Jiahong Wang and Yam Leung Lawrence Cheung

5 Egophoric and non-egophoric marking in Golog Tibetan

Abstract: This study examines the distribution and interpretation of egophoric (EGO) and non-egophoric (NON-EGO) forms in Golog Tibetan, a Tibetic language spoken in Qinghai, China. These forms constitute a binary grammatical opposition realized through the copular system, with EGO forms prototypically occurring in first-person declaratives and second-person interrogatives, and NON-EGO forms appearing elsewhere. While this basic pattern exhibits systematic regularity, Golog Tibetan demonstrates remarkable flexibility in the manipulation of these forms for various pragmatic purposes. The paper proposes that the distribution and interpretation of EGO and NON-EGO forms is governed by two interacting factors: the origo's epistemic authority over propositional content, and the consistency between the proposition and the origo's conceptual schema. Crucially, these factors operate differently across syntactic environments, yielding distinct pragmatic effects in simple clauses versus complex copular structures (CCS). In simple clauses, non-prototypical usage of EGO and NON-EGO forms directly reflects the manipulation of epistemic authority and schema consistency, generating interpretations ranging from heightened certainty to expressions of surprise. In CCS, these factors interact with construction-specific semantics to generate distinctive pragmatic interpretations, with the construction's inherent judgment-encoding semantics systematically constraining and shaping the realization of epistemic stance. Through investigation of both prototypical and non-prototypical marking patterns, the analysis reveals how the EGO/NON-EGO opposition encodes complex relationships between knowledge states, cognitive processing, and constructional meaning. This dual-factor model provides a unified account of how these forms serve multiple functions while capturing their sensitivity to clausal complexity and constructional semantics.

Keywords: egophoricity, epistemic marking, Golog Tibetan

Acknowledgements: We gratefully acknowledge the valuable feedback received from participants at the 56th Annual Meeting of the Societas Linguistica Europaea (SLE 56) in Athens. Special thanks are due to the workshop organizers, Karolina Grzech and Henrik Bergqvist, for facilitating such an engaging and productive session. We are particularly indebted to the two anonymous reviewers whose thorough and constructive comments substantially improved both the content and clarity of this manuscript.

Jiahong Wang, **Yam Leung Lawrence Cheung**, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111516233-005

5.1 Introduction

The grammatical encoding of epistemic stance and information access represents a fundamental domain of linguistic organization. Languages employ diverse strategies to mark speakers' relationships to propositional content, ranging from evidential systems that specify information source to epistemic modals that express degrees of certainty. Within this broader landscape of epistemic categories, EGO/NON-EGO marking constitutes a particularly sophisticated system for encoding privileged access to and involvement with information (e.g., Creissels 2008; San Roque, Floyd, and Norcliffe 2018).

This linguistic phenomenon has garnered significant attention in Tibeto-Burman linguistics since the pioneering work by Hale (1980) under the name *conjunct*/*disjunct* marking. Subsequent research has revealed EGO/NON-EGO marking to be a linguistic phenomenon that exhibits a binary morphological contrast on verbs or other predicating elements, with EGO forms prototypically occurring in first-person declaratives and second-person interrogatives, and NON-EGO forms appearing elsewhere (e.g., Post 2013; San Roque, Floyd, and Norcliffe 2018).

While sharing this core distributional pattern, EGO/NON-EGO marking across Tibetic languages displays considerable variation in their formal exponence, semantic nuances, pragmatic extensions, and interaction with other categories like evidentiality and mirativity (e.g., Sun 1993; Tournadre 2008; DeLancey 2012; Zeisler 2016; Widmer 2017, 2020; Tribur 2019). This diversity has sparked ongoing debates about the fundamental nature, interpretation, and functions of the phenomenon (e.g., DeLancey 1997; Garrett 2001; Hargreaves 2005; Tournadre and LaPolla 2014; San Roque, Floyd, and Norcliffe 2018).

The present study contributes to this ongoing discussion by examining the distribution and interpretation of EGO and NON-EGO forms in Golog Tibetan, a Tibetic variety spoken in Golog Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province, China. Located within the Amdo Sprachbund, a region of extensive linguistic convergence spanning the Qinghai-Gansu border area (Slater 2003), Golog Tibetan represents an understudied variety that offers valuable insights into epistemic marking systems. According to the 2020 census conducted by the Qinghai Statistical Bureau (2021), Golog Prefecture has a total population exceeding 210,000, with ethnic Tibetans constituting over 90% of residents. While precise data on speaker numbers remains unavailable, the language maintains robust usage throughout the prefecture.

This study focuses specifically on the semantic and pragmatic factors conditioning the distribution and interpretation of EGO and NON-EGO forms across different grammatical construction types in Golog Tibetan. Our data reveal that while the distribution of EGO and NON-EGO forms in Golog largely follows the prototypical

pattern, non-prototypical uses abound, generating a range of pragmatic implicatures. Consider the following minimal pair in (1):

(1) a. Prototypical use of EGO with first-person declarative subjects
ང་སྒོར་མོ་ཡོད།
nga sgor.mo yod
1SG money have.EGO
'I have money.' (Neutral statement)

b. Non-prototypical use of NON-EGO with first-person declarative subjects
ང་སྒོར་མོ་ཡོད་ཁུ།
nga sgor.mo yod.khu
1SG money have.NON-EGO
'I have money!' (Expression of surprise/recent discovery)
[Context: The speaker discovers money in the pocket of an old piece of clothing not worn for a long time.]

Examples (1a) and (1b) differ only in their selection between EGO and NON-EGO forms, but convey distinct meanings. In (1a), the EGO form *yod* appears in its prototypical use, conveying a neutral declarative statement. In contrast, (1b) demonstrates non-prototypical use of the NON-EGO form *yod.khu*, which expresses the speaker's surprise or recent discovery. This minimal pair exemplifies how non-prototypical use of EGO and NON-EGO forms in Golog Tibetan encodes extended pragmatic interpretations beyond their core grammatical functions.

A particularly significant finding is that these extended pragmatic effects are construction-specific, varying between simple clauses and complex copular structures. Most notably, the same non-prototypical marking can yield contrastive pragmatic interpretations across these syntactic environments. For instance, in simple clauses like (2b), non-prototypical use of the EGO form *yin* conveys the speaker's heightened certainty toward the propositional content, while in complex copular structures like (3b), the same non-prototypical use of *yin* marks the speaker's reduced certainty or inferential stance towards the described scenario. This reversal in pragmatic effect – from strengthened to diminished epistemic commitment – demonstrates how the interpretation of non-prototypical marking shows construction variation.

(2) a. Prototypical use of NON-EGO with non-first-person subjects
མིར་སྒེ་སློབ་མ་ཟིག་རེད།
mir.sge slob.ma zig red
3SG.F student CLF COP.NON-EGO
'She is a student.' (Neutral statement)

b. Non-prototypical use of EGO with non-first-person subjects
མིར་སྒེ་སློབ་མ་ཞིག་ཡིན།
mir.sge slob.ma zig yin
3SG.F student CLF COP.EGO
'She is a student.' (Asserted certainty)
[Context: The sentence subject is the speaker's sister.]

(3) a. Prototypical use of NON-EGO with non-first-person subjects
ལྟག་ག་ན་ཆར་འབབ་གོལ་ནི་རེད།
ltag.ga.na char 'bab-gol-ni-red
outside rain fall-IPFV-NI-COP.NON-EGO
'(*I* render a definitive assertive judgment that) It is raining outside.' (Neutral statement)

b. Non-prototypical use of EGO with non-first-person subjects
ལྟག་ག་ན་ཆར་འབབ་གོལ་ནི་ཡིན།
ltag.ga.na char 'bab-gol-ni-yin
outside rain fall-IPFV-NI-COP.EGO
'(*I* render a judgment that) It is raining outside.' (Reduced certainty/ Inferential reading).'

Based on detailed examination of both simple clauses and complex copular structures, we propose that the distribution and interpretation of EGO and NON-EGO forms in Golog Tibetan is fundamentally governed by two interacting factors:
(i) the origo's epistemic authority over the propositional content
(ii) the (in)consistency between the expressed proposition and the origo's conceptual schema

These two factors drive both the systematic distribution and pragmatic versatility of EGO and NON-EGO forms across different grammatical contexts. In simple clauses, they directly determine marking choices, generating implicatures such as heighted certainty and surprise. In complex copular structures, they interact with the construction-specific semantics to produce pragmatic effects distinct from those observed in simple clauses, demonstrating how the potential of EGO and NON-EGO marking is both augmented and constrained through its interaction with specific grammatical structures.

The paper proceeds as follows: Section 5.2 presents the paradigm of EGO and NON-EGO forms in Golog Tibetan. Section 5.3 examines their prototypical distribution across simple clauses and complex copular structures. Section 5.4 and Section 5.5 analyze the extended pragmatic meanings that emerge through non-prototypical distribution in simple clauses and complex copular structures, respectively. Section 5.6 synthesizes the observations into a unified account of Golog EGO and

NON-EGO marking grounded in the manipulation of epistemic authority and schema-proposition consistency. Section 5.7 concludes.

5.2 Paradigm of EGO and NON-EGO forms in Golog Tibetan

In Golog Tibetan, EGO and NON-EGO forms constitute a binary grammatical opposition realized through the copular system, with EGO forms prototypically occurring in first-person declaratives and second-person interrogatives, and NON-EGO forms appearing elsewhere. We analyze EGO and NON-EGO forms as instantiating a distinct grammatical category, separate from, though systematically interacting with, other epistemic markers in the language, including the sensory evidential *thal* and the inferential evidential *zig*. Although Golog exhibits a rich inventory of epistemic markers whose distributional and functional properties merit thorough investigation, such an analysis lies beyond our current scope. In this study, we focus specifically on the distribution and semantic-pragmatic interpretation of the EGO/NON-EGO opposition.

The term 'NON-EGO' requires precise theoretical delimitation. Following an approach similar to Tribur's (2019) analysis of 'allophoric' markers in Amdo Tibetan, we use 'NON-EGO' strictly to designate the opposing value to EGO forms within this binary paradigm, rather than as an umbrella term encompassing other grammatical markers (e.g., evidentials) within the language's broader epistemic system. This terminological specificity reflects our analysis of EGO and NON-EGO forms as constituting a systematic grammatical opposition in Golog Tibetan.

Table 1 presents the paradigm of EGO and NON-EGO forms across different constructions in Golog Tibetan. Constructions that lack a copular element, such as the simple past (i.e., V) and perfective aspects (i.e., V-*dang*), do not display the EGO/NON-EGO contrast. Consequently, these constructions have been omitted from the paradigm presented in Table 1, which focuses on constructions that exhibit this morphological distinction.

Table 1: EGO and NON-EGO forms in Golog Tibetan.

Construction	EGO	NON-EGO
EQUATIVE COPULA	*yin*	*red*
FUTURE	V-*rgyu*(-*yin*)	V-*rgyu*(-*red*)
EXISTENTIAL COPULA	*yod*	*yod-khu*
IMPERFECTIVE	V-*gi-yod*(-*gol*)	V-*go*(*l*)-*khu*
PERFECT	V-*yod*	V-*yod-khu*

5.3 Prototypical distribution pattern

This section examines the prototypical distribution of EGO and NON-EGO forms in Golog Tibetan across two primary syntactic environments: simple clauses and complex copular structures (CCS). Understanding these baseline distributional patterns establishes the foundation for our subsequent investigation of their extended pragmatic implications.

5.3.1 Prototypical distribution pattern in simple clauses

Simple clauses in Golog Tibetan are monoclausal constructions containing a single predicate, as exemplified in (4):

(4) a. Copular clause
ང་བོད་ཟིག་ཡིན།
nga bod zig yin
1SG Tibetan CLF COP.EGO
'I am a Tibetan.'

b. Lexical verb clause
ལོ་མ་ལྷུང་ཡོད་ཁུ།
lo.ma lhung yod.khu
leaf fall have.NON-EGO
'The leaves have fallen.'

In declarative simple sentences, EGO forms occur prototypically with first person subjects (5a), while NON-EGO forms appear with second and third person subjects (5b).

(5) a. ང་སློབ་མ་ཟིག་ཡིན།
nga slob.ma zig yin
1SG student CLF COP.EGO
'I am a student.'

b. ཁྱོད་/ཁེར་སྐེ་/མེར་སྐེ་དགེ་རྒན་ཟིག་རེད།
khyod/khir.sge/mir.sge dge.rgan zig red
2SG/3SG.M/3SG.F teacher CLF COP.NON-EGO
'You are/he is/she is a teacher.'

Interrogative simple sentences exhibit a different pattern: EGO forms appear with second person subjects (6a), while NON-EGO forms occur with first and third person subjects (6b).

(6) a. ཁྱོད་སློབ་མ་ཟིག་ཨི་ཡིན།
khyod slob.ma zig i yin
2SG student CLF Q COP.EGO
'Are you a student?'

b. ང་/ཁིར་སྒེ་/མིར་སྒེ་སློབ་མ་ཟིག་ཨི་རེད།
nga/khir.sge/mir.sge slob.ma zig i red
1SG/3SG.M/3SG.F student CLF Q COP.NON-EGO
'Am I/Is he/Is she a student?'

This distribution reflects the prototypical association between EGO forms and the perspective of the 'epistemic source' (Hargreaves 2005) or 'origo' (Garrett 2001) – the speaker in declaratives and the addressee in interrogatives.

5.3.2 Prototypical distribution pattern in complex copular structures

Complex copular structures (CCS) in Golog Tibetan represent a distinct constructional environment for EGO/NON-EGO marking. A CCS comprises a matrix equational copula *yin*/*red* (functionally analogous to English *be*) with a subordinate clause, connected by connectives such as *ni* and *rgyu*. Examples (7a) and (7b) illustrate these structures:

(7) a. ང་སློབ་མ་ཟིག་ཡིན་ནི་ཡིན།
[*nga slob.ma zig yin*]-*ni-yin*
[1SG student CLF COP]-NI-COP.EGO
'(*I* render a definitive assertive judgment that) I am a student.'

b. ང་སློབ་གྲྭར་འགྲོ་རྒྱུ་ཡིན།
[*nga slob.grwar 'gro*]-*rgyu-yin*
[1SG school go]-RGYU-COP.EGO
'(*I* render a definitive assertive judgment that) I will go to school.'

In (7a), the subordinate clause *nga slob.ma zig yin* combines with the matrix copula *yin* through the connective *ni*, while in (7b), the subordinate clause *nga slob.grwar 'gro* integrates with the matrix copula *yin* via the connective *rgyu*. Both structures

exhibit a hierarchical organization where the matrix copula adds a layer of definitive judgment to the propositional content expressed in the subordinate clause.

A methodological consideration merits attention regarding our unified treatment of these constructions. In the literature on Tibetic languages, *-rgyu-yin*/*red* and *-ni-yin*/*red* have traditionally been analyzed as distinct grammatical phenomena: the former as a grammaticalized future construction and the latter as factual or present perfect/past marking (cf. e.g., Garrett 2001; Tribur 2019). This theoretical divergence might appear to preclude their unified treatment.

However, our analysis of Golog data reveals substantial structural and functional parallels that justify their unified treatment. Crucially, these constructions resist analysis as simple verb syntagmas marking temporal reference (i.e., 'V-*ni*/*rgyu-yin*/*red*'). Rather, they exhibit a more complex, layered architecture where the matrix copula *yin*/*red* contributes definitive judgment meaning to the underlying proposition (i.e., [proposition]-*ni*/*rgyu-yin*/*red*).

This analysis finds support in several empirical observations. First, both constructions demonstrate temporal flexibility, occurring across diverse tense-aspect environments. Notably, the deletion of either *-rgyu-yin*/*red* or *-ni-yin*/*red* does not affect temporal-aspectual interpretation but rather eliminates the expression of the origo's definitive judgment.[1] This suggests their primary function lies in epistemic marking rather than temporal reference. Second, these constructions exhibit parallel syntactic behaviors, including the capacity for stacking of connectives (*ni*/*rgyu*) and equational copulas (*yin*/*red*) (e.g., *ni-yin-ni-yin*/*red*, *rgyu-yin-ni-yin*/*red*) to

1 In (i) and (ii), deleting *ni*/*rgyu-yin*/*red* only eliminates the expression of the origo's definitive judgment.

(i) a. ཁིར་སྒེ་སྤོ་ལོ་བརྩེས་ནི་རེད།
khir.sge *spo.lo* *brtses-ni-red*
3SG.M basketball play.PST-NI-COP.NON-EGO
'(*I* render an affirmative judgment that) He played basketball.'

b. ཁིར་སྒེ་སྤོ་ལོ་བརྩེས།
khir.sge *spo.lo* *brtses*
3SG.M basketball play.PST
'He played basketball.'

(ii) a. ངས་ནངས་ཀ་ཡས་བྱ་འབྲི་རྒྱུ་ཡིན།
ngas *nangs.ka* *las.bya* *'bri-rgyu-yin*
1SG.ERG tomorrow homework write-RGYU-COP.NON-EGO
'(*I* render an affirmative judgment that) I will do my homework tomorrow.'

b. ངས་ནངས་ཀ་ཡས་བྱ་འབྲི་ཡ།
ngas *nangs.ka* *las.bya* *'bri* *ya*
1SG.ERG tomorrow homework write SFP
'I will do my homework tomorrow.'

modulate epistemic force. Furthermore, they demonstrate systematic interchangeability in specific epistemic contexts, particularly those involving reduced certainty or inferential judgments, where either connective can be employed without significant semantic distinction.[2]

While a comprehensive justification of this unified treatment extends beyond the scope of our present investigation – which focuses specifically on examining the distribution and interpretation of EGO/NON-EGO forms across different constructional environments – the structural and functional parallels observed in the data strongly warrant treating these constructions as manifestations of a unified grammatical phenomenon in Golog Tibetan.

Semantically, all CCS share a fundamental property: they encode the origo's definitive judgment regarding propositional content, though their distribution varies across temporal-aspectual environments. Table 2 presents the major CCS types and their conventional semantic meanings.

Table 2: Major complex copular structures in Golog Tibetan.

CONSTRUCTION	CONVENTIONAL SEMANTIC MEANING
subordinate clause + *ni* + *yin*/*red*	express the origo's definitive judgment concerning the proposition (typically occurring in non-future contexts)
subordinate clause + *rgyu* + *yin*/*red*	express the origo's definitive judgment concerning the proposition (more commonly occurring in contexts with future temporal reference)

In CCS, the EGO/NON-EGO contrast is realized in the matrix equational copula, appearing either as the EGO form *yin* or the NON-EGO form *red* respectively. The prototypical distribution of these forms in CCS follows the same person-sensitive pattern found in simple clauses: the EGO form *yin* occurs in first-person declaratives and second-person interrogatives, while the NON-EGO form *red* appears elsewhere.

2 Example (i) demonstrates the pattern of stacking connectives (*ni*/*rgyu*) and equational copulas (*yin*/*red*), an arrangement that typically encodes the origo's epistemic judgment with reduced certainty. In such scenarios, the matrix *ni*/*rgyu* are interchangeable, as shown in (ia) and (ib):

(i) a. ཁིར་སྒེ་སྤོ་ལོ་བརྩེས་ནི་ཡིན་རྒྱུ་རེད།
[*khir.sge* *spo.lo* *brtses*]-*ni-yin-rgyu-red*
[3SG basketball play.PST]-NI-COP-RGYU-COP.NON-EGO
'He must have played basketball.' (speaker's affirmative judgment with reduced certainty)

b. ཁིར་སྒེ་སྤོ་ལོ་བརྩེས་ནི་ཡིན་ནི་རེད།
[*khir.sge* *spo.lo* *brtses*]-*ni-yin-ni-red*
[3SG basketball play.PST]-NI-COP-NI-COP.NON-EGO
'He must have played basketball.' (speaker's affirmative judgment with reduced certainty)

Notably, the full expression of construction-specific meanings demonstrated in Table 2 depends on this prototypical use of EGO and NON-EGO forms, as illustrated in examples (8)–(10).

In the 'subordinate clause + *ni* + *yin*/*red* ' construction, when EGO and NON-EGO forms are used prototypically, they express the origo's definitive assertive judgment towards the proposition, presenting the proposition as an established fact, as shown in (8):

(8) a. ང་སློབ་མ་ཞིག་ཡིན་ནི་ཡིན།
nga slob.ma zig yin-ni-yin
1SG student CLF COP-NI-COP.EGO
'(*I* render a definitive assertive judgment that) I am a student.'

b. ཁྱོད་/ཁོར་སྒེ་/མིར་སྒེ་དགེ་རྒན་ཞིག་ཡིན་ནི་རེད།
khyod/khir.sge/mir.sge dge.rgan zig yin-ni-red
2SG/3SG.M/3SG.F teacher CLF COP-NI-COP.NON-EGO
'(*I* render a definitive assertive judgment that) You are/he is/she is a teacher.'

Similar to the 'subordinate clause + *ni* + *yin*/*red*' construction, the 'subordinate clause + *rgyu* + *yin*/*red* ' construction with prototypically used EGO and NON-EGO forms also conveys the origo's definitive assertive judgment towards the proposition, though it more commonly appears in contexts involving future temporal reference, as shown in (9):

(9) a. ང་ནངས་ཀ་ཐོན་རྒྱུ་ཡིན།
nga nangs.ka thon-rgyu-yin
1SG tomorrow come-RGYU-COP.EGO
'(*I* render a definitive assertive judgment that) I will come tomorrow.'

b. བཀྲ་ཤིས་ནངས་ཀ་ཐོན་རྒྱུ་རེད།
bkra.shis nangs.ka thon-rgyu-red
Tashi tomorrow come-RGYU-COP.NON-EGO
'(*I* render a definitive assertive judgment that) Tashi will come tomorrow.'

Notably, the 'subordinate clause + *rgyu* + *yin*/*red*' construction also appears productively in non-future contexts while maintaining its core epistemic function of making definitive judgement. In such cases, it demonstrates systematic interchangeability with the 'subordinate clause + *ni* + *yin*/*red*' construction with no semantic distinction, as exemplified in ($10B_1$) and ($10B_2$).

(10) A: ཆི་ཟིག་གི་དྲི་མ་འདི་མོ་བཙོག་ག་ཟིག་ཡིན་ནི་རེད།
chi.zig gi dri.ma da ʻdi.mo btsog.ga.zig yin-ni-red
what GEN smell CONJ so smelly COP-NI-COP.NON-EGO
'What's this terrible smell?'

B_1: གད་སྙིགས་གི་དྲི་མ་ཡིན་རྒྱུ་རེད། [present tense construction]
gad.snyigs gi dri.ma yin-rgyu-red
garbage GEN smell COP-RGYU-COP.NON-EGO
'(*I* render a definitive assertive judgment that) It is garbage's smell.'

B_2: གད་སྙིགས་གི་དྲི་མ་ཡིན་ནི་རེད།
gad.snyigs gi dri.ma yin-ni-red
garbage GEN smell COP-NI-COP.NON-EGO
'(*I* render a definitive assertive judgment that) It is garbage's smell.'

5.3.3 Distributional differences between constructional types

While simple clauses and CCS exhibit similar prototypical patterns of EGO and NON-EGO marking, an important distinction emerges in their distribution with first-person subjects when verbs lexically encode lack of control (e.g., *log* 'fall', *kos* 'feel painful', etc.).

In CCS, in non-controllable events, these verbs obligatorily require NON-EGO forms, as exemplified in (11–13):

(11) ང་དག་མ་ཚོག་ལོང་ནི་{རེད་/*ཡིན}།
*nga da.so.ma log yod-ni-{red/*yin}*
1SG just now fall have-NI-{COP.NON-EGO/* COP.EGO}
'(*I* render a definitive assertive judgment that) I just fell down.'
[Context: The speaker does not have control over falling down.]

(12) ཀ། ཁྱོད་ཆི་ཟིག་ཁོས་ནི་{རེད་/*ཡིན}།
A: *khyod chi.zig khos-ni-{red/*yin}*
2SG what hurt-NI-{COP.NON-EGO/*COP.EGO}
'What's hurting you?'

ཁ། ངའི་མགོ་ཁོས་ནི་{རེད་/*ཡིན}།
B: *ngaʻi mgo khos-ni-{red/*yin}*
1SG.GEN head hurt-NI-{COP.NON-EGO/*COP.EGO}
'(*I* render a definitive assertive judgment that) My head hurts.'
[Context: The speaker does not have control over having a headache.]

(13) ང་ཆུང་དུས་སྟོང་སྐོར་ནས་ལག་ཆགས་ནི་{རེད་/*ཡིན}།
*nga chung.dus stong.skor nas lag.chags-ni-{red/*yin}*
1SG young Stongskor LOC grow-NI-{COP.NON-EGO/*COP.EGO}
'(*I* render a definitive assertive judgment that) When I was young, I grew up in StongSkor.'
[Context: The speaker does not have control over growing up.]

In simple clauses, however, greater flexibility emerges in such contexts. While EGO forms are typically incompatible with non-controllable predicates, they are not categorially banned, though their use is highly marked and rare, as exemplified in (14):

(14) a. ང་ལོག་ཐལ།
nga log thal
1SG fall EVI.SEN
'I fell down.' (Neutral statement)
b. ང་ལོག་ཡོད།
nga log yod
1SG fall have.EGO
'I fell down.'

The non-prototypical use of EGO form in contexts like (14b) occurs only in specific situations, such as when speakers aim to clarify their knowledge of the event (e.g., after being shown a photo or video of the incident) despite lacking direct sensory experience at the time of occurrence (e.g., due to heavy intoxication). In such cases, speakers may opt for the EGO form instead of the prototypical sensory evidential marker *thal* (14a), indicating possession of relevant knowledge despite lacking direct sensory perception.

This contrast highlights a crucial difference between simple clauses and CCS: while simple clauses permit limited variability in EGO/NON-EGO marking with verbs lexically encoding lack of control (such as *log* 'fall', *kos* 'feel painful'), CCS categorically exclude EGO forms in all contexts involving such verbs in non-controllable events.

5.3.4 Summary of prototypical distribution patterns

Table 3 summarizes the prototypical distribution of EGO/NON-EGO forms in Golog Tibetan across both simple clauses and CCS, based on patterns observed in pragmatically neutral contexts.

Table 3: Prototypical distribution patterns of EGO/NON-EGO forms in Golog Tibetan.

CONSTRUCTION		EGO	NON-EGO	MEANING
DECLARATIVE	SIMPLE	1st subject	2nd, 3rd subject	default statement
	CCS	1st subject (controllable)	2nd, 3rd subject	default constructional semantics
INTERROGATIVE	SIMPLE	2nd subject	1st, 3rd subject	default question
	CCS	2nd subject (controllable)	1st, 3rd subject	default constructional semantics

This prototypical pattern serves as the foundation for understanding the extended pragmatic functions that arise when EGO/NON-EGO forms are used non-prototypically, as explored in subsequent sections. The system's pragmatic versatility lies in its flexibility to deviate from prototypical patterns, enabling speakers to express various epistemic stances and intersubjective positions.

5.4 Non-prototypical distribution pattern in simple clauses

While Golog Tibetan exhibits systematic prototypical patterns in EGO/NON-EGO marking as established in Section 5.3, these forms demonstrate considerable flexibility in their distribution, enabling speakers to convey extended pragmatic meanings through non-prototypical usage. This section examines how EGO and NON-EGO forms generate extended pragmatic effects when used non-prototypically in simple clauses.

5.4.1 Non-prototypical use of EGO forms

5.4.1.1 Expressing asserted certainty

In declarative contexts, EGO forms occurring with non-first person subjects can express the speaker's heightened certainty about the proposition, provided that the speaker possesses both epistemic authority and relevant knowledge to make such assertions. Consider example (15), where the EGO form indexes the speaker's claim to epistemic rights over the subject's characteristics, conveying stronger assertive force than would be achieved with the prototypical NON-EGO form.

(15) བཀྲ་ཤིས་སྨྱི་བཟང་ངའི་ཡིན།

bkar.shis	*myi*	*bzang.nga*	*zig*	*yin*
Tashi	person	nice	CLF	COP.EGO

'Tashi is a nice person.'
(*I* assert this with certainty because he has done many good things for me.)

This usage in (15) typically requires the speaker to have direct, personal evidence supporting their assertion, such as the speaker asserts that the sentence subject (Tashi) is a nice person based on personal experience of Tashi's good deeds.

In interrogatives, perspective shifts from the speaker to the addressee (cf. Hargreaves 1991, 2005; Tournadre and LaPolla 2014). The choice between EGO and NON-EGO forms reflects the speaker's expectation about the addressee's potential response. The non-prototypical use of the EGO form with third person subjects can express the speaker's anticipation that the addressee will respond with asserted certainty, as illustrated in example (16):

(16) བཀྲ་ཤིས་སྨྱི་བཟང་ངའི་ཨི་ཡིན།

bkar.shis	*myi*	*bzang.nga*	*zig*	*i*	*yin*
Tashi	person	nice	CLF	Q	COP.EGO

'Is Tashi a nice person?'

Example (16) would be appropriate in a scenario where the speaker has observed Tashi performing a kind act for a young child (e.g., offering the child some snacks). When the speaker subsequently engages the child in conversation, they might ask 'Is he a nice person?' The use of the EGO form in this context indexes the speaker's expectation that the addressee (the child) possesses epistemic authority and first-hand knowledge regarding Tashi's benevolence.

5.4.1.2 Implying closeness or intimacy

Non-prototypical use of EGO forms can also signal a close, intimate relationship between the speaker and referent. Consider example (17), where the use of the EGO form with the third person subject Tashi could suggest that the speaker has a sufficiently intimate relationship with Tashi to claim epistemic authority regarding his profession. The unmarked NON-EGO form would be more appropriate if Tashi is a stranger or distant acquaintance.

(17) བཀྲ་ཤིས་ནི་དགེ་རྒན་ཞིག་ཡིན།
bkar.shis ni dgi.rgan zig yin
Tashi TOP *nice* CLF COP.EGO
'Tashi is a teacher.' (e.g., Tashi is the speaker's son.)

In interrogatives, the non-prototypical use of the EGO form with third person subjects can convey the addressee's presumed close relationship with the referent, in contrast to the neutral stance conveyed by NON-EGO. For instance, in example (18), the speaker asks about the identity of Tashi, who is the addressee's son. In such scenarios, speakers commonly employ EGO forms to acknowledge this anticipated closeness and intimacy:

(18) བཀྲ་ཤིས་དགེ་རྒན་ཞིག་ཨི་ཡིན།
bkar.shis dgi.rgan zig i yin
Tashi teacher CLF Q COP.EGO
'Is Tashi a teacher?' (Implying anticipated closeness, e.g., Tashi is the addressee's son.)

5.4.2 Non-prototypical use of NON-EGO forms

5.4.2.1 Expressing surprise

In declaratives with first person subjects, the non-prototypical use of NON-EGO forms can express the speaker's surprise at a newly discovered state of affairs:

(19) ང་སྒོར་མོ་ཡོད་ཁུ།
nga sgor.mo yod.khu
1SG money have.NON-EGO
'I have money!' (Expression of surprise/recent discovery)

In (19), the speaker employs the NON-EGO form to express surprise upon discovering money in a garment that has not been worn for an extended period. The NON-EGO form encodes the speaker's prior ignorance and the punctual realization of the surprising information. Golog speaker judgment is that using EGO is inappropriate in this scenario. NON-EGO forms are preferred, highlighting the speaker's transition from epistemic ignorance to awareness, rather than indicating pre-existing knowledge of the situation.

Nevertheless, it is not acceptable to use the non-prototypical NON-EGO form to express surprise in second-person interrogative context, as shown in (20):

(20) * ཁྱོད་སྒོར་མོ་ཨི་ཡོད་ཁུ།
khyod sgor.mo i yod.khu
2SG money Q have.NON-EGO
Intended: 'You have money?' (Anticipating addressee will express surprise regarding whether they have or do not have money)

This restriction is unexpected. However, it possibly stems from a fundamental pragmatic incompatibility. When interrogatives shift perspective to the addressee, they position the addressee as the epistemic source – one who possesses the relevant knowledge to provide an answer. However, surprise meanings inherently require the experiencer to transition from a state of not knowing to knowing. This creates an irreconcilable temporal paradox: the addressee cannot simultaneously assume the role of a knowledgeable respondent (presupposed by interrogatives) and the role of someone who is just discovering the information (required for surprise). This perspective conflict blocks the surprise interpretation in second-person interrogative contexts.

5.4.2.2 Describing irrealis scenarios

Golog Tibetan mandates NON-EGO forms when describing irrealis situations.[3] EGO forms are categorically excluded in these contexts. Consider example (21), which illustrates this pattern in dream narration, where the speaker uses the NON-EGO form *yod.khu* to describe becoming an actor within a dream state:

(21) ངས་མདང་དགོང་རྨི་ལམ་ཟིག་རྨིས་ཐ་ར་ རྨི་ལམ་ནང་ནས་ང་འཕྲུལ་སྟོན་པ་ཟིག་གི་ལོག་བསྡད་ཡོད་ཁུ།
ngas mdang.dgong rmi.lam zig rmis tha ra rmi.lam
1SG.ERG last.night dream CLF dream EVI.SEN CONN dream
nang nas nga vkhrub.ston.pa zig gi log.bsdad yod.khu
inside LOC 1SG actor CLF CONN become have.NON-EGO
'Last night I had a dream. In the dream, I became an actor.'

NON-EGO forms in interrogatives enable the speaker to ask about addressee's irrealis situations, as in the dream query in (22).

3 We gratefully acknowledge the valuable input from participants at the 56th Annual Meeting of the Societas Linguistica Europaea (SLE56) in Athens. Their perceptive questions and discussions concerning the use of egophoric and non-egophoric markers in irrealis scenarios have significantly informed our analysis of this phenomenon in Golog Tibetan.

(22) ཁྱོས་རྨྱི་ལམ་ནང་ན་ཅི་ཟིག་ཡེད་གོལ་ཁུ།
khyos rmyi.lam nang na chi.zig yed-gol.khu
2SG.ERG dream inside LOC what DO-IPFV.NON-EGO
'What did you do in your dream?'

5.5 Non-prototypical distribution pattern in complex copular structures

This section examines how EGO and NON-EGO forms in CCS demonstrate distinct pragmatic extensions and distributional constraints from those observed in simple clauses. Unlike simple clauses, CCS inherently encode the origo's definitive judgment regarding propositional content, leading to systematic differences in how non-prototypical marking generates pragmatic effects.

5.5.1 Manipulating the expression of control

5.5.1.1 Expressing unusual degree of control

As established in Section 5.3.3, verbs lexically encoding lack of control (e.g., *log* 'fall') require NON-EGO marking in non-controllable CCS. However, in CCS, speakers can deliberately employ EGO forms in sentences with the same verbs to express an unusual degree of control over normally uncontrollable events. Compare the following example with example (11) from Section 5.3.3:

(23) ང་བསམ་གཟེས་ཡེ་འོག་ནི་ཡིན། མིར་དགོད་གི་བཅུག་ནི་ཡིན།
nga bsam.gzes.ye log-ni.yin mir dgod.gi bcug-ni-yin
1SG purposely fall-NI-COP.EGO 3SG.F laugh.at let-NI-COP.EGO
'(*I* render a definitive assertive judgment that) I purposely fall down to amuse her.' [lit. 'I purposely fall down to let her laugh at me.']

(11)' ང་དཉ་མ་འོག་ཡོད་ནི་{རེད་/*ཡིན}།
*nga da.so.ma log yod-ni-{red/*yin}*
1SG just now fall have-NI-{COP.NON-EGO/*COP.EGO}
'(*I* render a definitive assertive judgment that) I just fell down.'
[Context: The speaker does not have control over falling down.]

Unlike the neutral description of uncontrollable falling in (11), the non-prototypical use of the EGO form in (23) expresses a controllable reading, suggesting the speaker willfully performed an action they would normally have no control over. Here is context where the sentence is felicitous. A speaker, seeing their younger sister unhappy, deliberately falls down to cheer her up. When describing this event later, the EGO form indicates purposefulness and control over the falling action.

Similarly, in (24), the non-prototypical use of the EGO form with the verb *lag.chags* 'grow' suggests unusual agency over a naturally non-controllable process, as shown in the following minimal pair with example (13) (repeated here for comparison):

(24) ང་ཆུང་དུས་སྟོང་སྐོར་ན་ལག་ཆགས་ནི་ཡིན།

nga	*chung.dus*	*stong.skor*	*nas*	*lag.chags-ni-yin*
1SG	young	Stongskor	LOC	grow-NI-COP.EGO

'(*I* render a definitive assertive judgment that) When I was young, I grew up in StongSkor.'
[Context: The speaker has volitional control over growing up.]

(13)' ང་ཆུང་དུས་སྟོང་སྐོར་ན་ལག་ཆགས་ནི་{རེད་/*ཡིན}།

nga	*chung.dus*	*stong.skor*	*nas*	*lag.chags-ni-{red/*yin}*
1SG	young	Stongskor	LOC	grow-NI-{COP.NON-EGO/*COP.EGO}

'(*I* render a definitive assertive judgment that) When I was young, I grew up in StongSkor.'
[Context: The speaker does not have control over growing up.]

Example (13) shows the prototypical use of NON-EGO marking with *lag.chags* 'grow', reflecting the default non-controllable nature of biological development. In contrast, example (24) employs the non-prototypical use of EGO to assert an exceptional degree of volitional control over the growing process – suggesting complete independence in development. This marked interpretation typically appears only in mythological or supernatural contexts.

This pattern extends to interrogative contexts, though with notably restricted distribution. One attested context emerges in response to utterances like (23), where speakers employ interrogatives to express surprise and seek confirmation about unexpected volitional control, as illustrated in (25):

(25) ཨ་··· ཁྱོད་བསམ་གཟེས་ཡེ་ལོག་ནི་ཡིན།

a	*khyod*	*bsam.gzes.ye*	*log-ni-yin*
INTJ	2SG	purposely	fall-NI-COP.EGO

'Ah, you fell down deliberately?'

5.5.1.2 Expressing exceptional non-control

While certain verbs inherently encode non-controllable states or actions and systematically require NON-EGO marking in non-controllable contexts (as established in Section 5.3.3), this pattern can extend productively to verbs that typically encode subject control. In these cases, non-prototypical use of the NON-EGO form with first-person subjects indicates that a normally controlled action has become subject to external control. Consider the following minimal pair with the volitional verb *'gro* 'go':

(26) a. ང་ནད་ཀ་ཉལ་ཆེར་སློབ་གྲྭར་འགྲོ་རྒྱུ་ཡིན།
nga nangs.ka phal.cher slob.grwar 'gro-rgyu-yin
1SG tomorrow probably school go-RGYU-COP.EGO
'I will probably go to school tomorrow.' (Neutral statement)

b. ང་ནད་ཀ་ཉལ་ཆེར་སློབ་གྲྭར་འགྲོ་རྒྱུ་རེད།
nga nangs.ka phal.cher slob.grwar 'gro-rgyu-red
1SG tomorrow probably school go-RGYU-COP.NON-EGO
'I will probably go to school tomorrow (but it's not fully under my control; e.g., my parents decide.)'

The contrast between (26a) and (26b) demonstrates how non-prototypical use of NON-EGO forms can override the inherent volitionality of verbs like 'go' to express lack of control.

However, this exceptional non-control marking excludes second-person interrogative contexts. Unlike verbs lexically encoding lack of control (e.g., *kos* 'feel painful' in example (12), attempts to non-prototypically use NON-EGO forms in second-person interrogatives with volitional verbs yield reduced acceptability:

(27) ? ཁྱོད་ནད་ཀ་སློབ་གྲྭར་འགྲོ་རྒྱུ་ཨི་རེད།
khyod nangs.ka slob.grwar 'gro-rgyu-i-red
2SG tomorrow school go-RGYU-Q-COP.NON-EGO
Intended: 'Will you go to school tomorrow (and I know you do not have control though)? '

This restriction stems from the pragmatic incongruity of presupposing another individual's lack of control over conventionally controlled events. While speakers can readily mark their own actions as exceptionally non-controlled through non-prototypical NON-EGO forms, projecting such lack of control onto an addressee in questions creates marked pragmatic tension.

5.5.2 Expressing reduced certainty/inferential reading

Contrary to simple clauses, when EGO forms are used non-prototypically with non-first-person subjects in CCS, they can encode reduced certainty. While speakers in these contexts possess adequate indirect evidence to formulate evaluative judgments, the indirect nature of their evidential access leads them to mark their inability to make categorical assertions. Such non-prototypical deployment of the EGO form thus functions to simultaneously signal both the speaker's diminished capacity for definitive judgment and their maintained ability to draw inferential conclusions based on available evidence. This can be illustrated through the contrast between examples (28a) and (28b):

(28) a. Prototypical use of NON-EGO with non-first-person subjects
ལྟག་གা་ན་ཆར་འབབ་གོལ་ནི་རེད།
ltag.ga.na char 'bab-gol-ni-red
outside rain fall-IPFV-NI-COP.NON-EGO
'(*I* render a definitive assertive judgment that) It is raining outside.' (Neutral statement)

b. Non-prototypical use of EGO with non-first-person subjects
ལྟག་གা་ན་ཆར་འབབ་གོལ་ནི་ཡིན།
ltag.ga.na char 'bab-gol-ni-yin
outside rain fall-IPFV-NI-COP.EGO
'(*I* render a judgment with reduced certainty) It is raining outside.' (Reduced certainty/Inferential reading)

Example (28a) demonstrates the prototypical distribution of the NON-EGO form. The environmental configuration provides optimal conditions for direct evidential access: the speaker, situated in an indoor environment with visual access through a transparent barrier, obtains immediate perceptual verification of precipitation. This direct sensory input licenses the prototypical use of the NON-EGO form to encode the speaker's definitive assertive judgment. Example (28b) illustrates how indirect evidence triggers the non-prototypical use of the EGO form. Consider a scenario where a speaker has just returned home from outside. Prior to entering a windowless house, the speaker observed weather conditions strongly suggesting imminent rain. After moving indoors, the speaker hears muffled sounds consistent with rainfall. The speaker's evidence comprises two sequential types of sensory input: first, direct visual observation of pre-rain conditions, followed by indirect acoustic signals indicating precipitation. While these ordered sensory inputs enable the speaker to form a probabilistic judgment about current weather conditions, the

speaker's indoor positioning precludes direct verification. This reduced access to direct evidence necessitates non-prototypical use of the EGO form to encode the speaker's reduced capacity for definitive judgment.

This pattern is further corroborated by the unacceptability of the EGO form in non-first-person contexts where the speaker has definite knowledge. Consider the following minimal pair involving a task assignment scenario. A teacher (the speaker) has assigned a student, Tashi, to complete a task as homework. When another teacher asks who is assigned the task, the speaker answers, 'Tashi will finish this task (homework). I have already assigned it to him.' In this context, only the prototypical NON-EGO form is pragmatically felicitous:

(29) a. བཀྲ་ཤིས་གིས་ལས་བྱ་འདི་བྱིས་ཚར་རྒྱུ་རེད། ངས་ཁིར་སྐེར་སྔོན་ཟིག་ནས་འདི་འགན་ཁུར་ཡ་བགོས་ཡེ་བཞག་ཡོད།
bkra.shis gis las.bya 'di bris-tshar-rgyu-red
Tashi ERG homework this write-PFV-RGYU-COP.NON-EGO
ngas khir.sger sngon.zig.nas 'di 'gan.khur ya
1SG.ERG 3SG.M earlier this task CONN
bgos.ye.bzhag yod
distribute have.EGO
'(*I* render a definitive assertive judgment that) Tashi will finish this homework. I have already assigned this task to him.'

b. # བཀྲ་ཤིས་གིས་ལས་བྱ་འདི་བྱིས་ཚར་རྒྱུ་ཡིན། ངས་ཁིར་སྐེར་སྔོན་ཟིག་ནས་འདི་འགན་ཁུར་ཡ་བགོས་ཡེ་བཞག་ཡོད།
bkra.shis gis las.bya 'di bris-tshar-rgyu-yin
Tashi ERG homework this write-PFV-RGYU-COP.EGO
ngas khir.sger sngon.zig.nas 'di 'gan.khur ya
1SG.ERG 3SG.M earlier this task CONN
bgos.ye.bzhag yod
distribute have.EGO
Intended: (*I* render a judgment with reduced certainty that) 'Tashi will finish this homework. I have already assigned this task to him.'

The pragmatic infelicity of (29b) demonstrates that non-prototypical distribution patterns are incompatible with contexts of definitive speaker knowledge. Since the speaker has personally assigned the task to Tashi, they possess unambiguous first-hand knowledge of the assignment. This direct epistemic access mandates the prototypical use of the NON-EGO form seen in (29a). The non-prototypical use of the EGO form in (29b), which signals reduced certainty or inference, creates a pragmatic contradiction with the speaker's established direct knowledge of the situation. This restriction provides further evidence that non-prototypical distribution patterns in CCS can indicate reduced epistemic authority or inferential knowledge states.

However, this pragmatic extension is systematically blocked in interrogative contexts:

(30) a. Prototypical use of NON-EGO with non-second-person subjects
ལྟག་ག་ན་ཆར་འབབ་གོལ་ནི་ཨི་རེད།
ltag.ga.na *char* *'bab-gol-ni-i-red*
outside rain fall-IPFV-NI-Q-COP.NON-EGO
'Is it raining outside?'

b. Non-prototypical use of EGO with non-second-person subjects
? ལྟག་ག་ན་ཆར་འབབ་གོལ་ནི་ཨི་ཡིན།
ltag.ga.na *char* *'bab-gol-ni-i-yin*
outside rain fall-IPFV-NI-Q-COP.EGO
Intended: '(Can you make the judgement with reduced certainty that) Is it raining outside?'

This restriction stems from a fundamental pragmatic incompatibility. While these constructions in declarative contexts can express both epistemic judgment and reduced certainty through non-prototypical patterns, this dual function creates a logical conflict in questions. Interrogative CCS primarily seek the addressee's assertive judgment about a proposition; attempting to simultaneously anticipate reduced certainty toward that yet-to-be-expressed judgment creates an inherent contradiction. One cannot meaningfully inquire about the addressee's judgment while presupposing its reduced certainty.

5.5.3 Expressing negative affect

In contexts where the speaker shares a close relationship with the sentence subject, non-prototypical use of the EGO form can express the speaker's negative affect, particularly disapproval or criticism. This pragmatic extension emerges specifically in situations involving emotional distancing from intimates. Consider example (31), where the speaker invites a friend into their house and discovers their brother's room's door wide open, with cigarette butts and the lingering scent of smoke in the bedroom:

(31) a. བཀྲ་ཤིས་གིས་ད་ཚེ་གང་ང་དོ་ལ་འཐེན་ནི་རེད།
bkra.shis *gis* *da* *tshe.gang.nga* *do.la.'then-ni-red*
Tashi ERG (it=smoke) everyday smoke-NI-COP.NON-EGO
'(*I* render a definitive assertive judgment that) Tashi (my brother) smokes everyday.' (Neutral statement)

b. བཀྲ་ཤིས་གིས་དེ་ཚེ་གང་ང་དོ་ལ་འཛེན་ནི་ཡིན།
bkra.shis gis da tshe.gang.nga do.la.'then -ni-yin
Tashi ERG (it=smoke) everyday smoke-NI-COP.EGO
'(*I* render a judgment that) Tashi (my brother) smokes everyday.' (Disapproval)

Prototypical use of the NON-EGO form in (31a) delivers a neutral statement of fact. In contrast, the non-prototypical EGO form in (31b), while still encoding a judgment, additionally conveys the speaker's emotional distancing and disapproval.[4]

However, this pragmatic extension is systematically blocked in interrogative contexts:

(32) a. བཀྲ་ཤིས་གིས་དེ་ཚེ་གང་ང་དོ་ལ་འཛེན་ནི་ཨི་རེད།
bkra.shis gis da tshe.gang.nga do.la.'then-ni-i-red
Tashi ERG (it=smoke) everyday smoke-NI-Q-COP.NON-EGO
'Does Tashi (your brother) smoke everyday?'

b. ? བཀྲ་ཤིས་གིས་དེ་ཚེ་གང་ང་དོ་ལ་འཛེན་ནི་ཨི་ཡིན།
bkra.shis gis da tshe.gang.nga do.la.'then-ni-i-yin
Tashi ERG (it=smoke) everyday smoke-NI-Q-COP.EGO
Intended: 'Does Tashi (your brother) smoke everyday (and you don't like it)?'

The unacceptability of (32b) stems from a fundamental pragmatic incompatibility in interrogative CCS. While these constructions in declarative contexts can express both epistemic judgment and emotional stance through non-prototypical use of the EGO form, this dual function creates a logical conflict in questions. Interrogative CCS primarily seek the addressee's judgment about a proposition; attempting to simultaneously anticipate their emotional stance toward that yet-to-be-expressed judgment creates an inherent contradiction. One cannot meaningfully inquire about something while presupposing both the content and the emotional orientation of

4 The pragmatic extension of non-prototypical forms expressing negative affect may alternatively be analyzed through "affectedness". Bergqvist and Knuchel's (2017) continuum in egophoric marking systems – moving from agent to attitude holder – parallels observations in Golog Tibetan. When Golog speakers use non-prototypical egophoric forms with third-person subjects in close relationships, they may encode both epistemic stance and their position as affected participants. For instance, using non-prototypical EGO in 'Tashi smokes everyday' might communicate how the brother's actions negatively impact the speaker. However, not all negative affect cases involve direct personal impact. Some express generalized disapproval without direct affectedness. This suggests that while affectedness is one dimension of these phenomena, the interaction between epistemic marking and emotional stance in Golog remains complex and requires further investigation.

the response. This explains why only the prototypical NON-EGO form, focusing solely on epistemic judgment, is acceptable in interrogative contexts like (32a).

5.5.4 Expressing irrealis situations

Similar to simple clauses, Golog Tibetan requires NON-EGO forms in irrealis contexts. This pattern emerges systematically across various irrealis environments, including dream narratives, counterfactuals, and hypothetical scenarios. Consider hypothetical scenarios where speakers explicitly mark content as contrary to reality:

(33) གལ་ཏེ་ང་གོང་མ་ཟིག་ཡིན་རྒྱུ་ན། ང་སྒོར་མོ་མང་ངར་ཡོད་རྒྱུ་{རེད་/*ཡིན}།
gal.te nga gong.ma zig yin-rgyu na nga sgor.mo mang.nga
if 1SG emperor CLF COP-RGYU COMP 1SG money many
*yod-rgyu-{red/*yin}*
have-RGYU-{COP.NON-EGO/*COP.EGO}
'If I were an emperor, I would have great wealth.'

This pattern extends to interrogatives, where NON-EGO forms enable speakers to inquire about addressees' irrealis situations:

(34) གལ་ཏེ་ཁྱོད་གོང་མ་ཟིག་ཡིན་རྒྱུ་ན། ཁྱོས་ཅི་ཟིག་ཡེད་རྒྱུ་{རེད་/*ཡིན}།
gal.te khyod gong.ma zig yin-rgyu na khyod chi.zig
if 2SG emperor CLF COP-RGYU COMP 2SG what
*yed-rgyu-{red/*yin}*
do-RGYU-{COP.NON-EGO/*COP.EGO}
'What would you do if you were an emperor?'

To sum up, the distribution of EGO and NON-EGO forms and their interpretation in CCS demonstrate the interaction between construction-specific semantics and pragmatic effects in Golog Tibetan. The strategic deployment of EGO and NON-EGO marking in CCS enables speakers to express various epistemic stances and intersubjective positions while adhering to construction-specific constraints. Although these non-prototypical usages may not be readily elicited without context, native speakers comprehend their functions even with minimal contextual support, indicating their status as conventionalized extensions rather than ad hoc usage patterns.

This systematic yet flexible distribution raises a key theoretical question: How can a unified framework account for both the regular distribution and pragmatic versatility of EGO and NON-EGO marking? The following section proposes a

theoretical model that captures both the principled nature and seemingly disparate functions of these patterns.

5.6 A unified account of EGO and NON-EGO forms in Golog Tibetan

Our analysis has revealed that EGO/NON-EGO forms in Golog Tibetan can express a wide range of pragmatic meanings. Table 4 summarizes these diverse functions across different grammatical contexts:

Table 4: Pragmatic effects of EGO/NON-EGO marking in Golog Tibetan.

Construction	EGO	NON-EGO
Simple Clause		
Declarative		
1st subject	Prototypical (§5.3.1)	Surprise (§5.4.2.1) Irrealis (§5.4.2.2)
Non-1st subject	Asserted Certainty (§5.4.1.1) Intimacy/Closeness (§5.4.1.2)	Prototypical (§5.3.1)
Interrogative		
1st subject	*unattested*	Prototypical (§5.3.1)
2nd subject	Prototypical (§5.3.1)	Irrealis (§5.4.2.2)
3rd subject	Anticipated Certainty (§5.4.1.1) Anticipated Intimacy (§5.4.1.2)	Prototypical (§5.3.1)
CCS		
Declarative		
1st subject	Prototypical (§5.3.2) Unusual degree of control (§5.5.1.1)	Exceptional non-control (§5.5.1.2) Irrealis (§5.5.4)
Non-1st subject	Reduced certainty/Inferential reading (§5.5.2) Negative Affect (§5.5.3)	Prototypical (§5.3.2)
Interrogative		
1st subject	*unattested*	Prototypical (§5.3.2)
2nd subject	Prototypical (§5.3.2) Unusual degree of control (§5.5.1.1)	Irrealis (§5.5.4)
3rd subject	*unattested*	Prototypical (§5.3.2)

As evident from Table 4, non-prototypical uses of EGO/NON-EGO forms in Golog Tibetan can generate diverse pragmatic effects that initially appear heterogeneous. The NON-EGO forms, when used non-prototypically, can express meanings ranging

from surprise (Section 5.4.2.1), irrealis (Section 5.4.2.2), to exceptional non-control (Section 5.5.1.2). Even more intriguingly, the same form may produce seemingly contradictory effects across constructions: non-prototypical use of EGO forms conveys high degrees of certainty in simple clauses (Section 5.4.1.1), but inference and reduced certainty in CCS (Section 5.5.2).

This apparent heterogeneity raises a fundamental theoretical challenge: How can we provide a unified account for these diverse and sometimes seemingly contradictory functions? The following sections present a unified theoretical explanation of these seemingly disparate functions.

5.6.1 Dual-factor licensing of Golog EGO/NON-EGO forms

To account for its apparently heterogeneous functions, we propose that the distribution and interpretation of EGO/NON-EGO forms in Golog is governed by two interacting factors:

(i) the origo's *epistemic authority* over the propositional content
(ii) the (in)consistency between the expressed proposition and the origo's conceptual *schema*

5.6.1.1 Epistemic authority

We use *epistemic authority* to refer to the origo's entitlement to claim knowledge about an event or situation based on their involvement or access to that knowledge. This concept builds on previous notions of 'assertor involvement' (Creissels 2008) and 'epistemic source' (Hargreaves 2005), but explicitly incorporates the dynamic negotiation of epistemic rights in interaction (Heritage and Raymond 2005; Bergqvist 2012; Grzech 2020a, 2020b, 2021).

In Golog Tibetan, an origo with epistemic authority can make knowledge claims about a given proposition by virtue of their status as a knowing, validating subject. Conversely, when an origo disclaims or defers epistemic authority, this signals their lack of direct validational access or epistemic primacy regarding the proposition in question.

5.6.1.2 Schema

The concept of *schema* was introduced by Piaget (1923) and subsequently elaborated by Bartlett (1932) as a theoretical framework for understanding how

individuals organize and interpret information. A schema comprises organized patterns of thought that enable individuals to process and interpret information based on prior experience (Rumelhart 1980).

In the present study, we employ the term *schema* to refer to cognitive structures that represent an individual's understanding of the world, facilitating the organization and interpretation of new information through the lens of past experiences (Bartlett 1932; Neisser 1976). These mental frameworks function as anticipatory structures that predispose perceivers to accommodate certain types of information more readily than others.

According to this theoretical framework, schemas derive from direct experiential encounters with the actual world and are structured through empirical perception. As a result, irrealis expressions, which encode non-actualized or hypothetical situations, present an inherent incompatibility with schema-based processing precisely because they lack the empirical foundation that schemas require. While people subjectively experience mental phenomena like dreams, expectations, and wishes, and cultures develop interpretive frameworks for these experiences (Strauss and Quinn 1998), such mental states remain inconsistent with schemas in their epistemic status. The distinction lies in the absence of perceptual validation through direct experience in the actual world that characterizes schematic knowledge organization. Consequently, schema-based processing struggles to effectively integrate irrealis propositions into stable knowledge structures, as they resist assimilation with the origo's empirically validated knowledge systems.

In the context of Golog Tibetan, schema (in)consistency refers to the degree to which a proposition aligns with or deviates from the origo's established knowledge frameworks. Schema consistency indicates that the proposition represents information integrated within the origo's conceptual schema, situated within a shared epistemic space of mutually validated knowledge. Conversely, schema inconsistency signals that the propositional content has an uncertain or discrepant status – characterized by being external to, contradictory to, or not yet reconciled with the origo's schematic representation.

5.6.2 Explaining pragmatic extensions in simple clauses

In simple clauses, the interplay of epistemic authority and schema consistency directly determines the choice between EGO and NON-EGO forms according to the following principles:

(35) Distribution of EGO and NON-EGO forms in simple clauses:
   a. The origo affirms their epistemic authority and asserts the proposition as integrated into and consistent with their conceptual schema. → **EGO**
   b. The origo disclaims/lacks epistemic authority and/or encounters propositions that contradict, are inconsistent with, absent from, or not yet integrated into their knowledge schema. → **NON-EGO**

The interaction between these conditioning factors can be visualized in Table 5 (note that [+] indicates presence/assertion of the feature; [-] indicates absence/downgrading of the feature):

Table 5: Distribution of EGO and NON-EGO forms in Golog simple clauses.

Feature configuration	Marking choice
[+epistemic authority] and [+schema consistency]	EGO
[-epistemic authority] or [-schema consistency]	NON-EGO

This dual-factor model provides a unified framework for analyzing the distribution and interpretation of EGO and NON-EGO forms in simple clauses. Through examination of Golog data across different discourse contexts, we find that the interaction between epistemic authority and schema consistency generates predictable marking patterns while allowing principled pragmatic extensions.

5.6.2.1 Declaratives

In declaratives, with first person subjects, EGO forms emerge as the default because speakers typically possess epistemic authority over their own states of affairs, and the proposition *p* about the self is generally consistent with and integrated into their schema, as in (5a). Non-prototypical use of NON-EGO forms in this context either disclaims authority or signals a discrepancy between the proposition *p* and the speaker's schema (*p*-schema discrepancy). This explains the expression of surprise in contexts like (19), where the new information *p* has not yet been integrated into the speaker's established knowledge schema. It also explains the obligatory use of non-prototypical NON-EGO forms in irrealis contexts such as (21), where the propositional content fundamentally contradicts or remains inconsistent with the speaker's schema.

With non-first-person subjects, NON-EGO forms are the default, as in (5b). This stems from the speaker's typical lack of epistemic authority over others' states of

affairs, and the proposition *p* is not required to be in the speaker's schema. The non-prototypical use of EGO forms in these contexts highlights the deliberate assertion of epistemic authority and the consistency between proposition *p* and the speaker's schema (*p-schema* consistency), which typically occurs when speakers have intimate relationships with the subjects (17) or possess heightened certainty about *p* (15).

5.6.2.2 Interrogatives

In interrogatives, perspective shifts from the speaker to the addressee. With second-person subjects, EGO forms are the default, as in (6a), encoding the addressee's presumed epistemic authority regarding their anticipated response and the expected congruence between that response and their established schema. Non-prototypical use of NON-EGO forms in this context index anticipated inconsistency between the proposition of the addressee's answer and the addressee's schema, particularly salient in irrealis contexts like (22), where the proposition inherently conflicts with reality-anchored schemas.

In first-person subject interrogatives, NON-EGO forms are the default, as in (6b), reflecting the inherent schema discrepancy involved in questioning one's own state of knowledge. Non-prototypical usages remain unattested in this context, likely due to the inherent pragmatic incompatibility between information-seeking acts and simultaneous claims of schema integration.

In third-person subject interrogatives, NON-EGO forms are the default, as in (6b), because addressees typically lack epistemic authority over others' states of affairs, and *p-schema* consistency of the addressee is not presupposed. Non-prototypically used EGO forms, highlighting anticipated presumed epistemic authority and *p-schema* consistency of the addressee, normally arises when answerers are expected to have heightened certainty about the proposition *p* of their own answer (16) or are presumed to have intimate relationships with the sentence subject (18).

5.6.2.3 Interaction of epistemic authority and schema consistency

A crucial theoretical insight in our analysis is that epistemic authority and schema consistency function not as independent variables, but as interacting conditions that jointly govern the choice between EGO and NON-EGO forms in Golog Tibetan. The necessity of satisfying both conditions simultaneously can be demonstrated through empirically revelatory scenarios that isolate these factors.

Consider first the institutional medical context of COVID-19 mass screening, where asymptomatic individuals were diagnosed through mandatory surveillance testing rather than self-initiated medical consultation:

(36) ཁྱོད་རློག་གསར་གློ་ཚོད་ཧོག་ཡོད་ཁུ།

khyod	*prog.gsar.glo.tshad*	*hog*	*yod.khu*
2SG	COVID-19	get/afflict	have.NON-EGO

'You have COVID-19.'

This context is particularly revelatory because it unambiguously establishes the doctor's epistemic authority: the medical professional operates within a formal testing protocol as the sole source of diagnostic information, and crucially, the diagnosis is not precipitated by any patient self-assessment. Despite this clear epistemic authority, the NON-EGO form *yod.khu* is used. This occurs precisely because the proposition represents a newly reached conclusion based on the current diagnosis, not yet integrated into the doctor's established schema. The use of the NON-EGO form thus signals this discrepancy between the proposition and the doctor's established schema, demonstrating that epistemic authority alone cannot license the EGO forms.

Conversely, the long-term classmate scenario in (37) demonstrates that schema consistency alone is insufficient to trigger the EGO form without corresponding epistemic authority:

(37) དཀར་ཤིས་ནི་སློབ་མ་ཟིག་རེད།

bkar.shis	*ni*	*slob.ma*	*zig*	*red*
Tashi	TOP	student	CLF	COP.NON-EGO

'Tashi is a student.' (The speaker lacks authority despite knowing this for years)

Here, after years of shared academic experience, the proposition 'Tashi is a student' is thoroughly integrated into the speaker's knowledge schema. Despite this well-established schema consistency, the speaker normally would use the NON-EGO form *red* because they lack the epistemic authority to make definitive assertions about another's academic status. This example demonstrates that schema consistency, even when well-established through long-term direct experience, cannot alone license the EGO form without corresponding epistemic authority.

These complementary scenarios (one with clear epistemic authority but lacking schema consistency, another with established schema consistency but lacking epistemic authority) demonstrate that the distribution of EGO versus NON-EGO forms in Golog simple clauses requires the simultaneous satisfaction of both conditions. If

either factor is absent, the NON-EGO form is used, regardless of the strength of the other factor. This systematic interaction between epistemic authority and schema consistency provides a unified explanation for the distribution of EGO/NON-EGO marking across diverse discourse contexts in simple clauses.

5.6.3 Explaining pragmatic extensions in CCS

The distribution and interpretation of EGO/NON-EGO forms in CCS reveal a fundamental difference from simple clauses in how epistemic authority and schema consistency determine form choice. This difference arises from the distinct nature of the two construction types.

Simple clauses serve purely as vehicles for propositional content without encoding any inherent construction-specific semantics. In these clauses, the presence of epistemic authority and schema consistency directly determines marking patterns: when speakers possess both factors, they select EGO forms to explicitly encode these epistemic-schematic properties.

CCS, in contrast, inherently encode a specific constructional meaning: the origo's definitive judgment regarding propositional content. The very act of rendering a definitive judgment necessarily presupposes both epistemic authority (the right to make such a judgment) and schema consistency (the integration of propositional content into one's knowledge framework). Therefore, the constructional meaning itself, regardless of person marking, already encodes the presence of these epistemic-schematic factors.

This fundamental difference leads to different principles governing form choice. In simple clauses, where there is no inherent epistemic-schematic meaning, EGO/NON-EGO directly encodes the presence or absence of epistemic-schematic factors. However, in CCS, since judgment-encoding semantics is inherent, form choice serves a different function: it must reflect the established patterns that have become conventionally associated with expressing definitive judgment. This results in the selection of prototypical marking patterns rather than a direct mapping from epistemic-schematic factors to specific forms. We can formalize this distinction as follows:

(38) Distribution of EGO and NON-EGO forms in CCS
   a. The origo affirms their epistemic authority and asserts the proposition as integrated into and consistent with their knowledge schema. → **prototypical marking** (full realization of constructional meaning)
   b. The origo disclaims/lacks epistemic authority and/or asserts schema inconsistency. → **non-prototypical marking** (extended pragmatic meaning)

This systematic difference in how epistemic-schematic factors determine form choice is illustrated in Table 6 (note that [+] indicates presence/assertion of the feature; [-] indicates absence/downgrading of the feature):

Table 6: Distribution of EGO and NON-EGO forms in Golog CCS and simple clauses.

Feature Configuration	CCS	simple clause
[+epistemic authority] and [+schema consistency]	prototypically used EGO/NON-EGO	EGO
[-epistemic authority] and/or [-schema consistency]	non-prototypically used EGO/NON-EGO	NON-EGO

When speakers deviate from prototypical marking patterns in CCS, they generate distinct pragmatic effects that arise from the interaction between non-prototypical marking and the construction's core function of expressing definitive judgment – effects that differ significantly from those found in simple clauses.

5.6.3.1 Declaratives

In declarative CCS, the interaction between epistemic-schematic factors and construction-specific semantics generates certain marking patterns. When speakers possess both epistemic authority and schema consistency, they employ prototypical marking to fully realize the construction's judgment-encoding function. When either factor is manipulated, non-prototypical marking generates pragmatic effects through its interaction with constructional meaning.

When the factor of epistemic authority is manipulated, three primary patterns emerge. First, speakers can deliberately assert heightened epistemic authority in contexts typically associated with non-controllable events. This manipulation generates pragmatic effects expressing unusual volitional control over normally uncontrollable propositions, as demonstrated in example (23), where deliberate falling is encoded. Conversely, with verbs encoding volitional control, speakers can deliberately suppress epistemic authority to override inherent semantics and express non-controllable interpretations, as illustrated in example (26b). Second, in contexts where speakers lack direct evidence, diminished epistemic authority results in inferential or reduced certainty readings. Example (28b) demonstrates this pattern, where indirect sensory access necessitates marking reduced epistemic authority through non-prototypical form choice. Third, in contexts involving close interpersonal relationships, deliberate suppression of epistemic authority – particularly regarding individuals about whom the speaker could legitimately claim

authority – generates emotional distancing effects. This manipulation conveys negative affect or disapproval, as shown in example (31b).

Violations of schema consistency manifest most clearly in irrealis contexts, where propositions conflict with reality-based knowledge structures. These contexts, including hypothetical scenarios, dream narratives, and counterfactual situations, require non-prototypical marking due to their inherent incompatibility with established schemas, as exemplified in (33).

5.6.3.2 Interrogatives

In interrogative CCS, the perspective shift from speaker to addressee interacts with the construction's judgment-encoding semantics to generate both systematic pragmatic effects and distributional constraints. These patterns manifest differently across person configurations.

For second-person subjects with controllable events, the prototypical use of EGO forms appears when speakers anticipate that addressees can render authoritative judgments. Non-prototypical use of NON-EGO forms emerges primarily in irrealis contexts example (34), where propositions conflict with addressees' knowledge schemas. With non-controllable events, speakers employ non-prototypical EGO forms when seeking confirmation of unexpected volitional control, as demonstrated in example (25).

First-person interrogatives exhibit a categorical restriction against non-prototypical marking. This constraint may stem from the semantic incompatibility between asking for information and simultaneously having the epistemic authority to judge this information.[5]

Similarly, interrogative CCS with third-person subjects using non-canonical forms are not attested. This restriction likely stems from pragmatic constraints on making anticipatory inquiries about the addressee's subtle emotional and epistemic stances toward yet-to-be-expressed judgments.

5 The editors and one of the SLE-56 attendants raised a question about egophoric marking patterns in rhetorical interrogatives. They consider rhetorical questions interesting because the speaker is actually the epistemic authority and does not intend the hearer to answer it (unlike information questions). The results from rhetorical questions can potentially reveal to us whether egophoric marking is determined by grammatical form or pragmatic factors. Unfortunately, rhetorical questions in Golog Tibetan have dedicated grammatical markers distinguishing them from genuine interrogatives, placing them outside our current analysis.

In sum, although the distribution and interpretation of EGO and NON-EGO forms vary significantly between simple clauses and CCS, both environments are fundamentally governed by epistemic authority and schema consistency. In simple clauses, these factors directly determine form choice, while in CCS, they interact with the construction's judgment-encoding semantics. The distinct distributions and interpretations thus emerge not from different conditioning mechanisms, but from how these dual factors manifest through construction-specific meanings.

5.6.4 Explaining person-sensitive patterns

While our dual-factor model does not treat grammatical *person* as a primary conditioning factor, it provides a principled explanation for the apparent person-sensitive patterns of EGO/NON-EGO marking in Golog Tibetan. These patterns emerge from the conventionalization of typical correspondences between *person* and the two licensing factors: epistemic authority and schema consistency.

In simple clauses, first person declarative and second person interrogative subjects prototypically correlate with asserted epistemic authority and schema consistency, favoring EGO forms. Other person-perspective alignments typically suggest reduced authority or *p*-schema discrepancy, favoring NON-EGO forms. These conventionalized associations between person and epistemic-schematic values give rise to the overall person-sensitive distribution without *person* itself being the determinative factor.

In CCS, the person-sensitive pattern exhibits less flexibility than in simple clauses due to the constructions' inherent judgment-encoding semantics. The construction's fundamental function of expressing definitive judgment inherently requires positive values of both epistemic authority and schema consistency. Through conventionalization, this requirement has led to prototypical person-marking becoming the established means of expressing the construction's core meaning – only prototypical usage fully instantiates the positive epistemic-schematic values necessary for definitive judgment. The prototypical pattern thus comes to iconically signal the complete realization of judgment-encoding semantics, while non-prototypical pattern generates specific pragmatic effects by deviating from these conventionalized epistemic-schematic associations.

This theoretical framework thus captures both the systematic nature of person-sensitive patterns and their pragmatic flexibility across different constructional environments.

5.7 Conclusion

This study has presented an analysis of EGO/NON-EGO marking in Golog Tibetan, offering novel insights into the interaction between epistemic marking systems, clausal structure and constructional meaning. Through examination of both simple clauses and complex copular structures (CCS), we demonstrate that the distribution and interpretation of EGO and NON-EGO forms in Golog is fundamentally governed by two interacting factors: the origo's epistemic authority over the propositional content and the (in)consistency between the expressed proposition and the origo's conceptual schema.

This dual-factor model provides a unified theoretical framework that captures both the systematic distribution and pragmatic flexibility of EGO and NON-EGO forms across diverse grammatical contexts. In simple clauses, these factors directly condition the choice between EGO and NON-EGO forms, giving rise to implicatures such as asserted certainty, surprise, and irrealis meanings. In CCS, they interact with the conventionalized construction-specific semantics to produce distinct pragmatic effects when non-prototypical forms are employed, revealing complex interactions between grammatical structure and pragmatic function.

This analysis further reveals that the overall person-sensitive patterns associated with EGO/NON-EGO marking actually emerge from the conventionalization of typical associations between *person* and the "*epistemic authority* + *p-schema consistency*" values, rather than *person* being a direct conditioning factor. This approach maintains the conceptual unity of EGO/NON-EGO marking across clause types while accounting for the constructional diversity in its pragmatic extension.

The findings carry several theoretical implications. First, the dual-factor model extends beyond traditional accounts of epistemic stance (e.g., Aikhenvald 2004; Boye 2012; Grzech 2021) by explicitly incorporating the role of cognitive schemas in the linguistic encoding of perspective. This integration provides a novel framework for understanding how speakers negotiate epistemic rights in interaction, suggesting that speakers are concerned not only with asserting or disclaiming knowledge, but also with signaling how that knowledge fits into their broader conceptual understanding of the world.

Second, the analysis demonstrates the crucial role of constructional semantics in shaping the interpretation of EGO and NON-EGO forms. The distinct behavior of these forms across simple clauses and CCS demonstrates how construction-specific meanings systematically constrain and shape pragmatic interpretation. This finding underscores the importance of considering construction-specific meanings in the analysis of epistemic categories, aligning with recent calls for more fine-grained, construction-based investigations of perspectival phenomena in language (Bergqvist 2016, 2017; Evans, Bergqvist, and San Roque 2017).

From a broader perspective, the dual-factor model suggests important cognitive underpinnings, bridging linguistic structure and cognitive processing. The notion of epistemic authority resonates with research on metacognition and epistemic vigilance (Sperber et al. 2010), while the schema consistency factor aligns with theories of predictive processing and schema theory in cognitive science (e.g., Reisenzein, Meyer, and Niepel 2012; Clark 2013; Ghosh and Gilboa 2014). This connection illuminates potential pathways through which linguistic structures both reflect and potentially shape cognitive processes of knowledge organization and update.

The investigation of EGO and NON-EGO marking in Golog Tibetan not only contributes to our understanding of these forms in Golog and Tibetic languages but also reveals fundamental insights about how languages encode complex epistemic relationships. The interplay between epistemic authority, schema consistency, and constructional meaning demonstrates that epistemic marking patterns arise not from arbitrary rules but from principled cognitive and pragmatic factors. This research underscores the complexity and subtlety of epistemic markings, highlighting the need for integrative approaches that can account for the multifaceted nature of linguistic phenomenon like EGO and NON-EGO marking. It contributes to the ongoing dialogue between linguistics elements and cognitive processes in the study of human communication.

Abbreviations

1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
CLF	classifier
COMP	complementizer
CONJ	conjunction
COP	copula
EGO	egophoric
ERG	ergative
EVI.SEN	sensory evidential
F	feminine
FUT	future
GEN	genitive
INTJ	interjection
IPFV	imperfective
LOC	locative
M	masculine
NEG	negative

NON-EGO	non-egophoric
PFV	perfective
Q	question particle
TOP	topic

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