PART FOUR:
MORPHOLOGY AND SYNTAX
1. Introduction

‘Conjunct/disjunct’ (c/d) are terms first coined by Austin Hale in 1980 based on his observations of a cross-referencing-like system in the Newar language of Nepal. This pattern has also been reported in the Bodic Branch of Tibeto-Burman, in Akha\(^2\) of the Lolo-Burmese Branch of Tibeto-Burman (Thurgood 1986) and Minhe Mangghuer,\(^3\) a Mongolic language spoken in Western China, north of Tibet (Slater 1998). In recent years, there have also been reports of similar systems in other parts of the world. Dongwang, a Southern Khams dialect of Tibetan, also has this pattern, but has important characteristics not reported in any other language, namely, the existential verbs and auxiliaries exhibit an animacy split. This paper constitutes the first report in which an animacy split and conjunct/disjunct patternings co-occur in the verbal morphology of a language. I will first describe the general features of the c/d system drawing on data from Standard Tibetan.\(^4\) I will then present an overview of the c/d system in Dongwang Tibetan, detail the animacy distinction observed in the existential verbs and auxiliaries, and suggest that this is an areal feature which developed in Dongwang, possibly as a result of contact with speakers of Naxi, a Lolo-Burmese language.

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\(^2\) Akha is known as Haniyu (哈尼语) in China.

\(^3\) Mangghue is known as Tuzuyu (土族语) in China.

\(^4\) Tournadre and Sangda Dorje (2003) use ‘Standard Tibetan’ to refer to the lingua franca for most of the Tibetan Autonomous Region.