-xige lai-lio*  
 2P.SG when come-PRF  
 'When did you come?'

**§39. Verbal markers.** From the point of view of the structure of the verb phrase, Wutun is best characterized as a serial verb language with an elaborate system of grammatical markers. By serial verbs, or verbal serialization, in this context is meant the method of grouping verbs into series or chains of interlinked predicates. Serialization can take place at three different levels, corresponding to basic-level, equi-level, and clause-level structures, and it allows predicates to be linked with each other in a variety of ways. Grammatical markers, on the other hand, are morphological elements that indicate the referential and epistemic properties of the verb phrase.

Verbal markers can be divided into four subclasses, which may be identified as tense-aspect markers, structural markers, serial markers, and sentence markers. Tense-aspect markers specify the temporal-aspectual status of the verb. Structural markers, which may

follow tense-aspect markers but also the unmarked verbal stem, affect the syntactic function of the verb phrase. Serial markers, which are always attached to the unmarked verbal stem, show the relationship between the component events expressed by two or more serialized verbs. Finally, sentence markers, which follow (or precede) the verbal stem with or without temporal-aspectual markers, target the sentence as a whole, defining its general position with regard to parameters such as perspective, interrogation, and negation.

In basic-level structures, serialization involves the integration of complement verbs into the verb phrase. In a verb-complement construction there is always a main verb, which occupies the first slot in the sequence and carries the basic semantic load, and one or more complement verbs, which indicate additional semantic and functional properties. The complement verbs are attached to the main verb without intermediate markers, and all the verbs in the sequence may be regarded as forming a single structural unit (core), which may also phonologically be analyzed as a single word. The main verb and the complement verb(s) share their argument structure, and grammatical markers are added after the (last) complement verb.

Constructions with auxiliaries are closely comparable with the verb-complement structures. However, while complements follow the main verb without any intervening marker(s), and within the confines of the same phonological word, auxiliaries are probably best analyzed as separate words, which take their own verbal marking, and which follow a main verb also containing verbal marking. Normally, in these cases, tense-aspect marking is placed on the main verb, which comes first, while sentence marking is placed on the following auxiliary. Even so, the main verb and the auxiliary form a single structural unit, and the auxiliary can have no arguments of its own.

In equi-level structures, there are two semantically related verbs which belong to two different structural units (juxtaposed cores) but have a common argument. In these structures, the first verb takes a serial marker, which shows the nature of the relationship between the serialized verbs, while the second verb takes the normal verbal marking, including tense-aspect markers, structural markers, and sentence markers, as required by the context. The chain of serialized verbs may also comprise more than two units.

In clause-level structures, there are two or more semantically independent verbs belonging to separate component clauses. Each verb has an argument structure of its own, though there may also be



common (corefential) arguments. The component clauses are normally juxtaposed without any formal marker indicating the structural relationship. Verbal marking is placed on the last verb of the chain. In some cases, however, the relationship between the members of the chain can also be indicated by structural or serial markers. The basic difference between equi-level and clause-level chains is whether the predicates necessarily share an argument (in equi-level structures) or not (in clause-level structures).

**§40. Complement verbs.** Complement verbs are originally regular full verbs, and many of them still survive in their lexical function also in Wutun. However, when used in the function of complement verbs, they have lost part of their semantic content, as well as their syntactic and phonological independence. As a result, they have become partly grammaticalized elements that are used suffixally in combination with a main verb. Depending on the semantics, certain complement verbs can only be combined with certain main verbs, but in principle, the number of combinations has no limit.

The degree and type of grammaticalization of complement verbs varies, with some complement verbs retaining more of their original semantic content than others. Such differences can also be reflected by differences in the morphological and syntactic behaviour of the individual complement verbs, and to some extent they correlate with functional distinctions. From the functional point of view, complement verbs are conveniently divided into the three subclasses of voice complements, aspect complements, and modal complements, depending on whether their grammaticalized function is biased towards expressing voice, aspect, or modality.

**§40.1. Voice complements.** Voice complements are a group of strongly grammaticalized complement verbs that are more or less void of any lexical meaning. They add a completive, non-completive, or causative meaning component to the meaning of the main verb. At the same time, they specify the orientation of the verb as agent-centered, patient-centered, or causee-centered. Depending on its orientation, the verb-complement construction can reflect different degrees of transitivity with regard to the described event.

Being in the grammaticalized end of the functional continuum of complement verbs, voice complements are very close to grammatical markers. This means, among other things, that they normally follow

other types of complements, which can contribute also to the lexical meaning of the main verb. Moreover, voice complements cannot be negated individually, for (prefixal) negation marking is always attached to the preceding main verb.

There are only three commonly used voice complements. These are: the non-completive complement *-la*, the completive complement *-gu*, and the causative complement *-ge* (Fig. 13). In view of their highly grammaticalized functions, all of these could synchronically also be classified as verbal markers.

NCOMPL	<i>-la</i>
COMPL	<i>-gu</i>
CAUS	<i>-ge</i>

Fig. 13. Wutun voice complements.

The non-completive complement *-la* represents a borrowing from the Amdo Tibetan multifunctional structural marker *-la* (WT .**pa** ~ .**ba**). It marks the extension of a state or an activity in time or space, and gives the verb a non-completive meaning as well as an agent-centered orientation. However, *-la* can be followed by another voice complement, which can reverse the status of the entire construction with regard to completion and orientation.

With many verbs of a Tibetan origin, *-la* is losing its status as a separate element and becoming an integral part of the lexicalized form of the verb itself. This may be exemplified by the modal verbs *ddo* 'to want' ← AT *ddo* (WT **vdod**) and *kek* 'to be able' = SM *kěyí* (可以), of which only the former, but not the latter, is combined with the complement *-la* in a pair of otherwise analogous sentences (54-55). Similar examples can also be found for verbs denoting state, activity, process, transition, or displacement.

(54) *ngu sama qe-la be-ddo-la-li*  
 1P:SG food eat-COND NEG-want-NCOMPL-OBJ  
 'I do not want to eat.'

(55) *nga-mu qhichai mai-la be-kek-yek*  
 1P-ASS car buy-COND NEG-be:able- SUBJ  
 'We cannot buy a car.'



On the other hand, in a number of structures, the complement *-la* can also be attached to verbs of a Sinitic origin, like *qu* 'to live' = SM *zhù* (住) in (56). In such cases, it is often a question of sentences which express the speaker's attitude, appreciation, or conclusion based on the extant or supposed state of affairs.

- (56) *je yi-jhan-li chong liang-ge hong-she-qhe-li*  
 this one-room-LOC bed two-CL put-get-able-OBJ  
 'It is possible to put two beds in this one room.'

*liang-ge rang qu-la-li*  
 two-CL people live-NCOMPL-OBJ  
 so that two people can live in it.'

The completive complement *-gu* represents the etymological equivalent of the Standard Mandarin experiential marker *guo*, based on the verb *guò* 'to pass' (過). It marks the endpoint of an action or a process and gives the verb-complement construction a completive meaning as well as a patient-centered orientation. As a result, the verb reflects the high degree of transitivity of the event, which is described as completed. However, the completive voice complement *-gu* can be followed by the causative voice complement *-ge*, which, then, adds a causative meaning and gives a causee-centered orientation to the construction as a whole.

Constructions with the complement *-gu* can have an intransitive, anticausative, or passive meaning. When used in combination with intransitive verbs expressing motion or activity, *-gu* marks a spatial or temporal endpoint, as in (57):

- (57) *gu congkang-li qhi-gu-liao*  
 3P.SG shop-LOC go-COMPL-PRF  
 'S/he went to the shop.'

When used in combination with intransitive verbs expressing a state (adjectives), *-gu* marks a turning point and gives the construction an anticausative (translative) meaning, as in (58):

- (58) *ngu-de ana lo-gu-ma-li*  
 1P.SG mother old-COMPL-RES-OBJ  
 'My mother has turned old.'

When used in combination with transitive verbs, *-gu* marks the natural endpoint of the action and gives the construction a passive meaning, as in (59):

- (59) *joze-she huaiqa-ge hong-she-gu-liao*  
 table-SUPER book-SG place-get-COMPL-PRF  
 'There is a book placed on the table.'

The causative complement *-ge* is possibly a grammaticalized reflex of the verb *gi* 'to give' = SM *gěi* (給). It modifies the verb type by adding a causee into the argument structure of the verb. At the same time, it gives the verb-complement construction a causative meaning and a causee-centered orientation. As a result, the verb reflects the high degree of transitivity of the event, which is described as caused. The construction may have a ditransitive (60), causative (61), or third person imperative (62) meaning.

- (60) *ana galamala-ha xen quandi quan-ge-di-li*  
 mother child-FOC new clothes put:ON-CAUS-PROGR-OBJ  
 'Mother is putting new clothes on the child.'
- (61) *gu-jhege nga-ha zek xaige xhe-ge-liao*  
 3P-PAUC 1P:SG:OBL-FOC wine much drink-CAUS-PRF  
 'They made me drink a lot of wine.'
- (62) *gejhai-na ngamong qhi-ge*  
 one:self-OBL camel ride-CAUS  
 'Let him (himself) ride a camel!'

The causative voice complement *-ge* can also be used in equi-level resultative and purposive structures, often in combination with the completive voice complement *-gu*. In resultative structures, as in (63), *-ge* is attached to the second of the serialized verbs and functions as a causative complement verb. In purposive structures, as in (64), *-ge* is attached to the first of the serialized verbs and functions as a causative irrealis marker.

- (63) *gu yidaze qe-ma liao-gu-ge-ma-li*  
 3P.SG all eat-SER get:finished-COMPL-CAUS-RES-OBJ  
 'He has eaten up everything.'



- (64) *xen tin-de-ge xen-de man-liangge*  
heart get:ill-NMLZ-SG heart-GEN medicine-SOC  
'A heart disease is treated'

*ho-gu-ge-lio ze-li*  
good-COMPL-CAUS-PRF EXEC-OBJ  
with heart medicine.'

**§40.2. Aspect complements.** Aspect complements belong to the middle range of the continuum of complement verbs and differ greatly in their degree of grammaticalization. The aspect complements in the lexical end add a semantic meaning of result or direction together with an aspectual meaning of completion to the meaning of the main verb. Towards the grammaticalized end, the lexical meaning gradually fades away and the aspectual meaning of completion alone remains. Some aspect complements can, however, also have the additional modal meaning of potentiality (ability, possibility), reflecting the speaker's attitude to the realization of the action.

Verbs used as aspect complements of result include *bo* 'to get full' = SM *bǎo* (飽), *guan* 'to get used to' = SM *guàn* (慣), *je* 'to hit' = SM *zháo* (着), *jhan* 'to see' = SM *jiàn* (見), *lio* 'to get finished' = SM *liǎo* (了), *man* 'to get full' = SM *mǎn* (滿), *man* 'to get finished' = SM *wán* (完), *pe* 'to get broken' = SM *pò* (破), *se* 'to die' = SM *sǐ* (死), *ze* 'to do' = SM *zuò* (作), as well as *qai* 'to get broken' ← AT *qai* (WT **vchad**). In the basic-level resultative structure, the main verb describes the action, while the complement verb marks the result, as in (65). Typically, the complement verb is interpreted as patient-centered and gets an anticausative meaning.

- (65) *ni zhaze da-pe-lio ze-li*  
2P-SG window hit-get:broken-PRF EXEC-OBJ  
'You have broken the window.'

The resultative verb-complement structure can also be followed by a more profoundly grammaticalized voice complement, such as the completive complement *-gu*, as in (66):

- (66) *zhungo-de sama qe-guan-gu-lio ze-li-mu*  
China-GEN food eat-get:used-COMPL-PRF EXEC-OBJ-INTERR  
'Have you got used to eating Chinese food?'

As in other forms of Mandarin, the negative marker *be-* can be inserted immediately before the complement, giving the construction an additional modal connotation ('cannot'), as in (67):

- (67) *nga gu yegai kan-be-jhan-li*  
1P-SG-OBL that letter see-NEG-see-OBJ  
'I cannot see those letters.'

Verbs used as aspect complements of direction include *do* 'to get done' < 'to arrive' = SM *dào* (到), *gu* 'to be put away' < 'to pass' = SM *guò* (過), *kai* 'to expand' < 'to start' = SM *kāi* (開), *lai* 'to be united' < 'to come' = SM *lái* (來), *qhe* 'to start' < 'to rise' = SM *qǐ* (起), *qhi* 'to be separated' < 'to go' = SM *qù* (去), *qui* 'to get an outcome' < 'to exit' = SM *chū* (出), and *she* 'to get a result' < 'to ascend' = SM *shàng* (上). Some of these, notably *qhi* and *lai*, can also express direction without completion, as in (68):

- (68) *gu nian bi-she-ma nian-remo-she-la*  
3P-SG eye close-get-SER eye-lash-SUPER-ABL  
'He closed his eyes, and from his eyelashes'

*nian-lo liang-ge ha-lai-lio*  
eye-tear two-CL come:down-come-PRF  
two tears dropped.'

Verbs used as aspect complements of completion with an additional notion of potentiality include *gu* 'to be going to' < 'to pass' = SM *guò* (過), *qhe* 'to be able to' < 'to rise' = SM *qǐ* (起), and *qen* 'to manage to' < 'to become' = SM *chéng* (成). These can also be combined with other aspect complements, as in (69):

- (69) *nga-mu da gu qhichai mai-she-qhe-li*  
1P-ASS now that car buy-get-able-OBJ  
'We cannot buy that car now.'

In the corresponding negative constructions, the negative marker *be-* can either precede the whole construction, implying that the negation refers to the action itself, or it can be placed immediately before the aspectual complement, implying that only the result or possibility is negated, as in (70):



- (70) *ngu jhang qhi-gu-be-qen-yek*  
 1P:SG today go-COMPL-NEG-manage-SUBJ  
 'I cannot go [there] today.'

§40.3. **Modal complements.** Modal complements are the least grammaticalized group among complement verbs. They are basically modal verbs that express deontic or epistemic modality, and some of them may also function as ordinary full verbs without any difference in meaning or form.

Verbs used as modal complements include *dio* 'must' < (\*)*de-yo* = SM *de* (的) + *yào* (要), *hai* 'to know how' = SM *hui* (會), *kek* 'be able to' = SM *kěyǐ* (可以), *wa-la* '(to be) possible' < *wa* = SM *fǎ* (法) 'way, means' + NCOMPL *la*, *ma-la* '(to be) impossible' < NEG:EXIST *mi* + *wa-la*, as well as *ddo* 'to want' ← AT *ddo* (WT **vdod**).

More often than other complements, modal complements occur in equi-level structures, in which the main verb and the complement are separated by a serial marker, as in (71). There are, however, also examples of basic-level structures, as in (72).

- (71) *jeda co-ma ma-la-li*  
 here live-SER impossible-NCOMPL-OBJ  
 'It is impossible to live here.'

- (72) *ngu ha-hua zai-ge sho-hai-yek*  
 1P:SG Chinese a:little speak-can-SUBJ  
 'I can speak a little Chinese.'

It may be noted that modal complements are not the only elements in Wutun that can contribute a deontic or epistemic meaning to the sentence. A similar function can also be filled by the aspect complements of result (when negated) and completion (when used to express potentiality), as well as by several auxiliaries (either alone or in combination with structural markers)

§41. **Tense and aspect.** Tense and aspect are two intertwined verbal categories which in Wutun are expressed in a variety of ways, both synthetic and analytic, and with a varying degree of grammaticalization. For purposes of grammatical description, it is important to make a distinction between primary tense-aspect forms, expressed by tense-aspect markers, and various secondary constructions, composed

of verbal forms and auxiliaries, which often involve a complex mixture of temporal-aspectual and modal connotations. In a strictly morphological framework, it is sufficient to deal with the primary tense-aspect forms only.

Although the distinction between finite and non-finite verbal forms is not fully crystallized in Wutun, the primary tense-aspect forms may be understood as finite forms, which are typically used as predicates of complete sentences, though they can also be followed by sentence-final auxiliaries. By contrast, predicates of non-complete sentences are marked by structural or serial markers, which may be understood as indicating non-finite forms, though they can also involve temporal-aspectual distinctions.

There are four primary tense-aspect markers in Wutun. All of these have multiple functions covering both temporal and aspectual meanings, but in view of their aspectual functions they may be defined as marking the perfective, continuative, progressive, and resultative aspects (Fig. 14). In addition, a finite predicate can be neutral with regard to temporal-aspectual distinctions, in which case it bears no tense-aspect marker.

PRF	-lio
CONT	-zhe
RES	-ma
PROGR	-di

Fig. 14. Wutun tense-aspect markers.

The default interpretation of a finite predicate unmarked for tense and aspect is that of present (or general) tense and imperfective aspect. Such a predicate is nevertheless normally marked for the epistemic category of perspective, as in (73):

- (73) *gu sho-de be-kuai-li*  
 3P:SG speak-NMLZ NEG-fast-OBJ  
 'He speaks not fast,

*nga-mu yidaze sawo jedo-li*  
 1P-ASS all clear know-OBJ  
 [so that] we all [can] understand clearly.'



The presence of a resultative complement in the predicate can, however, give the unmarked form a past tense reference, as in (74):

- (74) *gejhai laiga-wa qen-she-li*  
 one:self work-man become-get-OBJ  
 'He [himself] became a worker.'

A finite predicate with no marking at all normally expresses a command (second person imperative), as in (75):

- (75) *ni lai-ma yegai xai*  
 2P:SG come-SER letter write  
 'Come and write a letter!'

The perfective marker *-lio* is formally and etymologically identical with the aspect complement of result *lio* = SM *liǎo* (了), the difference between the two functions being only evident at the level of morphosyntax. As a tense-aspect marker *-lio* normally indicates an action that was terminated, though not necessarily completed, in the past. To describe a past event also as completed, a complement of result has to be added to the verb. The perfective marker *-lio* is added to the last main verb of the sentence (76), or to last complement of an equi-level construction (77). If it is necessary to mark the category of perspective, the marker of the latter is attached to a semantically void auxiliary (EXEC) following the main verb (78).

- (76) *ngu ghong-gu-lio*  
 1P:SG forget-COMPL-PRF  
 'I have forgotten [it].'
- (77) *gu liang-ge gga-la-qhe-lio*  
 3P:SG two-CL be:glad-NCOMPL-start-PRF  
 'The two of them became glad.'
- (78) *cui to-ze-gu-lio ze-li*  
 thief escape-do-COMPL-PRF EXEC-OBJ  
 'The thief has escaped.'

The continuative marker *-zhe* represents the counterpart of the Standard Mandarin imperfective particle *zhe* (着). In Wutun, this is an

aspect marker mainly in combination with a preceding perfective marker, which in this case is probably best understood as representing the complement *-lio*. The sequence *-lio-zhe* expresses a past or terminated action whose effect continues to the present and future (79). It is also used on static verbs (adjectives) to show the continuous relevance of the state (80).

- (79) *loshe nga she-li qhi-ge-lio-zhe*  
 teacher 1P:SG:OBL home-LOC go-CAUS-complete-CONT  
 'The teacher sent me home.'
- (80) *ngu je-ge ddaiba-li da-lio-zhe*  
 1P:SG this-CL village-LOC big-complete-CONT  
 'I grew up in this village.'

In combination with the negative existential *mi-* ('did not'), *-zhe* is used without *-lio* to express the continuing relevance of the absence of an action, as in (81):

- (81) *ngu nia mi-sho-zhe-ya*  
 1P:SG 1P:SG:OBL NEG-say-CONT-PART  
 'I did not tell you.'

The marker *-zhe* is, however, also used in a temporal sense to express the future tense. In view of its origin, this usage may also be understood as expressing a continuous intention that is relevant already at the time of speaking, as in (82). As a rule, *-zhe* is not combined with perspective marking.

- (82) *rongwo gguanba jja-la-qhi-zhe*  
 Longwu monastery visit-NCOMPL-go-CONT  
 'I am going to visit Longwu monastery.'

The resultative marker *-ma* (of unclear origin) gives the verb a resultative interpretation and indicates the end state of the patient. It is normally followed by a perspective marker, as in (83):

- (83) *gu nixhe-de xencai xaige qang-ma-li*  
 that girl-GEN body very long-RES-OBJ  
 'That girl has grown very tall.'



Most often, the resultative marker *-ma* is used in combination with the complements *-gu* (84) and *-she* (85).

- (84) *ngu huaiqa xai-de qang-gu-ma-li*  
 1P:SG book write-NMLZ long-COMPL-RES-OBJ  
 'It turned out that I made this book too long.'

- (85) *je nguiwo gui-she-ma-li*  
 this thing expensive-get-RES-OBJ  
 'This thing is more expensive [than before].'

The progressive marker *-di* is of a complex origin, deriving from a combination of the structural marker *-de* = SM (的) with the existential auxiliary *yek* = SM *yǒu* (有). With dynamic verbs, it indicates an on-going or habitual action (86), while with static or ambivalent verbs it can also indicate an on-going state (87-88):

- (86) *gu huaiqa kan-di-li*  
 3P:SG book read-PROGR-OBJ  
 'He is reading a book.'

- (87) *gu men kai-di-li*  
 3P:SG door open-PROGR-OBJ  
 'He is opening the door.'

- (88) *men kai-di-li*  
 door open-PROGR-OBJ  
 'The door is [being kept] open[ed].'

The complex origin of the progressive marker is still evident from the fact that the corresponding negative construction involves the use of the negative existential *mi*, which stands separately after the progressive form and takes the evidential marker (89):

- (89) *gu sama qe-di mi-li*  
 3P:SG food eat-PROGR EXIST:NEG-OBJ  
 'He is not eating anything.'

§42. **Structural markers.** Structural markers may be defined as grammatical elements that modify the verb to which they are attached,

separating structural units within complex structures. Structural markers, like serial markers, may be understood as marking non-finite predicates. However, while serial markers link separate predicates with each other, structural markers can link predicates also, and especially, with other constituents in the sentence.

There is strictly speaking only one structural marker in Wutun. This is the element *-de*, which is the equivalent of Standard Mandarin *de* (的地得). Like its Standard Mandarin counterpart, the Wutun structural marker *-de* has multiple functions, and it is difficult to tell whether it is synchronically a question of a single element (polysemy) or of several formally identical but functionally distinct elements (homonymy). Even so, most of the functions of *-de* may be derived from one basic function, which is that of nominalization. It is therefore possible to view *-de* basically as a nominalizer (NMLZ), whose function is to change the grammatical representation of a verb to that of a noun. In this, *-de* functions very much like a formative of verbal nouns (participles and infinitives) in other languages, including the Mongolic languages of the Amdo region.

The nominal character of verbs marked by the nominalizer *-de* is evident from the fact that they, thus marked, can also take the element *-ge*, which is a typically nominal marker. In the declension of regular nouns, *-ge* is used as a singular marker (SG), while in combination with pronouns and numerals it is better identified as a classifier (CL). When combined with a nominalized verb, *-ge* may also be analyzed as a classifier. Its basic function in this usage is to mark the nominalized verbal constituent as specific, as in (90-91):

- (90) *gu goba ddangda-di-de-ge xang-li*  
 3P:SG as:if think-PROGR-NMLZ-CL seem-OBJ  
 'He looked as if he were [one who was] thinking.'

- (91) *je-ge ddaiba sola-de-ge hai-li*  
 this-CL village comfortable-NMLZ-CL EQU-OBJ  
 'This village is [one that is] comfortable.'

A verb marked by the nominalizer *-de* forms the predicate of an embedded clause, which can have arguments of its own. On the other hand, the nominalized verb itself can be used as an argument to another verb. Thus, it can occur in the roles of a subject / topic (92) and object (93) to a finite or non-finite predicate.



- (92) *ni qhe-lai-de zaige zo-de-ra*  
 2P:SG rise-come-NMLZ a:little early-NMLZ-COND  
 'If you had got up a little earlier,

*nia guntang qe-de kun yek*  
 2P:SG:OBL breakfast eat-NMLZ time EXIST  
 you would have had time to eat breakfast.'

- (93) *yi-tian laiga wanlan-ma-da hua-de jedo-lio*  
 one-day work do-RES-CONSEQ tire-NMLZ know-PRF  
 'After working the whole day, he felt exhausted.'

When used immediately before a noun, the nominalized verb functions as an attribute (agentive participle), as in (94). The nominal headword of the attributively used nominalized verb can also be elliptically omitted and the whole construction used as a predicative noun, resulting in a passive meaning (95).

- (94) *ngu jhang mai-lio-de huaiqa gui-li*  
 1P:SG today buy-PRF-NMLZ book expensive-OBJ  
 'The book I bought today was expensive.'

- (95) *shu gu ngu zai-lio-de hai-li*  
 tree that 1P:SG plant-PRF-NMLZ EQU-OBJ  
 'That tree was planted by me.'

When attached to a verb standing immediately before an atelic motion verb, notably *qhi* 'to go' = SM *qù* (去) and *lai* 'to come' = SM *lái* (來), the nominalizer *-de* receives a function that, at least superficially, is reminiscent of a serial marker, as in (96).

- (96) *ni jhang zo-xhui-de qhi-zha*  
 2P:SG today bathe-water-NMLZ go-CONT.INTERR  
 'Are you going swimming today?'

The nominalized verb is also used in many special constructions with a greater or lesser degree of grammaticalization. In particular, there are several auxiliaries that require the preceding main verb to be marked by the nominalizer *-de*. Some of the resulting combinations, including the complement *-dio* 'must' < (\*)*de-yo* = SM *de* (的) + *yào*

(要) and the progressive marker *-di* < (\*)*-de-yek* = SM *de* (的) + *yǒu* (有), have been restructured and lexicalized into synchronically indivisible grammatical entities.

**§43. Serial markers.** Serial markers are a category of non-finite markers that indicate the relationships between the complement events described by the serialized verbs in a description of a complex event. Serial markers do not modify the verb to which they are attached, but they function as links between the members of polypredicative constructions in equi-level and clause-level structures. As such, they are functionally equivalent to what are also termed verbal adverbs (converbs or gerunds) in other languages, including the Mongolic languages of the Amdo region.

In a sequence of serialized verbs, serial markers can be attached to all the verbs but the last, while the last verb takes the regular finite marking for tense-aspect and/or perspective. The semantic relationship between the serialized verbs can involve various temporal-aspectual or modal distinctions, which are expressed by distinct serial markers. Even so, the functional realms of the individual serial markers are to some extent overlapping.

Commonly used serial markers in Wutun include the general serial marker *-ma*, the consequential marker *-da*, and the conditional marker *-la* (Fig. 15). All of these are used in both equi-level and clause-level structures. In addition, the structural marker *-de* can in some of its uses come close to a serial marker.

SER	<i>-ma</i>
CONSEQ	<i>-da</i>
COND	<i>-la</i>

Fig. 15. Wutun serial markers.

The general serial marker *-ma*, which is formally and possibly etymologically identical with the conjunction *ma* 'and' (also used between two nouns), indicates that the semantic relationship between the component events belongs to the realis. The basic function of *-ma* is to show the mutual coordination of two events ('and'). The second verb in the construction may indicate, for instance, the result (97) or manner (98) of the activity of the first verb.



(97) *huaiqa je ngu kan-ma lio-gu-lio*  
 book this 1P:SG look-SER complete-COMPL-PRF  
 'I finished reading this book.'

(98) *gu sa-ma kuai-li*  
 3P:SG run-SER be:fast-OBJ  
 'He is running [and he is] fast.'

Often, there is a temporal and/or causal succession between the two events, with the event expressed by the last verb taking place later than ('and then') or as a consequence of ('and therefore') the verb(s) in the serial form (99). In clause-level structures, the verbs need not share any arguments (100).

(99) *gu quandi quan-ma men-li ji-ma*  
 3P:SG clothes put:on-SER door-LOC squeeze-SER  
 'He put on his clothes, squeezed [himself] through the door,

*she-li qhi-gu-lio*  
 home-LOC go-COMPL-PRF  
 [and then] went home.'

(100) *ngu lai-ma yi-nian go-la-gu-lio*  
 1P:SG come-SER one-year pass-NCOMPL-COMPL-PRF  
 'One year has passed since I came.'

The consequential marker *-da* most probably represents a grammaticalized reflex of the adverb *da* 'now, then' ← AT *da* (WT **da**). As a serial marker, this element gives the verb a more general conceptual meaning and indicates that the relationship between the activity or the state and the expectation concerning its consequence belongs to the irrealis, as in (101):

(101) *ni zang jja-la-gu-da wa-la-li*  
 2P:SG Tibet visit-NCOMPL-COMPL-CONSEQ possible-NCOMPL-OBJ  
 'If you go to Tibet, there will be no problem.'

Quite often, the consequential marker *-da* is attached to the temporal-aspectual markers *-di* (PROGR) and *-ma* (RES). The resulting sequences of markers indicate that the serialized verbs represent a

temporally and/or causally organized series of simultaneous (*-di-da* 'while, at the same time as') resp. consecutive (*-ma-da* 'after, by the reason of') actions, as in (102-103):

(102) *daijhe-ge ngan-di-da da adia sho-de*  
 knife-CL hold-PROGR-CONSEQ then monk say-NMLZ  
 'As he was pressing the knife, the monk said [thus]:'

(103) *zhawa mi-wa-la-ma-da*  
 disciple NEG-possible-NCOMPL-RES-CONSEQ  
 'The disciple did not get better,

*ban-lu-she da se-gu-lio-de re*  
 half-way-SUPER then die-COMPL-PRF-NMLZ FACT  
 [and] then, in the middle of the way, he died.'

The conditional marker *-la*, which also has the variant *-ra*, is formally, though not necessarily etymologically, identical with the ablative marker of the nominal declension (with a similar variation in the initial consonant). This marker also occurs in the composition of the comparative case marker *-kan-la*. Another point of comparison is offered by the Amdo Tibetan conditional marker *na* (WT **na**).

The conditional marker basically indicates that the modal relationship between the component events belongs to the irrealis ('if, in case'), as in (104):

(104) *ni je huaiqa kan-gu-de hong-la*  
 2P:SG this book read-COMPL-NMLZ VOL-COND  
 'If you read this book,

*ngu xaige gga-la-li*  
 1P:SG very glad-NCOMPL-OBJ  
 I will be very glad.'

Often, however, the relationship of the events involves a simple temporal succession ('when'), as in (105):

(105) *ni huaiqa kan-man-lio-gu-la*  
 2P:SG book look-finish-complete-COMPL-COND  
 'When you have finished reading the book,



*nga-ha*      *qen-qui-la*      *ka*  
 1P:SG:OBL-FOC    give-come:out-COND    give  
 give it [back] to me!

The conditional marker can also be attached to the semantic main verb of deontic structures. In these cases, it contributes a vague complementing meaning and functions more like a structural marker required by the modal verb, as in (54-55).

An interesting case is offered by what would seem to be another serial marker with the shape *-tala* and with the meaning 'until, in order to' (106). It is possible that this marker is synchronically associated with the conditional serial marker *-la* (~ *-ra*). However, etymologically it seems to be a question of an entirely different element, borrowed from Bonan, where a formally identical marker (*-tala*) with a well-documented Mongolic background functions as a terminative converb. It is therefore probably correct to analyze the marker also in Wutun as a terminative (TERM) serial marker and assume that it was borrowed from Bonan.

(106) *zang-li*      *do-tala*      *san-ge*      *yai-ma*  
 Tibet-LOC    arrive-TERM    three-CL    month-and  
 'They say that, in order to arrive in Tibet

*she-wu*    *tian*    *xhen-dio-de*    *re*      *sho-li*  
 ten-five    day    go-NEC-NMLZ    FACT    QUOT-OBJ  
 you had to walk three months and fifteen days.'

Even if grammatical (as well as lexical) borrowings from Bonan into Wutun are conspicuously less common than those from Amdo Tibetan into both languages, they are apparently not non-existent. The fact that Wutun and Bonan do share grammatical markers suggests that there was a period when the two languages interacted even more closely than they do today, when the only medium of communication between the two speech communities is Amdo Tibetan.

**§44. Auxiliaries.** Auxiliaries are verbs used to form a grammatical structure. They add neither a semantic nor a grammatical meaning component to the main verb but function as independent structural constituents instead, expressing a variety of temporal-aspectual and/or modal meanings. Unlike complement verbs, auxiliaries are best

analyzed as separate words. In a typical auxiliary structure, both the main verb and the auxiliary take grammatical markers of their own, but complement verbs can normally be added only to the main verb. Some auxiliaries also function as copulas (with a nominal predicate) to form what may be called a copular structure. All true auxiliaries, like most complements, seem to be monosyllabic.

EQU	<i>hai</i>
NEG:EQU	<i>bai</i>
FACT	<i>re</i>
EXIST	<i>yek</i>
NEG:EXIST	<i>mi</i>
DUR	<i>co</i>
NEC	<i>yo</i>
VOL	<i>hong</i>
BEN	<i>ka</i>
QUOT	<i>sho</i>
EXEC	<i>ze</i>

Fig. 16. Wutun auxiliaries.

According to the type of grammatical structure they form, the Wutun auxiliaries (Fig. 16) can be divided into the equative copulas *hai* (~ *he*) 'is' = SM *shì* (是) vs. *bai* 'is not' < *be-hai* = SM *bú shì* (不是), the factual copula *re* (~ *rai*) ← AT *rai* (WT **red**), the existentials *yek* 'there is' = SM *yǒu* (有) vs. *mi* 'there is not' = SM *méi* (沒), the durative auxiliary *co* 'to sit' = SM *zuò* (坐), the necessitative auxiliary *yo* 'must' = SM *yào* (要), the voluntative auxiliary *hong* 'to be willing' = SM *fàng* (放), the benefactive auxiliary *ka* 'to give' (North-west Mandarin), the quotative auxiliary *sho* 'to say' = SM *shuō* (說), and the executive auxiliary *ze* 'to do' = SM *zuò* (做).

From the formal point of view, the structures in which the auxiliaries participate vary widely. Most often, however, the main verb preceding the auxiliary is marked by the nominalizer *-de*, which can also be preceded by the perfective marker *-lio*. The equative copulas *hai* resp. NEG *bai* can in this construction indicate necessity (107), while the factual copula *re* indicates certainty (108). The equative and factual copulas can also be used together (109).



- (107) *ngu*      *lhasa*      *qhi-de*      *hai-yek*  
 1P:SG      Lhasa      go-NMLZ      EQU-SUBJ  
 'I will [have to] go to Lhasa.'
- (108) *gu*      *mak*      *dang-lio-de*      *re*  
 3P:SG      soldier      act-PRF-NMLZ      FACT  
 'He has [certainly] been a soldier.'
- (109) *zho*      *zowo-ge*      *hai-de*      *re*  
 singing      main:thing-CL      EQU-NMLZ      FACT  
 'Singing is [certainly] the most important thing.'

In a similar construction, the durative auxiliary *co* expresses a durative aspect (110), while the existentials *yek* resp. NEG *mi* express a progressive aspect (111). However, the sequence *-de yek* tends to have a deontic meaning (112), while the temporal-aspectual function is filled by the synthetic progressive marker *-di*.

- (110) *ngu*      *yegai*      *xai-de*      *co-de*      *yek*  
 1P:SG      letter      write-NMLZ      DUR-NMLZ      EXIST  
 'I am [continuously] writing letters.'
- (111) *da*      *ngu*      *xhuiyang*      *jua-de*      *mi-yek*  
 now 1P:SG      fish      catch-NMLZ      EXIST:NEG-SUBJ  
 'Nowadays I am not catching any fish.'
- (112) *gu*      *ngu-jhege-de*      *yida*      *qhi-de*      *yek*  
 3P:SG      1P-PAUC-GEN      together      go-NMLZ      EXIST  
 'He agrees to go together with us.'

The necessitative auxiliary *yo* and the voluntative auxiliary *hong* express their respective modal functions (113-114).

- (113) *da*      *ni*      *qhi-de*      *yo-li*  
 now      1P:SG      go-NMLZ      NEC-OBJ  
 'You have to go now.'
- (114) *nga-ha*      *sho-de*      *hong*  
 1P:SG:OBL-FOC      say-NMLZ      VOL  
 '[Please] tell me!'

The benefactive auxiliary *ka* is also normally combined with a nominalized main verb (115):

- (115) *ni*      *huaiqa*      *je*      *nga*      *nian-de*      *ka-da*  
 2P:SG      book      this      1P:SG:OBL      read-NMLZ      BEN-nOW  
 'Please let me read that book!'

The pattern of linking two verbs with the nominalizing structural marker *-de* is so common that it also occurs with cognitive verbs like *jedo* 'to know, to feel' (93) and motion verbs like *qhi* 'to go' (96) vs. *lai* 'to come'. While these verbs are best not classified as auxiliaries (proper), they may be developing into auxiliaries. At the same time, the nominalized verb is developing into a general connective form (supine or infinitive) of the verbal conjugation.

Unlike the other auxiliaries, the quotative auxiliary *sho* and the executive auxiliary *ze* are normally used in combination with a finite temporal-aspectual form of the preceding main verb. The quotative auxiliary *sho* is typically preceded by the continuative marker *-zhe*, implying that it is a question of an intention to be realized in the immediate future ('saying that'). This auxiliary also takes perspective marking, as in (116).

- (116) *gu*      *je-ra*      *qhi-zhe*      *sho-li*  
 3P:SG      this-also      go-CONT      QUOT-OBJ  
 'S/he will also go.'

The executive auxiliary *ze* is normally used in combination with a preceding perfective form of the main verb, its main function being merely to form a base for perspective marking, as in (117). This function is relevant in combination with the perfective marker *-lio*, which cannot take direct perspective marking itself. By contrast, the progressive marker *-di* (< *-de + yek*) can take perspective marking and does not require the use of *ze* as an extra base.

- (117) *ngu*      *koshe-gu-lio*      *ze-li*  
 1P:SG      sleep-COMPL-PRF      EXEC-OBJ  
 'I fell asleep.'

In the copular structure, the position of the main verb is filled by a nominal predicate, which is followed by the equative copulas *hai*



resp. NEG *bai* (118). The place of the nominal predicate can also be occupied by a nominalized verb, to which the classifier *-ge* is added to pick up the content of the verb phrase (119).

- (118) *ngu*      *lhoma*      *hai-yek*  
 1P:SG      student      EQU-SUBJ  
 'I am a student.'

- (119) *gu-ge*      *gui-de*      *yangze-da*      *ddokwa*  
 that-CL      cupboard-GEN      style-and      colour  
 'The style and colour of that cupboard'

- ngu*      *gga-la-de-ge*      *hai-li*  
 1P:SG      like-NCOMPL-NMLZ-CL      EQU-OBJ  
 are something that I like.'

The existentials *yek* resp. NEG *mi* can also be used in what may be termed the existential structure. In this structure, the main verb bears the general serial marker *-ma*. The implication is that something has come into existence (120) or, in case of the negative existential, that something has not yet been realized (121).

- (120) *guda da she-ge gai-she-gu-ma yek-li*  
 there now house-CL build-get-COMPL-SER EXIST-OBJ  
 'They have now built a house over there.'

- (121) *ni xhui-ma mi-li-a*  
 2P:SG sleep-SER EXIST:NEG-OBJ-INTERR  
 'Have you not yet gone to sleep?'

It may be noted that the affirmative existential *yek* is also the etymological source of the subjective perspective marker *-yek*. In this case, however, the two functions are best analyzed as being marked by synchronically separate elements (homonymy).

**§45. Perspective.** Perspective markers form the most important class of sentence markers in Wutun. Perspective marking is a typological feature characteristic of the Bodic linguistic sphere, from where it has been transmitted into several non-Tibetan languages of the Amdo region, including Wutun. Although often confused with evidentiality,

perspective is a distinct category that divides statements into two contrasting types: those belonging, and those not belonging, to the personal (egophoric) sphere of the speaker. The two types may be identified as representing the subjective (also termed conjunct) and objective (also termed disjunct) perspectives, respectively.

SUBJ	<i>-yek</i>
OBJ	<i>-li</i>

Fig. 17. Wutun perspective markers

Each perspective has a distinct marker (Fig. 17), which in the finite verb phrase always comes after complements and tense-aspect markers, as well as after the executive auxiliary *ze*, if present. The subjective perspective marker *-yek* is etymologically identical with the existential *yek* 'there is' = SM *yōu* (有), while the objective perspective marker *-li* may or may not be connected with the verb *lai* 'to come' = SM *lái* (來). It is not immediately clear why exactly these two elements have come to function as perspective markers in Wutun, though parallels to the development of copulas and/or existentials into perspective markers are known from other languages in the region, including the neighbouring Bonan language.

In practice, the subjective perspective marker is used in sentences containing a first person subject / topic (118), or also in sentences whose subject / topic in some other way belongs to the sphere of a first person speaker (122). Correspondingly, in sentences whose subject / topic does not belong to the sphere of a first person speaker, the objective perspective marker is used (123-124).

- (122) *je ngu-de huaiqa hai-yek*  
 this 1P:SG-GEN book EQU-SUBJ  
 'This is my book.'

- (123) *je ni-de huaiqa hai-li*  
 this 2P:SG-GEN book EQU-OBJ  
 'This is your book.'

- (124) *je gu-de huaiqa hai-li*  
 this 3P:SG-GEN book EQU-OBJ  
 'This is his/her book.'



In a question the perspective is reversed, which means that the subjective perspective marker can be used with reference to the sphere of a second person respondent, as in (125):

- (125) *ni*            *ma-ge*            *nian-di-yek*  
 2P:SG            what-CL            read-PROGR-SUBJ  
 'What are you reading?'

As in other languages with the perspective category, it seems that the objective perspective in Wutun is the unmarked member of the opposition. For this reason, the objective perspective marker is often attested in sentences which, in principle, would seem to qualify for containing the subjective perspective marker, while the opposite situation is normally not observed. What this means synchronically and diachronically is difficult to determine for the time being. While it is possible that the category of perspective was never introduced into Wutun with the same rigorousness as it exists in Amdo Tibetan, it is also possible that the phenomenon is receding in Wutun, as it is in some Amdo Tibetan dialects. However, it cannot be ruled out that the rules regulating the use of the perspective markers are simply so complicated that they are not yet fully understood.

It also has to be noted that, although perspective is basically a category that is marked on a finite verbal predicate, the objective perspective marker *-li* is also attested with nominal predicates without an explicit copula. Such usage may simply be due to the omission of the equative copula *hai-*, and normally in these cases the sentence is equally grammatical with and without the copula. Synchronically, however, the absence of the copula might make a case for postulating a copular zero morpheme, as in (126-127).

- (126) *gu-jhege-de*    *quilek*    *ma-ge*    *hai-li*  
 3P-PAUC-GEN    religion    what-CL    EQU-OBJ  
 'What is their religion?'

- (127) *gu-jhege-de*    *quilek*    *ma-ge*     $\emptyset$ -*li*  
 3P-PAUC-GEN    religion    what-CL    EQU-OBJ  
 'What is their religion?'

Alternatively, it could be assumed that perspective is, or has become, a category marking the predicate irrespective of whether it

contains a verbal word or not. In principle, this is congruent with the definition of the perspective markers as sentence markers, rather than actual verbal markers in the strict sense.

**§46. Interrogation.** Another class of sentence markers is formed by the interrogative markers, which in the finite verb phrase take the absolutely final position, following even the perspective markers. The principal interrogative marker for polar questions is *-a*, which could also be analyzed as a (post)clitical particle. The interrogative marker is formally identical with the interrogative pronoun *a-*, though it might also be compared with Standard Mandarin *ma* (嗎). It is important to note that the suffixal (or postclitical) marking of interrogation in Wutun involves a morphosyntactic pattern characteristic of languages of the Altaic sphere, including Bonan, while Amdo Tibetan exhibits a different pattern, in which the interrogative marker (AT *ai ~ e = WT xe*) is prefixed to the finite predicate.

When combined with perspective marking, the interrogative marker *-a* always seems to require the objective perspective marker *-li*, yielding the sequence OBJ-INTERR *-li-a*. Importantly, this sequence is also used in questions with a second person subject / topic, as in (128), although otherwise questions addressed to a second person respondent are normally formed with a reversed perspective (125). In Amdo Tibetan, also polar questions are normally formed with a reversed perspective. The reason why this is not the case in Wutun may be connected with the formal history of the perspective markers. For some reason, the subjective perspective marker *-yek* is apparently not combinable with the interrogative marker *-a*.

- (128) *je*            *ni-de*            *huaiqa*            *hai-li-a*  
 this            2P:SG-GEN            book            EQU-OBJ-INTERR  
 'Is this your book?'

Morphophonologically, the interrogative marker tends to merge with the preceding tense-aspect marker or perspective marker. This is also the case in the sequence *-li-a*, which is to be understood as a single syllable containing a medial (*i*) and a main vowel (*a*). When preceded by the continuative marker *-zhe*, which is normally not combined with perspective marking, the interrogative marker becomes a part of the synthetic complex *-zha = -zh-a*, e.g. CONT-INTERR *qhi-zha* 'will (you) go?' (96). The other temporal-aspectual forms take



the interrogative marker in combination with the perspective marker *-li*, either with or without the executive auxiliary *ze*.

Somewhat less frequently, interrogation is marked by the element *-mu*, as in EXEC-OBJ-INTERR *ze-li-mu* 'have you (done)?' (66). This seems to be the only choice after the perfective tense-aspect marker *-lio*, as in (129), possibly because the combination of *-lio* with *-a* would yield a sequence identical with the perspective-marked interrogative complex *-li-a*.

- (129) *sama*      *qe-lio-mu*  
 food          cat-PRF-INTERR  
 'Have they eaten the food?'

It is interesting to note that the interrogative marker *-mu* has a formal and functional analogy in the Bonan interrogative marker *-m-u*, which represents a synthetic element of a native Mongolic origin (containing the finite narrative tense-aspect marker *-m-* and the actual interrogative marker *-u*). Like the terminative serial marker *-tala*, this may be a case in which a grammatical marker has been borrowed from Bonan into Wutun.

§47. **Negation.** Negation is a formally heterogeneous category in Wutun. The basic element expressing negation is *be-* = SM *bù* (不), which precedes the verb phrase, e.g. OBJ *jedo-li* '(s/he) knows' : NEG *be-jedo-li* '(s/he) does not know', OBJ *kuai-li* '(it is) fast' : NEG *be-kuai-li* '(it is) not fast'. The negative marker may be understood as a prefix or a (pre)clitical particle, which, depending on the context may refer either to the whole sentence or to the verb phrase, or even just to a part of the verb phrase. In the last case, involving constructions with certain types of complements, the negative marker is placed as an infix (interclitic) between the main verb and the complement, an arrangement that gives the whole construction an additional modal connotation, as in OBJ *kan-jhan-li* '(s/he) sees' : NEG *kan-be-jhan-li* '(s/he) does not / cannot see' (67).

The element *be-* may also be analyzed as an irrealis negative marker, since it implies that the description does not conform with the situation in the real world. The corresponding realis negative marker is *mi-* = SM *méi* (沒), which implies that the description conforms with the situation in the real world, but that a state does not exist, a change has not taken place, or an action has not been realized. In

practice, the negative marker *mi-* is normally used with a past tense reference, as in *qe* 'to eat' : NEG-PRF *mi-qe-lio* '(s/he) did not eat'. It is also used in the negative existential structure *mi-yek ~ mi* 'there is not' = SM *méi(yǒu)* (沒有). In a serialized structure, the negative marker becomes an independent negative auxiliary, which takes temporal-aspectual marking, as in (130):

- (130) *ngu*          *huan*          *qe-ma*          *mi-lio*  
 1P:SG          food          eat-SER          EXIST:NEG-PRF  
 'I did not finish eating.'

In combination with the equative copula *hai* 'is', the negative marker *be-* normally forms the synthetic structure *be-hai > b-ai = bai* 'is not'. When followed by the objective perspective marker *-li*, the equative copulas can also function as general affirmative vs. negative answers: EQU-OBJ *hai-li* 'yes; (it is) so; (it is) true' vs. NEG-EQU-OBJ *bai-li* 'no; (it is) not so; (it is) not true'. A synthetic negation is also present in the opposition between *wa-la* '(to be) possible' vs. NEG *ma-la* '(to be) impossible'. Although *ma-la* seems to incorporate a trace of the negative existential *mi*, there may also be an association with the Amdo Tibetan negative prefix *ma-* (WT **ma**).

An element formally identical with the negative equative copula *bai* also functions as a prohibitive (negative imperative) marker. In this case, however, it seems to be a question of a verbal prefix or a (pre)clitical particle, e.g. *sho* 'to say' : PROH *bai-sho* 'do not say!'. Diachronically, the prohibitive marker *bai-* is likely to represent a direct counterpart of the Standard Mandarin prohibitive particle *bié* 'do not!' (別), or also a parallel contraction from the elements NEG *be* + NEC *yo* 'must not' = SM *bú yào* (不要). Even so, it is possible that the prohibitive marker has in the synchronic consciousness of the native speakers become confused with the negative equative copula *bai* = SM *bú shì* (不是).

## SYNTAX

§48. **Argument structure.** Wutun, like Standard Mandarin and, with some reservations, Amdo Tibetan, may be characterized as a topic-prominent language. This means that most sentences are organized in terms of the pragmatic roles of topic and comment, rather than in



terms of the grammatical roles of subject and predicate. Unfortunately this is difficult to verify, since there is no commonly used topic marker in Wutun. In some cases, however, the topic can be marked by the element *hai-la* 'as regards' (131), which is formally the conditional serial form of the equative copula *hai*, and which has analogies in other languages of the region.

- (131) *aye-jhege hai-la zowo-da*  
 woman-PAUC EQU-COND main:thing-then  
 'As regards women, the most important thing

*tian-zhong-ma menzai ze-di-de gu-li*  
 field-middle-and like-that do-PROGR-NMLZ that-OBJ  
 '[for them] is to work in the field.'

In spite of the prominence of the topic in the sentence, Wutun may also be characterized as a language with a nominative-accusative strategy. This is particularly evident from the fact that the singular first and second person personal pronouns, as well as the reflexive pronoun, have specific oblique forms which are used in the semantic macroroles of patient (object) and recipient (indirect object). To some extent, the marker of the grammatical focus *-ha*, which signals the same roles for other nominals, also comes close to being equivalent to an oblique case marker with the function of a dative-accusative. On the other hand, unlike Amdo Tibetan, the Wutun system of nominal declension has no specific marker of the ergative type for the agent of a transitive predicate.

As a topic-prominent language, Wutun is not sensitive to the active-passive distinction. Consequently, it depends on the semantic and pragmatic circumstances whether a verbal has an agent-centered, a patient-centered, or a causee-centered orientation. In structures with two or more verbals, each verbal can have an orientation of its own. The orientation can be made explicit by adding a complement of the corresponding type. Even so, there is no complement that would function as an explicit passive marker, and many ambiguous sentences simply get a passive interpretation, as in (132):

- (132) *gu huaiqa huai-la-gu-liao ze-li*  
 that book print-NCOMPL-COMPL-PRF EXEC-OBJ  
 'That book has (already) been printed.'

A prototypical agent is a [+human] noun or a personal pronoun, while a prototypical patient is a [-animate] noun. When a sentence has a prototypical agent and a prototypical patient, no marking is required on either constituent. When, however, the semantic macrorole of agent is filled by a causee that is not a prototypical agent, it has to be marked for the sociative case (*-liangge*), while the patient is specified as a marked focus (*-ha*), as in (18-19), or also, in the case of a personal or a reflexive pronoun, it bears oblique (dative-accusative) marking, as in (20). It would be possible to regard such sentences as subjectless and/or topicless, that is, impersonal. Even they do not involve a formal passive, however, although they may have a passive translation in other languages.

**§49. Constituent order.** Like Amdo Tibetan, but unlike Standard Mandarin, Wutun is a verb-final language, in which all fully-formed sentences start with a nominal (noun phrase) representing the subject / topic, and end with a verbal (verb phrase) representing the predicate / comment. Other parts of the sentence, including the direct and/or indirect object of a transitive predicate, are normally placed between these main constituents, as in (133):

- (133) *ngu quandi xi-di-yek*  
 1P:SG clothes wash-PROGR-SUBJ  
 'I am washing clothes.'

The verb phrase functioning as the finite predicate / comment of the sentence can be based either on a regular full verb, with or without complements, or on a nominal or a nominalized verbal followed by an auxiliary. In either case, the markers of perspective and interrogation, if present, are attached to the last verbal element (including auxiliary) in the sentence. Perspective marking may be seen as an agreement phenomenon, since the choice of the perspective marker depends on the personal sphere of the subject / topic.

It may be concluded that the order of the main constituents in Wutun, even if the language is classified as topic-prominent, follows the subject-object-verb (SOV) pattern, as also known from languages of the Altaic sphere. The nominal phrase is also basically of the Altaic type, which means that the constituents are normally arranged in the genitive-adjective-noun (GAN) order, as also in Standard Mandarin. The place of the adjectival attribute (modifier) is, however, unstable



with regard to the noun (headword), and the typically Tibetan genitive-noun-adjective (GNA) order is also encountered especially when the attribute is a demonstrative pronoun or a numeral. Thus, expressions like *je(-ge) huaiqa* 'this book' and *huaiqa je(-ge)* (literally: 'book this') are more or less interchangeable in Wutun. In some constructions, as in higher numerals of the type 3,000 *dong san(-ge) ~ dong-co san(-ge)* (literally: 'thousand three'), only the Tibetan type of order is permitted.

**§50. Invariables.** Invariables are a heterogeneous class of words that lack the semantic, morphological, and morphosyntactic characteristics of nominals and verbals. Their separate status with regard to nominals and verbals is not sharp, however, since some of them are originally lexicalized nominal or verbal forms. Also, many items that are mainly used as invariables can actually, under specific circumstances, take certain nominal or verbal markers. Like nominals and verbals, the invariables in Wutun comprise both inherited Sinitic items and borrowings from Amdo Tibetan.

In the sentence, invariables cannot occur in the position of any of the major grammatical arguments (subject, object, predicate) or semantic macroroles (agent, patient, recipient). In a topic-based sentence structure some types of invariables can, however, occur in the role of the topic, in which case they normally occupy the initial position in the sentence, as in (134):

- (134) *jhang rongbo-li damo do-li sho-di-li*  
 today Longwu-LOC play many-OBJ say-PROGR-OBJ  
 'Today there is a lot of program at Longwu, they say.'

The largest subclass of invariables is formed by adverbs, which can denote temporal, spatial or modal circumstances. Some adverbs, like *xaige* 'very (much)' can normally only modify a verbal, while others, like *jhang* 'today', can modify an entire sentence (sentence adverbials). Apparently, it is the latter type of invariable that can also occur in the role of the topic in the sentence.

Of particular interest are those invariables that mark structural relationships, such as conjunction, disjunction, inclusion, exclusion, or purpose. These function more or less like conjunctions in other languages, except that some of them are used as (post)clitical particles that are on their way of becoming grammaticalized into grammatical

markers. For instance, the function of a coordinative conjunction between two noun phrases is filled by the (post)clitic *-ma* (apparently a Northwest Mandarin item), which is closely reminiscent of a case marker (coordinative case), as in *san-ge yai-ma she-wu tian* 'three months and fifteen days'. This is quite possibly the same element as also appears in the role of the general serial marker *-ma* (coordinative converb) between two verb phrases.

Two other invariables with multiple functions are *-ra* 'also, again, and, but, (not) even' ← AT *ra* (WT **ra**) and *(-)da* 'now, then, and, and then, so that' ← AT *da* (WT **da**), as in (135-136):

- (135) *han lhakang-dera-ra jja-la-ma mi-yek*  
 yet temple-PL-also visit-NCOMPL-SER EXIST-NEG-SUBJ  
 '[I] haven't even visited the temples yet.'
- (136) *ni a-li qhi-zhe-da*  
 1P:SG what-LOC go-CONT-now  
 'Where are you going now?'

The invariable *(-)da*, in particular, can occur in many different positions and roles. Apart from the sentence-initial position (sentence adverbial), it can be used as a modifier to a noun (attribute), as in *da-tang* 'this time'. Most often, however, it occurs as an unstressed final particle that follows a finite or a non-finite verb phrase. While it often retains its basic meaning 'now, then', it may also carry additional temporal-aspectual or modal connotations. It is particularly often used with the otherwise unmarked basic form of the verb in commands or requests directed at the second person. In these cases, as in (115), it could perhaps even be analyzed as an imperative marker (polite imperative). Moreover, it may be the diachronic source of the consequential serial marker *-da*.

The elements *-ma* and *-da* can also be combined to yield the complex serial marker *-ma-da*, as in (103). Although this is likely to represent a combination of the resultative temporal-aspectual marker with the consequential serial marker (RES-CONSEQ), the same sequence would also result from a combination of the general serial marker *-ma* (SER) with the particle *-da*. A similar problem of interpretation is offered by the occasional sequence *-la-da*, in which the conditional serial marker *-la* is followed by what could be either the particle *-da* or the more grammaticalized serial marker *-da*.



Some final particles (PART) convey to the sentence only a vague modal connotation that is difficult to specify. An example is *-ya*, which, in connection with a negative predicate, may or may not be developing into a connegative marker, as in (81). Obviously, final particles, including clitics, can play important roles in the discourse, but little is still understood of these roles. Since it is a question of the initial stages of grammaticalization, it may simply be too early to try to reach a systematic description of the situation.

Another group of invariables are combined postpositionally with the nominalizer *-de* to express subordinate relationships, including contemporaneity, causality, or concessivity. These include, among others, the combinations *-de shai* '(at the time) when' = SM *shi* (時), *-de jhorai* 'while' ← AT *jhorai* (WT **vgyo.re**), and *-de ggo* 'during' ← AT *ggo* (WT **vgor**). The combination of the nominalizer with the sociative marker NMLZ-SOC *-de-liangge* 'because, due to', as in (21), also belongs to this type, since the sociative marker itself is a lexicalized postpositional invariable.

Finally, there are some complex postpositional expressions directly borrowed from Amdo Tibetan with all the elements involved, e.g. *di-men-cai* 'in addition to' ← AT *di-men-cai* (WT **devi.mun.tshad**, with the Tibetan pronominal genitive **devi**), *(-)la-men-na* 'instead of' ← AT *-la-men-na* (WT **la.mun.na**, with the Tibetan case marker **la**). When used in Wutun, these are best analyzed as indivisible lexicalized entities, though their structure is obvious to the bilingual speaker fluent also in Amdo Tibetan.

## SAMPLE TEXT

This popular legend of two monks visiting Tibet (Lhasa) is widely told and known in Wutun. The present version (the initial part only) was adapted by Xiawu Dongzhou from a recording he made in 2005 from Liben Cairang, a 54-year-old Wutun-speaking male.

The glossing of the text should be understood as preliminary, since there are still grammatical and lexical features that are not fully understood for the time being. Also, as is common in Wutun speech, the text contains occasional Amdo Tibetan inflected forms, which are here treated as indivisible (lexicalized) entities. After the glossed text there follows a separate full translation.

[1] *ki nganqai-ge nganqai-ge ki nga-n-de ti-she*  
also before-CL before-CL also 1P-ASS-GEN place-SUPER

*hai-de re sho-li* [2] *dangma zang jja-la-qhi-la*  
EQU-NMLZ FACT QUOT-OBJ long:ago Tibet visit-NCOMPL-go-COND

*xhen-ma qhi-dio-li* [3] *jhang menzai qhichai-da gu-dera-she*  
go-SER go-must-OBJ today like:that car-and that-PL-SUPER

*qhi-la kuai-di lamenna* [4] *yilai dangma-mu*  
go-COND fast-PROGR instead:of anyway long:ago-INTERR

*hai-de-ra zang jja-la-qhi-la zang-li do-tala*  
EQU-NMLZ-and Tibet visit-NCOMPL-go-COND Tibet-LOC arrive-TERM

*san-ge yai-ma she-wu tian xhen-dio-de re sho-li*  
three-CL month-and ten-five day go-NEC-NMLZ FACT QUOT-OBJ

[5] *san-ge yai-ma she-wu tian xhen-la-da zang-li*  
three-CL month-and ten-five day go-COND-PART Tibet-LOC

*do-di mende-ge hai-li* [6] *dangma zang je*  
arrive-PROGR like:that-CL EQU-OBJ long:ago Tibet this

*jja-la-la-ra waiqai do-ma* [7] *waige xhongna*  
visit-NCOMPL-COND-also hardship many-SER at all in:general



<i>zang</i> Tibet	<i>gu</i> that	<i>jja-la-gu-de</i> visit-NCOMPL-NMLZ	<i>ghangga-mu</i> destiny-INTERR	<i>yek-zhe</i> EXIST-CONT		
<i>mi-de</i> EXIST-NEG-NMLZ	<i>mende-ge-li</i> like:that-CL-OBJ	[8]	<i>mende-ge-de</i> like:that-CL-GEN	<i>caitek</i> limitation		
<i>hai-de</i> EQU-NMLZ	<i>re</i> FACT	<i>sho-li</i> QUOT-OBJ	[9]	<i>mende-ge-de</i> like:that-CL-GEN	<i>hai-de</i> EQU-NMLZ	
<i>kuli-da</i> when-then	<i>dangma</i> long:ago	<i>nga-n-de</i> 1P-ASS-GEN	<i>wu-li-de</i> DIST-LOC-GEN	<i>adia</i> monk		
<i>hai-de</i> EQU-NMLZ	<i>re</i> FACT	<i>sho-li</i> QUOT-OBJ	[10]	<i>ki</i> also	<i>dangma</i> long:ago	<i>zang</i> Tibet
<i>jja-la-la</i> visit-NCOMPL-COND	<i>je</i> this	<i>ghangga</i> destiny	<i>yek</i> EXIST	<i>mi-yek</i> NEG-EXIST		
<i>sho-di-de</i> say-PROGR-NMLZ	<i>re</i> FACT	[11]	<i>laighang</i> destiny	<i>yek</i> EXIST	<i>mi-yek</i> NEG-EXIST	<i>lhasai</i> Lhasa's
<i>ju</i> Lord:Jobo	<i>toba</i> head	<i>dek-la-de</i> bow-NCOMPL-NMLZ	<i>lai</i> destiny	<i>yek</i> EXIST	<i>mi-yek</i> NEG-EXIST	<i>gu-ge</i> that-CL
<i>sho-di-de</i> say-PROGR-NMLZ	<i>re</i> FACT	[12]	<i>jhang</i> today	<i>menzai</i> like:that	<i>qhichai-dera-li</i> car-PL-LOC	
<i>sa-ge</i> run-CAUS	<i>je</i> this	<i>ze-di-de</i> make-PROGR-NMLZ	<i>re</i> FACT	<i>dangma</i> long:ago	<i>gu</i> that	[13] <i>zang</i> Tibet
<i>jja-la-la</i> visit-NCOMPL-COND	<i>je</i> this	<i>gejhai-na</i> one:self-OBL	<i>laighang</i> destiny	<i>yek</i> EXIST	<i>mi-yek</i> NEG-EXIST	
<i>kan-dio-de-da</i> see-must-NMLZ-PART	<i>mende-ge-li</i> like:that-CL-OBJ	[14]	<i>zang</i> Tibet	<i>jja-la-gu-la</i> visit-NCOMPL-COMPL-COND		
<i>waiqai</i> hardship	<i>yek</i> EXIST	<i>mi-yek</i> NEG-EXIST	[15]	<i>adia-ge</i> monk-SG	<i>yek-de</i> EXIST-NMLZ	<i>kuli-da</i> when-then
<i>dangma-da</i> long:ago-PART	<i>alak-ge</i> lama-SG	<i>xui-la-ma-da</i> ask-NCOMPL-RES-CONSEQ	[16]	<i>da</i> then	<i>adia-ge</i> monk-SG	

<i>hai-de</i> EQU-NMLZ	<i>tacona-da</i> since-PART	<i>da</i> then	<i>wandai</i> little:monk	<i>jjhosa</i> place:to:go	<i>ghui-li</i> Tibet-OBJ	
<i>sho-ma-da</i> say-RES-CONSEQ	[17]	<i>da</i> then	<i>nga-n-de</i> 1P-ASS-GEN	<i>mula</i> among	<i>zang-ge</i> Tibet-SG	
<i>be-jja-la-da</i> NEG-visit-NCOMPL-CONSEQ	[18]	<i>dangma-da</i> long:ago-PART	<i>wemo</i> girl	<i>jjhosa</i> place:to:go	<i>nai</i> marriage	
<i>hai-yek</i> EQU-SUBJ	<i>wandai</i> little-monk	<i>jjhosa</i> place:to:go	<i>ghui</i> Tibet	<i>hai-yek</i> EQU-SUBJ	<i>sho-ma</i> say-RES	
[19]	<i>je-ge-de</i> this-CL-NMLZ	<i>hai-ma-li-da</i> EQU-RES-OBJ-PART	<i>adia</i> monk	<i>hai-de-da</i> EQU-NMLZ-PART		
[20]	<i>adia-ha</i> monk-FOC	<i>zhawa-ge</i> disciple-SG	<i>yek-de</i> EXIST-NMLZ	<i>re</i> FACT	[21] <i>ta</i> 3P:SG	<i>zang-ge</i> Tibet-SG
<i>jja-la-ghi-zhe</i> visit-NCOMPL-go-CONT	<i>sho-ma</i> QUOT-SER	<i>alak-ge-ha</i> lama-SG-FOC	<i>longdan</i> prediction			
<i>xui-la-lio</i> ask-NCOMPL-PRF	[22]	<i>lama-ge</i> lama-SG	<i>longdan</i> prediction	<i>xui-la-ma</i> ask-NCOMPL-SER	<i>lama</i> lama	
<i>xakmo</i> pearl	<i>ssek-la</i> see-NCOMPL	<i>aen</i> ah	<i>adia</i> monk	<i>ni</i> 2P:SG	<i>ghi-da</i> go-CONSEQ	<i>kek-li</i> can-OBJ
<i>ze-li</i> EXEC-OBJ	[23]	<i>zhawa</i> disciple	<i>ta-ra</i> 3P:SG-also	<i>ghi-zhe</i> go-CONT	<i>sho-de</i> QUOT-NMLZ	<i>kuli</i> when
<i>zhawa-ha-ra</i> disciple-FOC-also	<i>nia</i> 2P:SG-OBL	<i>xakmo-ge</i> pearl-SG	<i>ssek-la-ge</i> see-NCOMPL-CAUS	<i>ze-ma</i> EXEC-OBJ		
<i>lama</i> lama	<i>longdan</i> prediction	[24]	<i>zang</i> Tibet	<i>jja-la-de</i> visit-NCOMPL-NMLZ	<i>laighang</i> destiny	
<i>yek-li-mu</i> EXIST-OBJ-INTERR	<i>mi-li</i> EXIST-NEG-OBJ	[25]	<i>adia</i> monk	<i>ni</i> 2P:SG	<i>zang</i> Tibet	
<i>jja-la-gu-da</i> visit-NCOMPL-COMPL-CONSEQ	<i>wa-la-li</i> possible-NCOMPL-OBJ	<i>sho-ma</i> say-SER	<i>adia-ha</i> monk-FOC			



*kadak-ge ka-liao ze-li lama* [26] *zhawa nia zang*  
ritual:scarf-SG give-PRF EXEC-OBJ lama disciple 2P:SG:OBL Tibet

*qhi-la-de laighang mi-li* [27] *nia ni*  
go-NCOMPL-NMLZ destiny EXIST:NEG-OBJ 2P:SG:OBL 2P:SG

*bai-qhi sho-ma zhawa-de banjhe-li daijhe-ge ngan-liao*  
PROH-go say-SER monk-GEN neck-LOC knife-SG press-PRF

*ze-li menzai* [28] *daijhe-ge ngan-liao ze-li* [29] *daijhe-ge*  
EXEC-OBJ like:that knife-SG press-PRF EXEC-OBJ knife-SG

*ngan-di-da da adia sho-de da zhawa-ha*  
press-PROGR-PROGR-CONSEQ then monk say-NMZL then disciple-FOC

*ni bai-qhi* [30] *nia lama song-la-di-yek*  
2P:SG PROH-go 2P:SG:OBL lama tell-NCOMPL-PROGR-SUBJ

*gu-a nia zang jja-la-de ghangga*  
that-INTERR 2P:SG:OBL Tibet visit-NCOMPL-NMLZ destiny

*mi-li* [31] *da ngu qhi-gu-dai menzai sho-liao-de*  
EXIST:NEG-OBJ then IP:SG go-COMPL-PART like:that say-PRF-NMLZ

*re* [32] *zhawa kek mi-tin-ma* [33] *hong sa-di-de*  
FACT disciple mouth NEG-listen-SER lie tell-PROGR-NMLZ

*re* [34] *nia zang jja-la-de lai yek-ma*  
FACT 2P:SG:OBL Tibet visit-NCOMPL-NMLZ destiny EXIST-SER

*nga a-menzai-li mi-liao-de re* [35] *alak-de*  
IP:SG:OBL INTERR-like:that-OBJ EXIST-NEG-PRF-NMLZ FACT lama-GEN

*gu hong hai-de re* [36] *ngu-ra qhi-zhe*  
that lie EQU-NMLZ FACT IP:SG-also go-CONT

[37] *menzai sho-liao-de re kek mi-tin-de re*  
like:that say-PRF-NMLZ FACT mouth NEG-listen-NMLZ FACT

[38] *ya da kek be-tin-la-da nia-ra*  
well then mouth NEG-listen-NCOMPL-CONSEQ 2P:SG:OBL-also

*yen-she sho-ma* [39] *da adia-da zhawa liang-ge du*  
take:along-get say-RES then monk-and disciple two-CL alone

*jaze bi-she-ma xhen-dio-de re* [40] *xhen-ma*  
basket carry-get-SER walk-NEC-NMLZ FACT walk-SER

*shang-qhi-ma* [41] *dangma zang do-tala san-ge yai-ma*  
rise-go-SER long:ago Tibet arrive-TERM three-CL month-and

*she-wu tian yo-de re* [42] *ban-lu-she, zang-de*  
ten-five day need-NMLZ FACT half-way-SUPER Tibet-GEN

*ban-lu-she da huai hong-de-ra yi-ge yai-ma*  
half-way-SUPER then example put-NMLZ-also one-CL month-and

*she-wu tian* [43] *mende-ge xhen-gu-liao-de mende-ge*  
ten-five day like:that-CL go-COMPL-PRF-NMLZ like:that-CL

*shai-da* [44] *zhawa ma-ge tin-qhe-liao-de re* [45] *da*  
time-PART disciple what-CL get:ill-start-PRF-NMLZ FACT then

*alak sho-di-de longdan dai-ra hai-li-a*  
lama say-PROGR-NMLZ prediction like-also EQU-OBJ-INTERR

[46] *tin-qhe-di-da da zhawa-de mi-ho-ma-da*  
get:ill-start-PROGR-CONSEQ then disciple-GEN NEG-good-SER-COND

*xhen-li xhen-li xhen-li xhen-li da* [47] *zhawa*  
walk-OBJ walk-OBJ walk-OBJ walk-OBJ then disciple

*mi-wa-la-ma-da ban-lu-she da zhawa*  
NEG-possible-NCOMPL-RES-CONSEQ half-way-SUPER then disciple

*se-gu-liao-de re* [48] *zhawa se-gu-di-da da*  
die-COMPL-PRF-NMLZ FACT disciple die-COMPL-PROGR-CONSEQ then

*adia-ra da xhen-la-da* [49] *ya da ngu-de zhawa*  
monk-also then walk-NCOMPL-CONSEQ well then IP:SG-GEN disciple

*xhongna yek-liao hua-ge mi-tin* [50] *yenjai-de lama*  
in:general EXIST-PRF speech-SG NEG-listen that:person-GEN lama



*longdan-de dai-ra ce* [51] *da lama-de longdan hai-li*  
prediction-GEN like-also PART then lama-GEN prediction EQU-OBJ

*nia zang jja-la-de laighang mi-li-mu*  
2P:SG:OBL Tibet visit-NCOMPL-NMLZ destiny EXIST:NEG-OBJ-INTERR

[52] *sho-ma-da adia yiqang kuu-ma zhawa-de ro-ha*  
say-RES-CONSEQ monk a:while cry-SER disciple-GEN corps-FOC

*tu-li xaima-li mai-she-ma* [53] *ssanxhan yidaze*  
earth-LOC sand-LOC bury-get-SER monk's:clothes all

*to-gu-ge-ma gejhai tai-she-ma bi-she-ma* [54] *da*  
take:off-COMPL-CAUS-SER one:self fold-get-SER carry-get-SER then

*menzai tek san-ge ke-gu-ma adia shang-qhi-gu-lio*  
like:that head three-CL kowtow-COMPL-SER monk rise-go-COMPL-PRF

[55] *adia shang-qhi-gu-di-da zhawa rolang*  
monk rise-go-COMPL-PROGR-CONSEQ disciple corps

*qhe-lai-gu-ma* [56] *gu gai-li gui sho-de*  
get:up-come-COMPL-SER that time-LOC ghost say-NMLZ

*bai-li rolang sho-de re* [57] *rolang sho-de je*  
EQU:NEG-OBJ zombie say-NMLZ FACT zombie say-NMLZ this

*da nga-n-de mula ren se-gu-la diando rolang*  
then 1P-ASS-GEN among person die-COMPL-COND again zombie

*qhe-lai-li sho-de gu-li* [58] *adia jhang jhang*  
get:up-come-OBJ say-NMLZ that-OBJ monk today today

*yi-tian-na xhen-ma tianshe shang-qhi-gu-lio-ra* [59] *waixi*  
one-day-DISTR walk-SER upwards rise-go-COMPL-PRF-also evening

*do-de kuli da suanzzhai mende-ge-da* [60] *sho-dio-de*  
arrive-NMLZ when then spirit like:that-PART say-must-NMLZ

*re-da rolang mende-ge suanzzhai mende-ge-da*  
FACT-PART zombie like:that-CL spirit like:that-CL-PART

[61] *zhawa da guai jjhak-la-ma-da* [62] *sa-da*  
monk then cry do-NCOMPL-RES-CONSEQ run-CONSEQ

*shang-lai-lio ze-li sho-li-ya* [63] *diando guai* [64] *din*  
rise-come-PRF EXEC-OBJ say-OBJ-PART again scream wait

*adia ni din-da* [65] *marai mende jhhenzzhi*  
monk 2P:SG wait-PART why like:that reason

*mi-de chaimai dang-de* [66] *ngu yiqang*  
EXIST:NEG-NMLZ shameless act-NMLZ 1P:SG a:while

*koshe-lio-de re-ya*  
sleep-PRF-NMLZ FACT-PART

[1] This is said to have happened at our place a long time ago. [2] In those days, if you visited Tibet, you had to go on foot, [3] instead of going by bus or other things like that, as you do today. [4] Anyway, they say that in those days, when you visited Tibet, you had to walk three months and fifteen days in order to arrive in Tibet. [5] Only if you walked three months and fifteen days would you arrive in Tibet, this is how it was. [6] In those days, even when you did visit Tibet, there were many hardships, and [7] it was even a question of whether it was at all your destiny to visit Tibet, this is how it was. [8] There was this kind of limitation, they say. [9] In those days, our monks were under such circumstances, they say. [10] Also, in those days, if you went to Tibet, you had to be told whether you would have this destiny or not. [11] You would be told whether you would have the destiny, that is, the destiny of bowing your head to Lord Jobo of Lhasa. [12] Nowadays people are covering this distance in buses, but in those days — [13] If you went to Tibet, it was so that you had to see in advance whether you would have that destiny or not, [14] that is, whether there would be any hardships or not after you had started your journey to Tibet. [15] In those days, whenever there was a monk, he would go to ask a lama, and [16] since he was a monk, the lama would say that Tibet was a place for a monk to go. [17] Among our people it was unthinkable not to go to Tibet, for [18] in those days there was a saying that 'a girl had to get married, and a monk had to go to Tibet.' [19] This is how it was to be a monk. [20] — Now, there was a monk who had a disciple. [21] Since he intended to go to Tibet,



he went to ask a lama for a prediction. [22] When he went to ask the lama, the lama looked in the divination ball and said: 'Ah, monk, you may go.' [23] When the disciple also said he would be going, they asked the lama to see the ball also for him, to give a prediction [24] as to whether he would have the destiny of visiting Tibet or not. [25] 'Monk, for you it will be possible to go to Tibet,' he said and gave a ritual scarf to the monk. [26] 'Disciple, you do not have the destiny of visiting Tibet.' [27] 'You, you should not go,' he said and pressed a knife on the disciple's neck, like this. [28] He pressed a knife. [29] As he was pressing the knife, the monk said: 'Disciple, you should not go. [30] Isn't the lama telling you that you do not have the destiny of visiting Tibet. [31] So, I will go myself,' he said. [32] The disciple did not listen to his advice and said: [33] 'He is lying. [34] If you have the destiny of visiting Tibet, how wouldn't I have it? [35] What the lama is saying is a lie. [36] I will also go.' [37] He said like this and did not listen to the advice. [38] 'Well, since you do not listen to the advice, I will take you along,' the monk said. [39] Then, the monk and the disciple had to start walking with baskets on their back. [40] They went walking up towards Tibet and — [41] In those days, to arrive in Tibet, you needed three months and fifteen days. [42] — when they were half way, that is, half way to Tibet, or something like after one month and fifteen days, [43] when they had walked like this, [44] the disciple got ill. [45] It was exactly as the lama's prediction had said. [46] He got ill, and when he did not get any better, they kept on walking, and then [47] the disciple could not walk any more, so half way to Tibet he died. [48] As the disciple was dead, the monk was going to walk further, saying: [49] 'Well, generally speaking, my disciple did not listen to what was said to him, [50] though everything was as the lama had predicted. [51] For wasn't it the lama's prediction that you did not have the destiny of visiting Tibet?' [52] After saying this, the monk cried a while and buried the disciple's body in earth and sand. [53] He took off all of the disciple's clothes, folded them himself and put them on his back. [54] Then the monk kowtowed three times like that and went further up towards Tibet. [55] When he was arriving there, the disciple's body rose up and — [56] At that time one did not speak of ghosts, but of zombies. [57] As for this thing called zombie, it is said that if a person among us dies, there will appear a zombie instead. [58] — when the monk had walked the whole day he reached the high point of the pass, and [59] when the evening came, there appeared something like a spirit — you have to

call it so, haven't you — [60] something like a zombie, or a spirit. [61] The monk gave a scream, and [62] the zombie came running and said: 'I have risen up.' [63] Again, a scream, and the zombie said: [64] 'Wait, monk, wait! [65] Why are you acting so shamelessly? [66] I was just sleeping for a while.'



## BASIC WORD LIST

This list of selected basic vocabulary items is based on the 200-word list of Morris Swadesh with some additions especially for numerals and culture-specific terms. The items, numbered from 1 to 235, have been slightly rearranged to correspond to logical semantic categories. For each item, the following data are specified in separate columns: (i) running item number (№), (ii) semantic category, (iii) corresponding number in the Swadesh list (Sw) if available, (iv) English gloss, (v) Wutun phonemic shape, and (vi) etymological comment. The synchronically relevant inflexional morpheme boundaries of the Wutun items are indicated by a hyphen (-), but diachronic morpheme boundaries within complex nominal and verbal stems (compounds and derivatives) are not marked.

The etymological comments are mainly confined to identifying either the Standard Mandarin cognate (with the corresponding Chinese character/s) or, in the case of borrowed vocabulary, the (Romanized) Written Tibetan (WT) shape of the Tibetan source of the Wutun item. Local Chinese words are specified as Northwest Mandarin (NWM). For items whose etymology or structure remain unclear, partial etymologies are provided as far as possible. It should be noted that neither the Standard Mandarin cognates nor the Written Tibetan shapes of borrowed vocabulary should be viewed as 'original' forms, or reconstructions, of the Wutun items.

As a general observation concerning the diachronic composition of the Wutun lexicon it may be noted that the bulk of the basic vocabulary is of a Chinese origin. Among the non-culture-specific meanings in the list (nos. 1-225), only 19 (= 8.4 per cent) are always expressed using a word of a Tibetan origin. These include two rather marginal body part terms (93: 'leg', 96: 'arm'), two hydrographical terms (171: 'lake', 172: 'sea'), two higher numerals (212: 'thousand', 213: 'ten thousand'), some concepts referring to the organic (56: 'animal', 62: 'worm', 72: 'grass', 82: 'feather') and inorganic (180: 'dust', 193: 'ashes', 194: 'charcoal') environment, some verbs related to physiology (109: 'to spit', 115: 'to breathe'), cognition (125: 'to think') and interaction (163: 'to dance' / 'to sing'), as well as two items for qualities (219: 'young', 221: 'bad').

The proportion of Tibetan lexical elements is, of course, much larger in the non-basic and cultural vocabulary. Even in the basic

vocabulary, many items that still have an inherited Sinitic expression, have a Tibetan synonym, which means that for many concepts the Wutun speakers have the choice of using either the Chinese or the Tibetan word. Particularly many examples of this are found among static verbs (189b: 'warm', 215b: 'full', 216b: 'empty', 217b: 'old', 218b: 'new', 220bc: 'good', 222b: 'rotten', 223b: 'dirty'), but also among marginal pronouns (22: 'other'), spatial (35b: 'up', 36b: 'down'), and chronological terms (199b: 'year'). The widespread bilingualism in Amdo Tibetan makes it often difficult to distinguish between a true loanword and a casual borrowing.

It is important to note that the transmission of lexical items from local Amdo Tibetan to Wutun has no phonological or morphological restrictions, which means that all parts of speech, including grammatical elements (particles and markers) can be borrowed. Even so, it is clear that some of the most basic parts of the Wutun lexicon, including the personal and demonstrative pronouns, the lower numerals, and most grammatical elements, remain consistently Sinitic. In the Sinitic part of the Wutun lexicon there are also some specifically Northwest Mandarin items. These are not particularly many, however. In the basic vocabulary they include some random terms for dimensions (27: 'small'), body parts (84: 'head'), kinship relations (53: 'mother', 54: 'father'), physiology (108: 'to suck'), and technology (144: 'to push', 145: 'to throw').

Of particular interest are those lexical items in Wutun that have no obvious etymology on either the Chinese or the Tibetan side. In the basic vocabulary there are perhaps only 4-5 such items. For some of them it might be possible to propose a tentative external etymology. The word for 'young male' (48: *wa*), for instance, might be of a Tibetan origin (cf. Tibetan *-wa* [suffix for males] = WT *.pa*), while the word for 'mountain' (183: *wuwa*, with a somewhat unclear or unstable phonemic shape) might have a source in Mongolic (cf. Bonan *wula* 'mountain'). It is also possible that some of these items are actually more widely present in Northwest Mandarin, where they may ultimately represent either independent local innovations or borrowings from non-Chinese languages. Wutun itself also has some more or less transparent lexical innovations, created by way of compounding. Thus, for instance, the item for 'fish' (57: *xhuiyang*) seems to be a compound from 'water' (168: *xhui*) and 'sheep' (230: *yang*), both of which are of a Chinese origin.



i	ii	iii	iv	v	vi
No	Category	Sw	Gloss	Wutun	Comment
1	Pronouns	001	1P:SG I	ngu	wō 我
b			GEN my	ngu-de	wō de 我的
2		002	2P:SG thou	ni	nǐ 你
b			GEN thy	ni-de	nǐ de 你的
3		003	3P:SG he	gu	= 10
b			GEN his	gu-de	+ de 的
4			3P:SG she	gu	= 3 = 10
b			GEN her	gu-de	+ de 的
5		004	1P-PAUC we	ngu-jhege	= 1 + jǐge 幾個
b			GEN our	ngu-jhege-de	+ de 的
6			ASS our folk	nga-mu	cf. -men 們
b			GEN our	ngan-de	+ de 的
7		005	2P-PAUC ye	ni-jhege	= 2 + jǐge 幾個
b			GEN your	ni-jhege-de	+ de 的
8		006	3P-PAUC they	gu-jhege	= 3 + jǐge 幾個
b			GEN their	gu-jhege-de	+ de 的
9		007	this	je	zhè 這
b	CL		je-ge	+ ge 個	
c	PAUC these		je-jhege	+ jǐge 幾個	
10	008	that	gu	= 3	
b		CL	gu-ge	+ ge 個	
c		PL those	gu-dera	+ dera	
11	009	here LOC	je-li	zhèlǐ 這裏	
12	010	there LOC	wu-li	wu + lǐ 裏	
13	011	who CL	a-ge	a + ge 個	
14	012	what CL	ma-ge	ma + ge 個	
15	013	where LOC	a-li	a + lǐ 裏	
16	014	when	doxige	cf. duō 多	
17		way how to	menzai	NWM	

b		015	how	a-menzai	a + 17	
18			together	yida	yīdā 一搭	
b		017	all	yida-ze	+ zi 子	
19		018	many	do	duō 多	
20		019	some	jhige	jǐge 幾個	
21		020	few	sho	shǎo 少	
22		021	other	xxanba	WT gzhan.pa	
b			PL	gu-dera	10 + dera	
23		Dimension	027	big	da	dà 大
24			028	long	qang	cháng 長
25			029	wide	kuan	guǎng 廣
26			030	thick	xhek	hòu 厚
27			032	small	ga	NWM
28			033	short	duan	duǎn 短
29			034	narrow	zhai	zhǎi 窄
30			035	thin	pe	bó 薄
31			Position	197	near	qen
32	198			far	yan	yuǎn 遠
33	199	right GEN		jen-shek-de	zhèng 正 + 95	
34	200	left GEN		do-shek-de	dào 倒 + 95	
35		up/on		tianshe	tiānshang 天上	
b				lai	WT klad	
36	down	dize-li		dizi 地子 + lǐ 裏		
b		yok	WT yog			
37	Form	189	straight	je	zhí 直	
38		190	round	yan	yuán 圓	
39		191	sharp	kuai	kuài 快	
40		192	dull	be-kuai	bù 不 + 39	
41		193	smooth GEN	pin-pin-de	píng 平 REDPL	
42	Colour	172	red	hen	hóng 紅	
43		173	green	luu	lù 綠	



44		174	yellow	hong	huáng 黃	
45		175	white	pai	bái 白	
46		176	black	xhi	hēi 黑	
47	Society	036	woman	ni-xhe	nǚhái 女孩	
48			young male	wa		
b		037	man	wa-ren	48 + 49	
49		038	person	ren	rén 人	
50		039	child	galamala		
51		040	wife	ni-ren	nǚ 女 + 49	
52		041	husband	nixi	nǚxu 女婿	
53		042	mother	ana	NWM	
54		043	father	aba	NWM	
55		207	name	minze	míngzi 名子	
56	Fauna	044	animal	denzho	WT dud.vgro	
b			wild animal	redak	WT ri.dwags	
57		045	fish	xhuiyang	168 + 230	
58		046	bird	macio	máquè 麻雀	
59		047	dog	gek	gǒu 狗	
60		048	louse	shaize	shīzi 蝨子	
61		049	snake	shai	shé 蛇	
62		050	worm	cek	WT tshig	
63		Flora	051	tree	shu	shù 樹
64			052	forest	lin	lín 林
65	053		stick	gun/ze	gūnzi 棍子	
66	054		fruit	goze	guǒzi 果子	
67	055		seed	ze	zǐ 子	
68	056		leaf	yaize	yèzi 葉子	
69	057		root	genze	gēnzi 根子	
b				zaba	WT rtsa.ba	
70	058		bark of tree	shu-pize	63 + 74	
71	059	flower	hu	huā 花		

72		060	grass	zatang	WT rtsa.thang
73		061	rope	shen/ze	shéngzi 繩子
74	Anatomy		leather	pize	pízi 皮子
b		062	skin	rek-pize	75 + 74
75		063	meat / flesh	rek	ròu 肉
76		064	blood	xai	xuè 血
77		065	bone	gutek	gǔtou 骨頭
78		066	fat / grease	hi	féi 肥
79		067	egg	jhidan	jīdàn 雞蛋
80		068	horn	ge	cf. jiǎo 角
81		069	tail	liba	wěiba 尾巴
82		070	feather	jjho	WT sgro
83		071	hair	mo	máo 毛
b				hair on head	tekhua
84		072	head	dolo	NWM
85		073	ear	ekdo	ěrduo 耳朵
86		074	eye	nianzek	yǎnjīng 眼睛
87		075	nose	pigong	bīkǒng 鼻孔
88		076	mouth	kek	kǒu 口
89		077	tooth	niacha	yáchi 牙齒
90		078	tongue	shaitek	shétou 舌頭
91			finger	zhechek	zhītou 指頭
b		079	finger nail	zhekjha	zhǐjia 指甲
92		080	foot	jho	jiǎo 腳
93		081	leg	la	WT brla
94		082	knee	polo-gaize	+ gàizi 蓋子
95		083	hand	shek	shǒu 手
96				arm	hongba
97	084	wing	bangze	bǎngzi 膀子	
98	085	belly	tuze	dùzi 肚子	
99	086	guts	qangze	chángzi 腸子	



100		087	neck	banjhe	+ jǐng 頸
101		088	back of body	bi	bèi 背
102		089	breast	naitek	nǎitou 奶頭
103		090	heart	xen	xīn 心
104		091	liver	gan	gān 肝
105	Physiology	092	to drink	xhe	hē 喝
106		093	to eat	qe	chī 喫
107		094	to bite	nio	niǎo 嚙
108		095	to suck	za	NWM
109		096	to spit	tai	WT thed
110		097	to vomit	tu	tù 吐
111			to urinate	nio	niào 尿
112			to excrete	ba	bā 屙
113			to sweat	han	hàn 汗
114		098	to blow	qhui	chuī 吹
115		099	to breathe	jje	WT vjib
116		100	to laugh	xo	xiào 笑
117		107	to sleep	xhui	shui 睡
118	108	to live	ho	huó 活	
119	109	to die	se	sǐ 死	
120	145	to freeze	dun	dòng 凍	
121	146	to swell	zhong	zhǒng 腫	
122	Cognition	101	to see	kan	kàn 看
123		102	to hear	tin	tīng 聽
124		103	to know	jedo	zhīdào 知道
125		104	to think	ddang	WT vdang
126		105	to smell	cixai	
127		106	to fear	haipa	hàipà 害怕
128		139	to count	suan	suàn 算
129	Technology	110	to kill	sha	shā 殺
130		111	to fight	dajang	dǎzhàng 打仗

131		112	to hunt	redak da	= 56b + 132
132		113	to hit	da	dǎ 打
133		114	to cut	ge	gē 割
134		115	to split	baikai	cf. bì 敝
135		116	to stab	qo	chuō 戳
136		117	to scratch	ghua	= 137
137		118	to dig	ghua	wā 挖
138		129	to hold	jua	zhuā 抓
139		130	to squeeze	zi	jī 擠
140		131	to rub	ca	cā 擦
141		132	to wash	xi	xǐ 洗
142		133	to wipe	ca	= 140
143		134	to pull	la	lā 拉
144		135	to push	xan	NWM
145		136	to throw	ek	NWM
146		137	to tie	dai	dài 帶
147		138	to sew	hen	féng 縫
148	Motion	119	to swim	ho	fú 浮
149		120	to fly	hi	fēi 飛
150		121	to walk	xhen	xíng 行
151		122	to come	lai	lái 來
152			to go	qhi	qù 去
153			to arrive	do	dào 到
154		123	to lie on side	gundo	gūn 滾 + 158
155		124	to sit	co	zuò 坐
156		125	to stand	zhan	zhàn 站
157		126	to turn	juan	zhuǎn 轉
158	127	to fall	do	dǎo 倒	
159	143	to float	ho	= 148	
160	144	to flow	yi	yì 溢	
161	Interaction	128	to give	gi	gěi 給



162		140	to say	sho	shuō 說
163		141	dance	zho	WT bro
b			to sing	zho sho	163 + 162
164		142	to play	wan	wán 玩
165	Astronomy	147	sun	raitek	rètou 熱頭
166		148	moon	yailiang	yuèliàng 月亮
167		149	star	xixang	xīngxīng 星星
168	Hydrology	150	water	xhui	shuǐ 水
169		151	rain	tai	cf. 187
170		152	river	xhe	hé 河
171		153	lake	co	WT mtsho
172		154	sea	jjhangco	WT rgya.mtsho
173		164	snow	xai	xuě 雪
174		165	ice	bin	bīng 冰
175		194	wet	she	shī 溼
176		195	dry	gan	gān 乾
177	Geology	155	salt	qiyán	qīngyán 青鹽
178		156	stone	shetek	shítou 石頭
179		157	sand	shaze	shāzi 沙子
180		158	dust	ddu	WT rdul
181		159	earth / field	tu	tǔ 土
182		170	road	lu	lù 路
183		171	mountain	wuwa	
184		171	valley	gek	gōu 溝
185	Meteorology	160	cloud	wencai	yúncái 雲彩
186		161	fog	wu	wù 霧
187		162	sky	tian	tiān 天
188		163	wind	hen	fēng 風
189		180	warm	rai	rè 熱
b				zho	WT dro
190		181	cold	dun	dòng 凍

191	Pyrology	166	smoke	yan	yān 烟
192		167	fire	ho	huǒ 火
193		168	ashes	ta	WT thal
194			charcoal	suanga	WT som.ga
195		169	to burn	zio	jiāo 焦
196	Chronology	177	night	waixi	wǎn 晚 +
197		178	daytime	paire	45 + ri 日
198			week	xenqi	xīngqī 星期
199		179	year	nian	nián 年
b				lo	WT lo
200			month	yai	yuè 月
201	Numerals	022	one	yi	yī 一
b				yi-zek	201 + zek
c			CL	yi-ge	+ ge 個
202		023	two	ek	èr 二
b			CL	liang-ge	liǎngge 兩個
203		024	three	san	sān 三
b			CL	san-ge	+ ge 個
204		025	four	se	sì 四
b			CL	se-ge	+ ge 個
205		026	five	wu	wǔ 五
b			CL	wu-ge	+ ge 個
206			six	lek	liù 六
b			CL	lek-ge	+ ge 個
207			seven	ci	qī 七
b			CL	ci-ge	+ ge 個
208			eight	ba	bā 八
b			CL	ba-ge	+ ge 個
209			nine	jhek	jiǔ 九
b			CL	jhek-ge	+ ge 個
210			ten	she	shí 十



b			CL	she-ge	+ ge 個	
211			hundred	yi-bai	yībǎi 一百	
b			CL	yi-bai-ge	+ ge 個	
212			thousand	dong	WT stong	
b			CL	dong-ge	+ ge 個	
213			ten thousand	che	WT khri	
b			CL	che-ge	+ ge 個	
214	Qualities	031	heavy	chong	zhòng 重	
215			full	man	mǎn 滿	
b				gang	WT bkang	
216			empty	kun	kōng 空	
b				dongwa	WT stong.pa	
217			184	old	lo	lǎo 老
b				ggi	WT rgas	
218			183	new	xen	xīn 新
b				soma	WT so.ma	
219				young	loqong	WT lo.chung
220			185	good	ho	hǎo 好
b				ssang	WT bzang	
c				shage	WT hra.gí	
221			186	bad	tama	WT tha.ma
222		187	rotten	lan	làn 爛	
b			ru	WT rul		
223		188	dirty	zang	zāng 髒	
b			zzhangzok	WT sgrang.btsog		
224		196	correct OBJ	hai-li	shi 是	
225			wrong OBJ	bai-li	bù 不 + 224	
226	Economy		horse	ma	mǎ 馬	
227			donkey	li	lú 驢	
228			mule	loze	luózi 騾子	
229			yak	yak	WT gǎg	

b			male yak	zzo	WT vdzo
c			female yak	zzhe	WT vdri
230			sheep	yang	yáng 羊
231			goat	gure	NWM
b				rama	WT ra.ma
c			male goat	ratong	WT ra.tung
232			wool	wa	WT wal
233			barley	qenke	qīngkē 青稞
234			milk	naize	nǎizi 奶子
235			butter	xek	



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