

The future tenses in the Tibetic languages

Diachronic and dialectal perspectives

In Aspectuality and Temporality: Descriptive and theoretical issues
Zlatka Guentchéva (Ed), John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2017

Nicolas Tournadre¹

1. Introduction²

The purpose of this article is to provide an overview of the future tenses found in Tibetic languages. The term ‘Tibetic’ is used to denote a well-defined compact family of languages derived from Old Tibetan (see Tournadre, 2013). These languages are spoken on the Tibetan Plateau and in the Himalayas in 6 countries: China, Pakistan, India, Nepal and Bhutan and Myanmar. In this article, I will take into consideration both Classical Tibetan and modern Tibetic languages.

2. Preliminary remarks about the theory of TAM

Plurifunctionality and polysemy of grammatical morphemes still constitute a real issue for contemporary linguistic theory. When dealing with morphemes or markers conveying a tense, aspect or modality³ meaning many linguists continue to use monolithic and mutually exclusive definitions. The conception reflected in this paper is that each TAM morpheme bears at the same time a temporal, an aspectual and a modal parameter. In other words a tense, such as the English *preterit* or the French *passé composé*, conveys not only a temporal but also an aspect and a modal value. Although one of the values is dominant, other secondary values are also present and may interact in the grammatical semantics of the morpheme. Such a conception of TAM markers is shared by Wilmet (1997: 329), Gosselin (2005) or Tournadre (2004, 2009, 2013). Within such an approach, the long standing debate over the status of the future which is considered either as a modality or as a tense becomes quite meaningless.

¹ University of Aix-Marseille, CNRS (Lacito) and Institut Universitaire de France

² Abbreviations : POSS : possessive, IRR : irrealis, EMPH : emphasis, PFCT : perfective, IMPF : imperfective, NMLZ : nomanizer, H: honorific, FUT: future, ELA : elative, TOP: topic, NEG: negation, INST : instrumental, REL: relator, CP: connective, COP: copula, PRES : present, AUX : auxiliary, TAM : tense, aspect, modality; CT : Classical Tibetan, OT : Old Tibetan; INT : intentional, Sg : singular, ERG : ergative, EGO: egophoric, PROG : programmatic, Q: question, ASPT : assumptive; INF : inferential; RHEM : rhematic; CONTR : contrary to expectation; FACT : factual; BEN: benefactive; PREV: preventive; DEONT : deontic; AUTO: autolalic; EPI : epistemic; SENS : sensory; DUB: dubitative, L^v: light verb.

³ Hence abbreviated as TAM.

Another frequent characteristic of the TAM systems is the possibility to use various ‘tenses’ to refer to the same ‘time’. That means that even if ‘future tense’ exists in a given language, the future may be marked as well by other categories such as the ‘present tense’. For example, in French, despite the existence of a ‘future tense’, the present is very often used to convey a future meaning. In Persian the form of the future tense based on the modal verb *xâstan* ‘to want’ followed by the uninflected form of the lexical verb, but this form is often largely confined to the educated register. The future is frequently marked by the ‘present tense’ or by the ‘aorist’. (see Windfuhr, 1987, Lessan-Pezeshki, H, forthcoming).

Another often forgotten caveat is that the TAM values are not restricted to the verbal predicate but are spread over the whole sentence including subordinate clauses.

3. Deictic versus relative futures

Within the canonical conception of deictic tenses, the past event is anterior to the moment of utterance T_0 , the present coincides with T_0 , while the future is posterior to T_0 . Thus, within this framework, we can give the label of “future” to a marker when it is *mainly* used to denote an event located after the moment of utterance T_0 . However, even when this label is used, one should bear in mind that the verbal form may also be associated with a specific aspect (complete, incomplete, perfective, imperfective, aoristic, etc.) and a modality (e.g. realis, irrealis, epistemic, etc.). Moreover, the same form may be used in some specific contexts to express events that are indeed anterior and simultaneous to T_0 . In that case, the ‘future’ is used as *relative tense* such as in the following example:

- 1) *Osceola will die the following year [in the 19th c.] in prison, and the remaining Seminole will mostly be killed.*

In the above sentence, the reference point is the year 1837. Many languages may allow such a translation of the reference point and the use a deictic tense (*will die, will be killed*) as a relative tense (see Tournadre N. and Jamborova D., 2009). However, the grammatical meaning of the form *will die* is by default a deictic tense and refers to an event posterior to T_0 .

4. Future and modality

From a notional, psychological and even physical point of view, the concept of ‘future’ is always uncertain. However, language grammars may associate ‘future tense’ with various modalities which range from ‘certain’ to ‘very unlikely’. As pointed out by Mithun (1995: 386), a

grammatical future is not necessarily *irrealis*. It may very well correspond to a *realis* event. In that case, the event which has not yet taken place is presented by the speaker as certain.

Some languages such as Hausa, Maurician Creole (see D. Véronique, 2009) or Standard Tibetan (see below) exhibit two types of futures: *realis* and *irrealis*.

As shown by Sun (2007), in Caodeng a rGyalrongic language of eastern Tibet du Tibet oriental, the future generally corresponds to a *realis* modality (2007) and used for predictions, warnings, promises, etc. However, Jackson Sun (2007, p 808) also mentions the existence of a dubitative future: “this dubitative future construction is employed for instance by a hesitant speaker mumbling to her/himself while weighing up the available alternatives for future action”:

2) ཅ-ལྷཱཱ	ཅ-ཚཱ-འཇ-འཇུའྱཱ	so: །
1sg: POSS-child	IRR1-go-IRR2-study	or : EMPH
ཅ-ཚཱ-འཇ-འཇུའྱཱ	ཀཱ	
IRR1-go and-IRR2-work	SFP	

“Will my child go to school or will he work in the fields?”

He adds: "whereas the ordinary (formally *realis*) future forecasts future situations *with full assertive force*⁴, the dubitative exists for a diametrically opposed purpose : to indicate means of *irrealis* marking the speaker’s indetermination as to which one out of number of alternative situations should be brought into being. Thus future tense may be associated with various kinds of modality. I will illustrate this point with the Tibetic languages.

5. Future and aspect

Aspectual oppositions (such as complete vs incomplete or perfective vs imperfective) are not as frequently marked in the future as they are in the past. For example in French the ‘future simple’ is neutral as far as the aspect is concerned. It is neither *accompli* ‘complete’ nor *inaccompli* ‘incomplete’. The aspectual meaning depends on the verb lexical configuration as illustrated from the examples below:

3) *Timochenko **dormira** en prison pendant 7 ans*
 ‘Timochenko **will stay** [litt. will sleep] in jail for 7 sevens’

4) *La bombe **explosera** quand on appuiera sur le bouton.*
 ‘The bomb **will explode** when the button is pressed

⁴ I underline.

Of course in many languages, one finds aspectual distinctions in the future such as the ‘future perfect’ or the ‘future progressive tense’ in English, however, marking the aspect is not compulsory in many contexts, unlike the situation found in Slavic languages. In these languages, the opposition between ‘imperfective’ and ‘perfective’ is pervasive in the future just as it is in the past. This is a salient feature of the Slavic group as shown in the Slovakian examples below⁵ :

5) *Zajtra vstanem* [PFCT] *skoro*.

« I am going to/ will get up early tomorrow morning »

6) *Celý týždeň budem vstávať* [IMPF] *skoro*.

« I am going to/ will get up early the whole week »

One can notice that it is not possible in the above translations to replace the periphrastic form or the simple future by future perfect or future progressive forms. Let’s note in passing that given the specificity of the Slavic aspect, the terminology used in the English scientific literature (see Comrie 1976) is problematic since most authors use imperfective/ perfective to refer to Germanic, Romance as well as non European languages. The French tradition (see Cohen, 1989, Tournadre 2006) makes a clear distinction between ‘perfective’ vs ‘imperfective’ (found prototypically in Slavic languages) and ‘accompli’ vs ‘inaccompli’ [complete vs incomplete] found in many languages of the world.

6. Morphogenesis of the future

Not all languages have developed grammatical futures. In those languages which do have a specific form for the future, one can mention four frequent sources for this category:

- 1) The form is morphologically derived from a modal verb with a desiderative or deontic meaning such as ‘want’ or ‘must’. That is the case in Mandarin Chinese, English, Swedish, Bulgarian; Serbo-Croatian, Tamazight, Romanian, Persian and Tibetan.
- 2) The form is derived from motion verbs such as ‘come’ or ‘go’. This strategy is frequently attested, e.g in French, English, Swedish or again Tibetan.

⁵ Jamborova (2009: 140)

- 3) The construction is made of a copula ‘to be’ or an existential verb ‘to have’ used in combination with an infinitive form of the verb. This is the case in French, Spanish, Russian (for the imperfective future), German or again Tibetan.
- 4) The construction is made of an adposition and an infinitive form of the verb. This strategy is used e.g in French based Creoles.

For other sources of grammaticalization see also Heine et Kuteva (2002). The site of WALS provides a sample of 112 languages without ‘flexionnal future’ while 110 languages which have developed such forms. This suggests that the periphrastic future is a very frequent phenomenon.

7. General remarks about the future in Tibetic languages

A specific ‘future stem’ exists in Classical Tibetan and Old Tibetan for a number of verbs (along with the ‘present’, ‘past’ and ‘imperative’) as shown in the following examples: ‘to plant’ *debs* (present), *gtab* (future), *btab* (past), *thobs* (imperative) or ‘to look at’ *lta* (present), *blta* (future), *bltas* (past), *ltos* (imperative), etc. These forms reflect an archaic morphology found in Old Tibetan and limited to a few hundred verbs, many verbs having only three or two forms while a number frequent verbs are *entirely invariable*.

This explains why in Old Tibetan (hence OT) and Classical Tibetan (CT), TAM was already also conveyed by auxiliary verbs. The auxiliary is often preceded by a nominalizer or a connective according to the pattern: **V [stem]+[NMLZ/CO]+AUX**

It is worth noting that none of the modern Tibetic languages have preserved the archaic future stem and thus in the modern languages, this TAM category is always conveyed by suffixed forms inherited from auxiliary constructions. This recalls a similar phenomenon in the Romance languages where the two inflectional paradigms of the Latin future (*futurum primum* and *futurum exactum*) have entirely disappeared in the modern languages and been replaced by auxiliary constructions which have led to the emergence of suffixes.⁶

⁶ Except in Rumanian which has a periphrastic future made of the verb *voi* ‘to want’.

8. The future in Classical Tibetan

The stem alone

In CT and OT, the general meaning of the simple future (i.e the stem alone) is future tense reference (Ex. 7) as well as necessity or obligation as in (Ex. 8).

7) *nga shi dur-khungs-nas blta-'o-zhes gsungs*

I die hole- ELA watch[FUT]- ASS-DR say[H]

“I shall watch (you) from the hole in my tomb, he said”

8) *myi gdul-na-ni tshig dang rlabs-kyis gdul (...)*

NEG tame-if-TOP word and wave-INST tame[FUT]

“If one wants to soften (lit. tame) a man, one will/should soften him by words and influence”

The deontic meaning is thus a salient feature of the simple future in CT as shown by Zeisler (2004: 315). She adds: “[it] may also express that the speaker is binding him – or herself by a promise or vow” (ibid: 316). In OT and more rarely CT, the prohibitive is indicated by the combination of the negation marker and the future stem.

Auxiliary constructions

The future stem may also be used in combination with the auxiliary *byed* ‘to do’ which also occurs in the future stem *bya*: V[FUT] + [REL]+ FUT. From the typological point of view, this pattern where both the verb and its auxiliary are inflected for the future is rather rare.

As it is the case with the stem alone, this type of future frequently often conveys a deontic meaning.

9) *shin-tu rgas-par-gyur-tshe yang thos-pa mang-du gsag-par-bya*

very old-AUX-when even teaching a lot accumulate[FUT]-CO+do [FUT]

“Even when one has become very old, one **should** still **accumulate** a lot of teachings.”

10) *sems-kyi rgyud-la brtag-par-bya*

mind-GEN line- DAT examine[FUT]-CO+do[FUT]

“One **should examine** the continuum of the mind.”

Additionally, the future is often marked in CT by the combination of the *present stem* of the verb usually followed by a relator (a connective or a nominalizer) with the copula *yin* (or other copulas such as *lags*) ‘to be’ : V[**PRESENT**] + [REL]+ **COP** (‘to be’). This construction does not yield a deontic connotation.

11) *des-na* *khyod-kyang khong-gi* *drung-du* *nga-rang-gi*
 thus you-also. he(hon.)-GEN. in front-OBL. me-GEN.
bu 'di-dang *bsdebs-nas* *gtong-ba-yin*
 son this-ASS. accompany(past)-CO. **send [pres.]- REL.+AUX**
 Thus I will send you to his place, together with my son.

12) *bod-yul* *dbus-su* **'gro-ba-yin**
 Tibet centre **go [prés.]-REL.+AUX**
 I will go to central Tibet.

The construction V[**PRESENT**] + [REL]+ **COP** has become the main strategy for building the grammatical future in all the modern Tibetic languages. The structure is identical in the various languages, but the copulas meaning ‘to be’ may vary: *yin* (in Sherpa, Dzongkha, etc.), *red* (in Amdo, Central Tibet), **rbad* (in Tsang, Sikkim), **'dad* (in Tö Ngari, etc.), etc.

As shown by Oisel (2013) and Hill (2013), evidential and epistemic grammatical meanings have already emerged in Classical Tibetan and thus some forms of future may already convey evidential and epistemic values. However the full development of evidential and epistemic systems in the three tenses (past, present and future) has been achieved in the modern Tibetic languages.

9. The types of future in the modern languages

In the modern languages, the specific future stems have disappeared and the ‘do’ auxiliary constructions are no longer used. The present stem may still be used alone (without auxiliary/suffix) in Amdo and in some Kham dialects, to indicate the future (See Zeisler, 2004).

However, the main paradigms of the future are derived from the above Classical structure (Ex. 7, 8), i.e a nominalised form of the verb followed by a copula meaning ‘to be’⁷. As we will see, other auxiliaries are also used to convey various future evidential and epistemic meanings. All the Tibetic languages that have been described so far have developed rich systems of epistemic,

⁷ This structure is thus similar (except for the word order) to the one used in Russian for the imperfective future. In Amdo and in some Kham dialects, the present stem may be used alone (without auxiliary/suffix), particularly in negative sentences, to indicate the future.

evidential and volitional modalities associated with the three tenses through the grammaticalization of various auxiliaries. The various systems reflect the grammaticalization of the source and access to information but also the grammaticalization of various types of speech acts.

In this paper, we will consider only the case of the future and examine the following types:

‘intentional’, ‘programmatic’, ‘assumptive’, ‘factual’, ‘benefactive’, ‘inferential’, ‘preventive’, ‘deontic’, ‘dubative’ and ‘autolalic’, as well as various types of epistemic futures.

Generally speaking, *sensory access*⁸ is a major evidential category of all the Tibetic languages (for Central Tibetan see Tournadre, 1996, 2008, 2009; for Tsang see Haller, 2000; for Amdo, see Haller, 2004 ; for Ladakhi see Koshal, 1982, Zeisler, 2004; for Sherpa, see Tournadre 2009, for Dzongkha see van Driem 1998; etc.). However, for obvious semantic reasons, it is marked *only in the past and present tenses*, since in the future one cannot see an event which has not yet taken place. This does not preclude the existence of inferential futures based on sensory information as we will see later.

Among the widespread categories of future, one should mention the intentional (or volitional) future, which is made out of the nominalised verb followed by the copula *yin*: V- NMLZ+*yin*. It is attested in many Tibetic languages such as Central Tibetan (Tournadre 1996, 2003, 2008), Tsang (Haller, 2000), Amdo Themchen (Haller, 2004). It is however not found in several Tibetic languages outside Tibet such as Dzongkha (Driem, 1998) or Sherpa.

The intentional future is compatible only with *controllable verbs* and is restricted to the *first person* (singular or plural). For this reason it is sometimes called ‘intentional egophoric future’ (Tournadre 1996, 2003). This restriction is due to the fact that the intentions of other people are not accessible to the speaker who only has access to his/her own intention. Here is an example from the Tsang dialect (Haller, 2000: 93):

13) <i>bdag</i>	<i>yi-ge</i>	<i>bris-kyi-(yin)</i>
1sg	letter	write- FUT (INT)
“I’ll write a letter”		

This future would not be compatible with the 3rd person or the 2nd person (in affirmative sentences):

14) * *bdag yi-ge bris-kyi-(yin)* “He will write a letter”.

⁸ Depending on the various author, the sensory access is referred to as ‘experiential’ (Zeisler, 2004), ‘evidentiell’ [evidential in German] (Haller, 2000, 2004), ‘objective knowledge on the part of the speaker acquired through observation’ (Driem, 1998), etc.

In the Amdo Themchen dialect, the intentional egophoric future is also restricted to the 1st person (Haller, 2004):

15) *nga-s* *dpe-cha* *lta-rgyu-yin*
 1sg-ERG book read- FUT (INT)
 ‘I’ll read the book’

This future would not be compatible with the 3rd person or the 2nd person (in affirmative sentences). In Central Tibetan, notably Lhasa, there is a similar structure (V- *mkhan+yin*)⁹ that I propose to call ‘programmatically future’. It is used along with the ‘intentional future’ (V-*gi+yin*) mentioned above. Both grammatical meanings are very similar: they are intentional and are restricted to the first persons. Vokurkova (2008: 102) gives the following explanation about the ‘programmatically future’: “It is used to express that the action of the sentence is the subject’s plan or someone else’s plan. This construction is limited to controllable verbs.”

16) A: *rang* *ga-par* ‘*gro-ga*
 you where go (PRS)-FUT+EGO+(Q)
 B: *nga* *khrom-la* ‘*gro-mkhan-yin*
 1sg market-OBL go (PRS)-FUT (PROG)+EGO

A: "Where are you going?" B: "I plan to go to the market."

17) *nga* *rgya-nag-la* ‘*gro-mkhan-yin*
 1sg China-OBL go (PRS)-FUT (PROG)+EGO
 "I plan to go to China."

The main difference between the ‘intentional’ and the ‘programmatically’ futures is related to the fact that in the latter construction, the speaker states that she/he has a plan. As noted by Vokurkova (*ibid*), the plan does not necessarily reflect the speaker’s will. For example, if a Tibetan student from Lhasa is sent by the government to study outside the Tibetan Autonomous Region in the Chinese provinces and utters the sentence (17), she/he puts emphasis on the institution’s program and not on his own intention. About the distinction between the two types of future, Vokurkova (2008) adds: “Using the future ending *gi.yin* in the above sentence would imply that the speaker insists on his current intention and not on his (or someone else’s) plan. Unlike the ending *gi.yin*, which is only used in future contexts, the construction V-*mkhan+yin* is also used in past contexts.” Thus the example (16) may be preceded by the adverb *kha-sa* ‘yesterday’ (16b) but it is not possible with the intentional future (16c) below:

(16b) *kha-sa nga khrom-la 'gro-mkhan-yin*

"I was planning to go to the market yesterday"

(16c) * *kha-sa nga khrom-la 'gro-gi-yin*

The following examples illustrate the fact that some Tibetic languages do not have an intentional future. In (18) and (19), the Dzongkha future is made out of the nominalized verb followed by *ʔn* (a cognate of *yin*) but occurs with the 3rd person plural and does not convey specifically an intentional meaning:

18) *am-tshu* *de-tshu* *ga-te* *'gyo-ni-ʔn-na*
1sg letter where go-FUT (ASPT)-Q

“Where are the women off to?”

19) *las-rim* *nam* *'go btsugs-ni-ʔn-na*
1sg letter begin-FUT (ASPT)-Q

“When is the programme going to begin?”

One should note that in Ü, Tsang and Amdo, the intentional future may be used with the 2nd person in interrogative sentences. This phenomenon which has sometimes being described within the framework of the so-called ‘conjunct/disjunct system’ (see Tournadre, 2008) represents the speaker’s anticipation of the addressee’s answer. For example, the question “Will you write a letter?” would contain an intentional egophoric future anticipating the addressee’s intention found in the answer, as in (13): “yes I’ll write a letter?”.

As mentioned above, the Dzongkha construction *V-ni ʔn*¹⁰ found in (18) indicates the future but it does not convey an intentional meaning. This construction is opposed to another type of future: *V-ni ʔn-pas* (19). These forms have been described by Driem (1998: 348) in the following way: “The difference in meaning between the auxiliary *ʔn* [...], expressing personal or assimilated knowledge, and *ʔn-pas*, [...], expressing objective or acquired knowledge also holds true when these auxiliary are in combination with the infinitive [*V-ni*].

Let us give two examples quoted by Driem (ibid, 350):

⁹ The nominalizer *mkhan* replaces the form *gi*.

¹⁰ As noted earlier, the construction is formed in the standard Tibetic way: a nominalised verb *V* followed by a nominalizer *ni* and the copula *'in* or *ʔinpas*

20) *khong* *da-lto-rang* *lto* *za-bar* *'gyo-ni-ʔn-pas*
 3sg right now food eat-SUP go-FUT (INF)
 “They’re going to have their meal right now.”

21) *khong* *da-lto-rang* *lto* *za-bar* *'gyo-ni-ʔn*
 3sg right now food eat-SUP go-FUT (ASPT)
 “They’re going to have their meal right now.”

Here is Driem’s commentary (1998: 350) about these two sentences, which have an identical English translation: “Speaking of a third person, one is inclined to use the form *ʔn-pas*, expressing acquired knowledge [as in 20] [...] although one might say [21] [...] if the speaker had been working together with the third person referents, in which case, he shares personal knowledge of their plans.”

From a cognitive point of view, the concepts of ‘acquired knowledge’ (or ‘new knowledge’) vs ‘assimilated knowledge’ (or ‘old, ingrained backgrounded knowledge, personal knowledge’) do not seem entirely appropriate. The time when the information was acquired is not directly relevant. For example, according to the above commentary, in order to use *V-ni-ʔn* and say (21) in a pragmatically felicitous way, the speaker might have just shared personal information a few minutes ago. Conversely, the construction *V-ni-ʔn-pas* is not necessarily newly acquired. In fact, many sentences collected by the author, the construction is related to conditional clauses such as:

22) *mo-gis* *yi-gu* *bkal-ba-cin* *dga'-ni-ʔn-pas*
 3fsg-ERG letter send-if like-FUT (INF)
 “I’d like if she would send me a letter.” (lit. I will like, if she sent me a letter)

Here is a last series of examples¹¹ showing that the concepts of ‘newly acquired information’ vs ‘old information’, ‘personal knowledge’ are not suitable to qualify respectively the copulas *ʔn-pas* and *ʔn*. This is true whether they are used as part of a future construction or simply as copulas:

23) *nga* *nadp* *ʔn-pas (sbo-ste)*
 1sg patient ‘be’ (contr-rhem)
 “So I’m a patient!” (waking up in a hospital after an accident)

¹¹ These examples are borrowed to Driem (1998 : 129-130)

Driem (1998: 129) contrasts (23) and (24) adding: “but in speaking about himself to a visitor, the same patient would simply say”:

24) *nga nadp ḥin*
 1sg patient ‘be’
 “I’m a patient.”

It is clear from (23) that *ḥin-pas* is first “acquired” through an inference. The amnesic person wakes up in the hospital and deduces that he is a patient. The *ḥin* copula may be used only subsequently once the first revelation has already taken place. Thus the copula *ḥin-pas* is best characterized by the ‘inferential’ access to information.

Thus, the core meaning of the construction *V-ni-ḥin-pas* is to convey an ‘inferential future’. It may correspond to various kinds of inferences: logical (as in 22), sensory or an inference driven from a reported speech.

The status of the other construction *V-ni-ḥin* still needs a clarification. The notion of ‘personal knowledge’ is little fuzzy and problematic since there is nothing ‘personal’ in an utterance such as (21) “They’re going to have their meal right now.” The speaker’s access to the information is not specified (it is not sensory or hearsay, etc.) and the term ‘personal’ here rather refers to an information assimilated by the speaker as in (21) and (24). Moreover, the term ‘personal’ could introduce a confusion with the egophoric evidentials, found in Standard Tibetan or Amdo, which are restricted to the first persons and really convey personal information. Thus in order to describe this type of Dzongkha future, I propose to use the term ‘assumptive’ propagated by Aikhenvald (2008).

Another frequent type found in the Tibetic languages is the ‘factual future’. From a morphological point of view, it is again derived from a nominalised form of the lexical verb followed by copulas meaning ‘to be’: *red* (in Ü), * *rbad* (in Tsang), * ‘*dad/’da*’ (in Tö).

Here is an example from Ruthok (Tö, Ngari) reported by Qu Aitang and Tan Kerang (1983).

25) *Kho ja ‘thung-ka-’da’*
 3sg tea drink-FUT (FACT)
 “He will drink tea.”

The corresponding sentence in Lhasa and Standard Tibetan would be *kho ja ‘thung-gi-red*. In both cases, the factual future indicates that the speaker presents the information as a fact and do not specify how he had accessed to this information. With controllable verbs, the factual future is used

with the 3rd and 2nd persons, while the intentional future is preferred with the 1st person, but it is possible to use the factual with the 1st person as well. In some contexts, the speaker puts emphasis on the factual information and may suggest a lack of intention.

An interesting type of future found in Central Tibet (Ü) and Tsang is the ‘benefactive’ future. It is marked by the grammaticalization of the modal verb *dgos* ‘want’ or *chog* ‘to be allowed’. The speaker offers to perform an action for the benefit of the addressee:

- 26) *nga-s* *sang-nyin* *yong-dgos*
 1sg-ERG tomorrow come-FUT (BEN)
 “I’ll come tomorrow (for you, to help you, etc.)”.

The benefactive future is restricted to the first person (singular and sometimes plural) which always appears in the ergative case (even with intransitive controllable verbs as in (26)). Again the restriction to the 1st person is due to pragmatic constraints, whereby the speaker can only make a commitment related to his own intention.

The ‘preventive’ future, which is marked by the auxiliary *yong* ‘to come’ is frequently used in Central Tibetan to indicate a warning about a coming danger or risk. Although it has sometimes been described as an imminent danger, it is not always the case. (See Tournadre, 2001)

- 27) *gzab-gzab byas-na ma-gtogs* *zag-yong*
 careful L^y (make)-if otherwise fall-FUT (PREV)
 “Be careful, otherwise, you will fall down”

A ‘deontic’ future *rgyu’yin* and *rgyu’red* also found in Central Tibetan have been described by Vokurkova (2008) in the following way: These “endings are used in future contexts that, besides an evidential meaning (*rgyu’yin* egophoric, *rgyu’red* factual), often have deontic connotations: conveying the meaning of obligation or capacity. They correspond in English to ‘intend’, ‘have yet to’, ‘need to’.

- 28) *nga tshogs- ‘du-r* *‘gro-rgyu-yin*
 1sg meeting-OBL go (PRS)-FUT (DEONT)+EGO
 « I have yet to go the meeting. » or « I have to go to the meeting. » (The meeting hasn’t started yet.)

According to van Driem (1998, p 363), "There is a special future form [in Dzongkha], the ‘autololalic’ future which expresses the intent of the first person subject. The autolalic future is only used when thinking to oneself in Dzongkha about what one intends to do. The form is never

uttered unless one is talking to oneself and is always in the first person singular. The autolalic future also occurs in narrative, in direction quotations of someone's thought and is marked by the ending – *ge'no*, which originally derives from the adhortative suffix.”

- 29) *lta-ma* *nga* *za-ge-no*
 after 1sg eat-FUT+AUTO
 « I'll eat later »

Apart from the various types of future mentioned above, a number of epistemic futures are attested in the Tibetic languages. Many authors have concentrated upon the evidential systems and not paid enough attention to the epistemic paradigms. For Standard Tibetan, one finds an epistemic form of the deontic future¹²: *V-rgyu'yin'pa'dra*. Here is an example borrowed from Vokurkova (2008: 106)

- 30) *khong-la* *spu-gu* *skyes-rgyu-yin-pa-'dra*
 she+H-OBL child give birth-FUT (EPI+SENS)

« It seems she has yet to give birth to the baby. » (When I saw her several months ago, she was pregnant. I called her today and she said she was in the office. So it seems that she hasn't given birth yet.)

This epistemic deontic is based on a sensory inference.

Another form corresponding to a 'dubitative' future is attested in Standard Tibetan. The verb is followed by an interrogative marker and the auxiliary *yong* 'to come': *V-a yong*. The speaker expresses a hope that something will happen although it looks unlikely. See the above example from Vokurkova (2008: 171).

- 31) *nga-r* *spu-gu* *skyes-a-yong*
 1sg-OBL child give birth-FUT (DUB)

"I probably won't have a child" or "I wish I could have a child." (The speaker rather thinks he won't. She tried many times but it didn't work out. Thus the meaning is also close to "if only I could have a child!").

A fairly frequent form of epistemic future is the construction: *V-pa'dug*. This form is based on sensory evidence. In the above example, the speaker bases his statement on the observation of the clouds:

- 32) *char-pa btang-pa- 'dug*
rain L^v (send)-FUT (EPI+SENS)
"It looks like rain" or "It seems it's going to rain." (Tournadre, 2003: 307, Vokurkova, 2008)

Finally one should note that many of the forms of future tenses that we have analyzed in this paper have only a declarative form and may not appear in combination with interrogative markers. For example, the 'dubitative' *a.yong* and the 'benefactive' *dgos/chog* lack interrogative counterparts. The interrogative form *V- pa 'dug* do have an interrogative form (*V- pa 'dug-gas*) but according to Vokurkova (2008), it seems rarely used.

10. Conclusions

We have seen that the Tibetic languages exhibit a rich diversity of futures expressing various evidential, epistemic and pragmatic meanings. They include the following categories: 'factual', 'assumptive', 'intentional', 'benefactive', 'inferential', 'preventive', 'deontic', 'dubative' and 'autolalic'. Additionally, some of the above categories may combine with epistemic suffixes. Generally speaking the epistemic paradigms have been described for some languages particularly Standard Tibetan or Amdo but need further research in most Tibetic languages.

The various types future depend upon several factors, namely the controllable vs non controllable nature of the lexical verb as well as the persons. The benefactive, 'intentional', and 'autolalic' futures are restricted to the first persons (agents).

This diversity confirms the significance of these grammatical categories in this region of the world. It also shows that the TAM systems are profoundly asymmetrical since the paradigms used in the future do not necessarily have equivalent in the past tenses. The 'sensory' evidential does not appear marked in the future for obvious reasons. Moreover, a lot of the future tenses that have been examined in this paper have only a declarative form. They can not appear in interrogative sentences. A better understanding of the TAM systems found in the Tibetic languages could bring a contribution to the typology of tense, aspect and modalities in general.

¹² Cf The deontic future is illustrated in (28).

Références

- Boisserie E., Jamborova, D. Kreckova V. 2009, *Parlons slovaque, une langue slave*, L'harmattan.
- Bottineau, D. (à paraître) 'Futur et déflexivité en français et dans d'autres langues (approche contrastive) : le futur « composé », réplique du passé composé ?
- Bres J., 2003, "Temps verbal, aspect et point de vue : de la langue au discours" in Cahiers de praxématique 41, 55-84.
- Comrie, B.– 1985, *Tense*, Cambridge University Press.
- Comrie, B.– 1976. *Aspect*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge.
- Confais, J.-P. –1995 : temps mode aspect. Les approches des morphèmes verbaux et de leurs problèmes à l'exemple du français et de l'allemand. PUM.
- Dahl, Östen. 1985. *Tense and aspect systems*. New York: Basil Blackwell.
- Driem, van G. 1996, *Languages of the greater Himalayan Region. Dzongkha*. SAAM, Leiden University
- Driem, van G, 1998, *Dzongkha*. Leiden: Research School of Asian, African and Amerindian Studies [language textbook, xvi + 489 = 505 pp., with three audio compact disks].
- François, A. – 2003. *La sémantique du prédicat en mwotlap (Vanuatu)*. Collection linguistique, Société Linguistique de Paris, LXXXIV, Peeters, Leuven, Paris.
- Garde, P. « Comment se crée un futur : le cas des langues slaves. », Séminaire du Claix, Jeudi 19 novembre 2009, Université de Provence.
- Gosselin, L. 2005, *Temporalité et modalité*, Duculot.
- Hayashi, M. 2011, *The structure of multiple tenses in Inuktitut*, These de doctorat, Université de Toronto.
- Haller, F. (2000). *Dialekt und Erzählungen von Shigatse*. (Beiträge zur tibetischen Erzählforschung 13.) Bonn: VGH Wissenschaftsverlag.
- Haller, F. (2004). *Dialekt und Erzählungen von Themchen: sprachwissenschaftliche Beschreibung eines Nomadendialektes aus Nord-Amdo*. (Beiträge zur tibetischen Erzählforschung 14.) Bonn: VGH Wissenschaftsverlag.
- Heine B. et Kuteva, 2002, T. *World Lexicon of grammaticalization*. Cambridge University Press.
- Lawrin E. & Tournadre N., 2012, "Quelques observations sur le temps et l'aspect en Langue des Signes Française", in *Volume d'hommages à Claire-Maury Rouan*, Presse Universitaire de Provence.
- Lessan-Pezechki, H. (forthcoming), « Les formes verbales du futur en persan. » in *Le futur : une notion temporelle que les langues construisent avec de l'aspect*, (Louis Begioni éd.), Presses Universitaires de Cluj. Roumanie.
- Mithun M. 1995 "On the reality of irrealis. *Modality in Grammar and discourse*, ed. J. Bybbee and S. Fleishman, 367-388 Amsterdam, John Benjamins.
- Moeschler, J. et alii – 1998, *Le temps des événements, pragmatique de la référence temporelle*, ed. Kimé.
- Oisel G. 2013, « Morphosyntaxe et sémantique des auxiliaires et des connecteurs du tibétain littéraire. Étude diachronique et synchronique. [Morphosyntax and semantics of Literary Tibetan auxiliaries and clause linking. A diachronic and synchronic study.]», PhD.
- Qu Aitang and Tan Kerang (1983) *Ali Zang yu*. Beijing : Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe.
- Recanati, C. et F. – 1999 "La classification de Vendler revue et corrigée", *Cahiers Chronos* 4 (1999) pp. 167-184.

- Sun, Jackson T.-S, 2007, "The irrealis category in rGyalrong", *Language & Linguistics* 8(3):797-819.
- Sun, Jackson T.-S., 2000, "Stem alternations in Puxi verb inflection" . *Language & Linguistics* 1.2: 211-232.
- Tournadre, N., 1996. *L'ergativité en tibétain : approche morphosyntaxique de la langue parlée*. Paris: Peeters
- Tournadre, N. – 2004, Typologie des aspects verbaux et intégration à un théorie du TAM, *Bulletin de la Société Linguistique de Paris*, t. XCIV (fasc 1, pp 7-68).
- Tournadre, N. 2008 "Arguments against the Concept of 'Conjunct'/'Disjunct' in Tibetan" in *Chomolangma, Demawend und Kasbek. Festschrift für Roland Bielmeier zu seinem 65. Geburtstag*. B. Huber, M. Volkart, P. Widmer, P. Schwieger, (Eds), Vol 1. p. 281–308.
- Tournadre, 2013 "The Tibetic languages, ", in Mouton de Gruyter. *In Trans-Himalayan Linguistics Historical and Descriptive Linguistics of the Himalayan Area*, N. Hill and T. Owen (eds)
- Tournadre N. et Jamborova D., – 2009, "Taxis : temps déictique, temps relatif, ordre séquentiel" in *actes du colloque „Románske štúdie: súčasný stav a perspektívy“* [Études romanes : situation contemporaine et perspectives], 26. - 27. marca 2009 v Banskej Bystrici *Studia Romanistica Beliana*. Banská Bystrica, p. 458-466.
- Tournadre N. « Vers une typologie des futurs », in *Le futur : une notion temporelle que les langues construisent avec de l'aspect*, à paraître (Louis Begioni éd.), Presses Universitaires de Cluj. Roumanie.
- Tournadre, N. & Sangda Dorjé, 2003, *Manual of Standard Tibetan*, Ithaka, NY. *Manuel de tibétain standard, langue et civilisation* (préface de Claude Hagège), Paris, L'Asiathèque « Langues et mondes », 544 p., with 2 CD. [1998, 3rd edition 2009]
- Tournadre, N. & Konchok Jiatso, 2001 "Final auxiliary verbs in literary Tibetan and in the dialects" in *Person and Evidence in Himalayan Languages*. LTBA special issue, Spring 2001, p. 177-239, Berkeley.
- Tournadre N. and LaPolla, R. J., (forthcoming), "Towards a new approach to evidentiality: Issues and directions for research", *LTBA*.
- Tournadre N. Lhakpa Norbu Sherpa, Gyurme Chodrak and Guillaume Oisel, (2009) *Sherpa-English and English-Sherpa Dictionary, with Literary Tibetan and Nepali equivalents*, 295 p. Vajra Bookstore, Kathmandu.
- Tournadre , N. et Cadiot, P. (manuscript) "La défektivité du TAM dans les énoncés de sens figuré".
- Véronique, G.D. 2009, "L'expression du futur dans les créoles français", in *Le futur*, *Faits de Langue* 33
- Vetters, C. et E. Skibinska (1998): "Le futur: une question de temps ou de mode? Remarques générales et analyse du «présent-futur» perfectif polonais", in A. Borillo, C. Vetters et M.Vuillaume (éds.): *Regards sur l'aspect III*, Rodopi, Amsterdam, 247-26
- Vokurkova, Z. 2008, *Epistemic modalities in Spoken Standard Tibetan*, PhD Paris 8 and Univerzita Karlova, Prague.
- Wilmet, M. 1997, *Grammaire critique du français*. Louvain-la-Neuve: Duculot, Hachette Supérieur.
- Windfuhr, G. L. 1987, "Persian". In: Comrie, B. (Ed.): *The World's Major Languages*. London: Croom Helm
- Zeisler, B. 2004. *Relative tense and aspectual values in Tibetan languages: a comparative study*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.