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Sandman, Erika

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Wutun as a mixed language

1. Introduction

1.1 The Wutun language and the Amdo Sprachbund

The Wutun language is spoken by ca. 4000 people in Wutun, a rural locality consisting of the three villages of Upper Wutun, Lower Wutun and Jiancangma located in Tongren County, Huangnan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province, P.R. China. In spite of the small number of speakers, it remains a vigorous language actively used by all generations of its speech community. Wutun represents a high degree of both lexical and grammatical mixing. While most of its basic vocabulary and grammatical forms are of Sinitic (more precisely, Northwest Mandarin) origin, its morphology and syntax show heavy influence from neighboring Tibetic and Mongolic languages. Both non-Sinitic and Sinitic source languages contribute significant amounts of grammar (Sandman 2016). Unlike most of the Sinitic varieties that are predominantly isolating languages, Wutun has an agglutinative morphology with an elaborate system of number and case marking, aspect marking, egophoric marking and converbal constructions used for clause combining. The most prominent contact language of Wutun is Amdo Tibetan, a local lingua franca and the second language for almost all the Wutun speakers. Wutun has also interacted with Bonan, a Mongolic language spoken by ca. 4000 people in four villages located near three Wutun-speaking villages.¹ The contact situation of Wutun is further complicated by the fact that Wutun and its contact languages are part of a larger linguistic area, the Amdo Sprachbund. Many contact features of Wutun are also observed in other Sinitic languages of the region, such as Huangshui (previously known as Xining Chinese, Dede 2007), Xunhua (Dwyer 1995), Linxia (Dwyer 1992; Lee-Smith 1996a), Gangou (Zhu et al. 1997) and Tangwang (Ibrahim 1985; Lee-Smith 1996b; Xu 2017), and it is not always obvious whether the source language for these features is Tibetic or Mongolic, since Tibetic and Mongolic languages share a number of morpho-syntactic features (such as basic

¹ A variety of Bonan is also spoken in Gansu province. While Qinghai Bonan speakers are Buddhists like Wutun speakers, Gansu Bonan speakers are Moslems. The exact number of Gansu Bonan speakers, as well as lexical and grammatical differences between Qinghai Bonan and Gansu Bonan remain unclear.

word order, agglutinative morphology, differential object marking and lack of numeral classifiers).

The Amdo Sprachbund² (also known in the literature as the Qinghai-Gansu Sprachbund) comprises some 15–19 languages spoken in the Upper Yellow River Basin of Western China, in Eastern Qinghai and Southern Gansu Provinces (Janhunen 2007, 2012, 2015). Historically the area has been part of Tibet and it has been known by the name Amdo. Genealogically, the languages of the Amdo Sprachbund represent four language families: Sinitic, Tibetic, Mongolic and Turkic. In the course of its history, the Amdo region has been dominated by all these linguistic groups, which have left linguistic traces. The Tibetans represent the oldest population in the area, their arrival connected to the expansion of the Tibetan empire between the 7th and 9th centuries. The Mongol empire and its representative in China, the Yuan dynasty (1279–1368) contributed to the migration of both Mongolic-speaking populations as well as for Turkic and Sinitic speakers to the area. Since the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), the Amdo Sprachbund has been politically dominated by the Chinese, although the number of Sinitic speakers in many parts of the area has remained low until very recently. Due to centuries of intense contact, languages of the Amdo Sprachbund have developed shared grammatical features not found in their genetic relatives spoken elsewhere. While varieties of Northwest Mandarin and Amdo Tibetan are generally used as dominant regional languages and lingua francas in the area, Mongolic and Turkic languages are mainly spoken at a more local level. Besides, some typologically transformed Sinitic varieties with a small number of speakers (such as Ganou and Tangwang) exist, but their use is restricted to individual villages.

Before the 1980s, Wutun was a completely undocumented language. The first publications written by professional linguists were published in the 1980s by Chen (1982, 1986, 1988, 1989, in Chinese) and Li (1983, 1984, 1986, in English). An entirely secondary treatise based on Li's and Chen's materials is Lee-Smith and Wurm (1996). Acuo (2004, in Chinese) discusses Wutun in his book on Daohua, another mixed language with Chinese lexicon and Amdo Tibetan grammar spoken in Sichuan Province. Janhunen et al. 2008 is a brief

² 'Amdo' is the historical name of Tibetan areas that today cover parts of Qinghai, Gansu and Sichuan provinces of China.

grammar sketch that discusses aspects of Wutun phonology, morphology and syntax, as well as its areal context as a member of the Amdo Sprachbund. The first comprehensive reference grammar is Sandman (2016).

1.2 Sociohistorical background of the Wutun people

Our current understanding posits the genesis of the Wutun language as a product of both mixed marriages between partners from different linguistic groups, and long-term community bilingualism. Interestingly, the Wutun people's historical sources and local narratives have an opposite view on whether the mixed marriages took place between Chinese men and Tibetan women or vice versa. According to Chen (1986) and Janhunen et al. (2008), the history of the Wutun language dates back to the 14th century, when the Upper Yellow River region formed a borderland between Chinese and Tibetan territory. During the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1911) dynasties, inhabitants of certain local villages were organized into hereditary border guard units based on various parts of the Amdo area. The Wutun villages in the Tongren area were part of this border guard system and in this account, the Wutun language most probably emerged due to marriages between Chinese soldiers sent to the area from other parts of China and local Tibetan and Mongolian women. Chen (1986) claims that some of the ancestors of the Wutun people were Chinese soldiers sent from the Nanjing area. He justifies his claim by observing the similarities between the vowel systems of Wutun and the Old Nanjing dialect.

However, the Wutun speakers themselves have a different view about the origins of their language. This is evident from local folktale narratives that deal with the ethnogenesis of the Wutun population. According to local narratives, the creation of the Wutun language was linked to the expansion of Tibetan empire during King Songtsen Gampo (605–650), whose troops came to the area to fight the Tang dynasty (618–907). Some of the Tibetan soldiers settled in the Tongren area and married local Chinese and Mongolian women, and the Wutun language was created in these bilingual families (Cabras forthcoming). The Wutun speakers adopted Tibetan Buddhism and continued to use Amdo Tibetan as their lingua franca in communicating with neighboring linguistic groups. This community bilingualism has contributed to the

development and preservation of Tibetan features in Wutun. The number of Sinitic speakers in Tongren remained very low until recent political developments such as the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) and the Western Regions Development Campaign (since 2000) that have attracted an increasing number of Chinese to the area. Amdo Tibetan continues to be used as the dominant regional language in the present day.

Today's Wutun speakers, except certain older women, are all bilingual in Amdo Tibetan. The children usually attend Tibetan schools and Tibetan is the working language in local monasteries. Knowledge of Tibetan is also needed in painting and selling *thangkas* (traditional Tibetan religious paintings made on canvas), which is, besides agriculture, the most important means of livelihood for the Wutun people. This tradition is known as *Rekong School of Tibetan Art*. Chen (1982, 1986) who did fieldwork in the 1980s, notes that at that time the Wutun people do not speak Chinese. This situation has changed due to education, mass media, migration of Chinese to Tongren. At the time of my fieldwork between 2007 and 2018 knowledge of both local Northwest Mandarin and Modern Standard Chinese has become common among the younger generation. Most present-day Wutun speakers do not speak Bonan, a Mongolic language spoken nearby, except some bilingual individuals who have moved from Bonan to Wutun due to mixed marriages. However, based on some shared grammatical features between Wutun and Bonan that do not exist in Amdo Tibetan and other Sinitic languages of the Amdo Sprachbund (see Section 3.4), the interaction between the two languages was likely historically more intense in the past than today.

Whether Wutun people constitute a separate ethnic group is a matter of debate. The Wutun language lacks official recognition in China and its speakers have been classified as the Tu (Monguor) nationality or Tibetans in the Chinese system of officially recognized “nationalities” (Janhunen et al. 2008). The Wutun people tend to identify as Tibetans, often emphasizing the importance of Tibetan Buddhism in their identity. They have no actual name for their ethnic group and language. The language is usually referred to as *ngan-de-hua*, ‘our speech’.

On the other hand, people are well aware that their mother tongue is a mixture of Mandarin Chinese and Amdo Tibetan, and they appreciate it as a

“secret” language that neighboring linguistic groups do not understand. While almost all its speakers are bilingual or multilingual, Wutun retains a strong position as an in-group language. It is actively used by all generations in the community, and children acquire it as a first language before attending school.

1.3 Typological characteristics of Sinitic and Tibetic languages

Most Sinitic languages are morpho-syllabic tonal languages. Their morphosyntactic structure is analytic with very little inflectional morphology and grammatical relations are primarily expressed by word order or by independent grammatical particles. The basic, unmarked word order generally appears to be Agent-Verb-Patient (Norman 1988: 8–10). However, it is important to note that sentences are characteristically organized based on a topic-comment structure rather than an argument structure (Li and Thompson 1981 for Mandarin). In noun phrases, numerals, demonstratives and adjective attributes precede the noun. Most of the Sinitic languages have a rich system of numeral classifiers, which are used with numerals and demonstratives. Verbs are marked for aspect, but not for tense and person. Clause combining is achieved through serial verb constructions where verbs occur in chains without any morphology specifying their relationships.

Tibetic languages are characterized by Agent-Patient-Verb word order and polysyllabic words derive from monosyllabic roots. The noun phrase comprises an optional dual and plural marker, as well as case marking. Definiteness is optionally marked by demonstratives or by more specific definiteness markers that are morphologically enclitics. The Tibetic languages are generally classified as ergative languages with ergativity marked by cases on the noun phrase, although other alignment types coexist besides this predominant type (Tournadre 1996: 73; Zeisler 2007: 400). Modern Tibetic languages have rich systems of grammaticalized evidentials and other knowledge-related grammatical categories, such as egophoric marking that is due to speech act participants’ access to the instigation of the events or states.

In summary, Sinitic and Tibetic languages show marked differences in typological profile. However, due to long-term language contact, Wutun combines structural properties from both language groups.

2. Sociohistorical and structural approaches to mixed languages

In this chapter, I will refer to both sociohistorical and structural approaches to mixed languages. From a sociohistorical perspective, mixed languages have been distinguished from other types of contact languages by their genesis. While creole languages have arisen from a language contact situation in which the speakers of different languages need to acquire means of interethnic communication (Bartens 2013: 65), mixed languages have arisen in contexts in which a common language already exists, and they have been created for expressing act of identity rather than for communicative functions (Bakker 1997: 375). They often serve as markers of group identity. Mixed languages have further been classified according to mechanisms that contributed to their genesis, such as mixed marriages, incomplete shift from an ancestral language to newly introduced language and attempts to reverse the language shift and maintain the ancestral language. Other sociolinguistic features discussed in relation to mixed languages are whether speakers of a mixed language constitute a separate ethnic group and if mixed languages are used as native languages (see Meakins 2013, 2018; Bakker 2017; Meakins and Stewart forthcoming). The existence of mixed languages as a separate type of contact languages has also been questioned by some authors (see e.g. Versteegh 2017).

From a structural perspective, mixed languages are often defined based on genetic ambiguity (Thomason and Kaufman 1988). They are typically defined as the result of the fusion of two identifiable contact languages. Most mixed languages exhibit a split between lexicon and grammar; Bakker (2003: 135) calls them Grammar-Lexicon mixed languages (2003: 135). Examples of Grammar-Lexicon mixed languages include e.g., Angloromani with a restricted set of Romani lexicon within an English grammatical frame and Media Lengua with predominantly Spanish lexicon and Quechua grammar. Also, a number of mixed languages exist in which both contact languages contribute a significant

amount of grammar. These include, for example, Michif, in which the nominal system is mainly based on French and the verbal system on Cree. It is common in mixed languages with a significant amount of grammatical mixing that there is some split between different grammatical systems, e.g., nominal and verbal systems are based on different contact languages. Bakker (2003: 122) calls these Noun-Verb mixed languages. Other examples of mixed languages with a significant amount of structural mixing are Australian languages Gurindji Kriol, based on the Pama-Nyungan language Gurindji and English-lexifier creole Kriol, as well as Light Warlpiri based on Warlpiri and Aboriginal English/Kriol. In these mixed languages, both contact languages contribute to the lexicon and grammar, and the grammatical forms are used in a unique system that is not a mere replication of contact languages (see Meakins 2013: 175).

From a sociohistorical perspective, Wutun shares many features with mixed languages, since it is an in-group language rather than a language of interethnic communication and it has developed as the result of mixed marriages and community bilingualism. We will see in Section 3 that Wutun exhibits a significant amount of structural mixing and there is no clear split between different grammatical systems; both its nominal and verbal systems are a blend of Sinitic, Tibetic and Mongolic features. Despite being a relatively little-documented language, Wutun has received some attention in language contact literature, and it has been mentioned as a potential example of a mixed language (Meakins 2013; Dede 2015; Xu 2017), as well as a creole (Ansaldo 2015). While earlier accounts on contact features of Wutun are based on entirely secondary sources, this study aims to give a systematic overview of grammatical mixing in Wutun based on first-hand field data.³

3. Overview of structural features of Wutun

In this section, I will give an overview of the structural features of Wutun. In Section 3.1, I will discuss features that are of Sinitic origin. In Section 3.2, I will give an overview of the features that can be attributed to either Tibetic or

³ The Wutun examples cited in this article are based on author's field work among the Wutun speech community in between 2007 and 2018 and they include elicited examples, narrative texts and conversations. When citing examples, I have indicated whether they come from naturally-occurring data or elicitation.

Mongolic influence and they are shared by other high-contact varieties of Northwest Mandarin spoken in the context of the Amdo Sprachbund. In Section 3.3, I will discuss the features that are unambiguously the result of contact with Amdo Tibetan, and in 3.4, I will summarize the features whose source language is Bonan.

3.1 Lexical and grammatical features shared with other varieties of Mandarin

Certain of the Wutun lexical and grammatical features are shared by varieties of Mandarin spoken outside the Amdo Sprachbund. They are unambiguously of Sinitic origin. These include basic vocabulary and grammatical forms (Section 3.1.1), standard negation (Section 3.1.2) and complement verbs (3.1.3).

3.1.1 Basic vocabulary and grammatical forms

Most of the Wutun basic vocabulary is of Sinitic origin and has unambiguous cognates in other varieties of Mandarin. Janhunen et al. (2008: 118) contains a modified Swadesh 200-word list with some additions for numerals and culture-specific terms (altogether 235 words). In total, 205 words from the wordlist (ca. 87 percent) are always expressed by using a word of Sinitic origin. Personal and demonstrative pronouns, the lower numerals, color terms and many basic verbs such as motion verbs remain consistently Sinitic. Twenty-one words (ca. 9 percent) are always expressed by the word of Tibetan origin. These include some body parts (e.g., *la*, ‘leg’ and *hongba*, ‘arm’), two higher numerals (*dong*, ‘thousand’ and *che*, ‘ten thousand’), some concepts referring to environment (e.g., *co*, ‘lake’), some verbs related to physiology (e.g., *jje*, ‘to breathe’ and *tai*, ‘to spit’), cognition (e.g., *ddang*, ‘to think’) and interaction (e.g., *zho*, ‘to dance’) and two adjectives for qualities (*loqong*, ‘young’ and *tama*, ‘bad’). Some items in basic vocabulary have both a Sinitic and Tibetic equivalent. This category includes many verbs for qualities (e.g., *rai/zho*, ‘warm’, *lo/ggi*, ‘old’ and *xen/soma*, ‘new’). Finally, 4-5 words on the list have no obvious cognates on either the Chinese or Tibetan side. These include, for example, *wuwa*, ‘mountain’ and *galamala*, ‘child’.

It must be noted that the proportion of Tibetan vocabulary is higher among cultural vocabulary items (such as vocabulary related to religion, food

- | | | | |
|-----|---|--------------|--------------------|
| (4) | <i>ni</i> | <i>nga</i> | <i>da-lio</i> |
| | 2SG | 1SG.OBL | hit-PFV |
| | 'You hit me. / You have beaten me.' | | |
| | (Elicited) | | |
| | | | |
| (5) | <i>ni</i> | <i>zhaze</i> | <i>da-pe-lio</i> |
| | 2SG | window | hit-get broken-PFV |
| | <i>ze-li</i> | | |
| | EXEC-SEN.INF | | |
| | 'You have broken (lit. hit and broken) the window.' | | |
| | (Elicited) | | |

In (5), the ain activity ‘hit’ is expressed by the verb *da* and the complement verb *pe*, ‘to get broken’ specifies the outcome of the main activity and its effect to the Patient. In addition to this lexical meaning, the complement verb *pe* adds an aspectual meaning of completion and punctuality to the main verb. Complement verbs in Wutun are a part of the TAME system together with highly grammaticalized aspect and evidential markers and various auxiliary constructions. The TAME system in Wutun is a complex blend of Chinese and Tibetan grammatical elements and morphosyntactic structures. While a system of complement verbs clearly represents the/a Sinitic component in Wutun TAME system, Tibetan influence is considerable in aspect marking (Section 3.3.2) and in egophoric marking (Section 3.4.1).

3.2 Grammatical features shared with other ‘Altaicized’ varieties of Mandarin

Several scholars have noted since the 1970s that varieties of Northern Chinese have been influenced by “Altaic” (Mongolic, Turkic and Tungusic) languages (Hashimoto 1976; Janhunen 2007, 2012, 2015; Szeto, Ansaldo, and Matthews 2018), while varieties of Southern Chinese have been oriented towards Mainland Southeast Asian languages. This impact of language contact explains some of the typological differences between northern and southern varieties of Chinese. Frequently observed typological changes in Northern

Chinese varieties that can be attributed to the interference from ‘Altaic’ languages include the emergence of agglutinative morphological patterns, the development of stress-accent dominance over tone, as well as word order changes and loss of numeral classifiers (Chappell 2001: 335–337). In Gansu and Qinghai that have been primarily populated by non-Sinitic speakers, Sinitic languages have until the present day remained minority languages nested between Tibetic, Mongolic or Turkic speakers. This areal interference has led to a number of Sinitic varieties whose morphosyntactic structure resembles the “Altaic” type of languages. In this section, I will discuss some non-Sinitic features of Wutun that are shared by several other “Altaicized” Sinitic varieties of Amdo Tibetan. These features are common to both Amdo Tibetan and Mongolic languages, and they can be attributed to either Mongolic or Tibetic influence. They include loss of tonal distinctions (Section 3.2.1), basic word order (Section 3.2.2), agglutinative morphology (Section 3.2.3), loss of numeral classifiers (Section 3.2.4) and differential object marking (Section 3.2.5).

3.2.1 Loss of tonal distinctions

A striking feature in Wutun phonology is that the lack of tones. Many minimal pairs based on tonal differences in Modern Standard Chinese have been neutralized in Wutun. Consider:

- (6)
- a. *da* [ta], ‘to hit, big’ (= MSC *dǎ*, ‘to hit’ vs. *dà*, ‘big’)
 - b. *tu* [t^hu], ‘earth, to vomit’ (= MSC *tǔ*, ‘earth’ vs. *tù*, ‘to vomit’)
 - c. *se* [s^hə], ‘to die, four’ (= MSC *sǐ*, ‘to die’ vs. *sì*, ‘four’) (Elicited)

The present-day Wutun is best described as a language with no phonologically relevant suprasegmental distinctions at the level of isolated words. However, the contrast between regular vowels /i/ and /u/ and their long and tense counter parts /ii/ and /uu/ might contain traces of earlier tonological opposition (see Sandman 2016: 53). The simplification of tonal systems has been reported in many varieties of Northwest Mandarin spoken in Western

China (see Lee-Smith 1996a) and it is obviously due to language contact with non-tonal languages such as Mongolic and Turkic languages, as well as Amdo Tibetan.

3.2.2 Basic word order

In Mongolic and Tibetic languages the basic word order is APV, unlike in Sinitic languages which are usually AVP languages. Examples (7) and (8) illustrate the basic word order in Wutun:

(7) *gu* *pigo-ge* *qe-she-lio*
 3SG apple-REF eat-RES.AO-PFV
 ‘S/he ate an apple.’
 (Elicited)

(8) *londonwa-jhege* *tian* *zhun-she-lio*
 farmer-PAUC field till-RES.AO-PFV
 ze-li
 EXEC-SEN-INF
 ‘The farmers have tilled the land.’
 (Elicited)

As

illustrated by the examples (7) and (8), Wutun basic word order is APV as in Tibetic and Mongolic languages, while in Modern Standard Chinese, the basic word order is AVP. APV word order similar to Wutun has also been reported in other varieties of Northwest Mandarin with long-term contact with non-Sinitic languages.

3.2.3 Agglutinative morphology

Another non-Sinitic feature present in Wutun and other varieties of Northwest Mandarin is agglutinative morphology. While most of the Sinitic languages are predominantly isolating with very little inflectional morphology, Wutun has a rich system of suffixes and clitics. Example (9) illustrates the agglutinative nature of the Wutun language:

gu-n-de *awu-ha* *huaiqa-ge* ***yek-li***

- (9) 3-COLL-ATTR boy-OD book-REF EXIST-SEN-INF
 ‘Their boy has a book.’
 (Elicited)

Wutun nouns have an elaborate system of marking of number, case and referentiality, while verbs are inflected for aspect and egophoric marking. In terms of morphological typology, Wutun is closer to Tibetic and Mongolic languages than to Sinitic languages.

3.2.4 Loss of numeral classifiers

Classifiers are grammatical noun categorization devices that classify objects expressed by nouns according to various semantic parameters (Aikhenvald 2000: 271). Most common semantic parameters employed for categorization include humanness, animacy, physical properties (shape, size) and functional properties. While most of the southern Sinitic varieties are known for their extremely rich systems of numeral classifiers⁶, reduction of numeral classifier systems is common in northern Sinitic (Norman 1988; Yue 2003). There are generally two sets of classifiers in Sinitic languages: sortal classifiers that occur with concrete, discrete units (such as a man, a stick and a book), and mensural classifiers that can be used to quantify both nouns naturally occurring in discrete units and nouns that do not naturally occur in discrete units (such as water and flour). In most Sinitic languages, including Modern Standard Chinese numeral classifiers are obligatorily used with number and/or demonstrative, or with certain quantifiers before a noun. Example (10) illustrates numeral classifiers in Modern Standard Chinese:

(10) Modern Standard Chinese

- | | | |
|----|---|------------|
| a. | <i>liǎng-běn</i> | <i>shū</i> |
| | two-CLF-BOOK | book |
| | ‘two books’
<i>liǎng-xiàng</i>
(Zhang 2007: 45) | <i>shū</i> |

⁶ *Hanyu Liangci Cidian (A Dictionary of Chinese Classifiers, 1988)* lists altogether 902 classifiers, including nominal classifiers, verbal classifiers and other measurement units. In practice, speakers of modern Sinitic languages do not actively use such a high number of classifiers (see Zhang 2007: 44).

- b. **two-CLF-BOX** book
 ‘two boxes of books’
 (Zhang 2007: 45)
- c. *liǎng-píng* *jǐu*
 two-CLF-BOTTLE wine
 ‘two bottles of liquor’
 (Zhang 2007: 45)

A striking feature of the Wutun noun phrase is a radically reduced system of numeral classifiers. Wutun lacks sortal classifiers that assign nouns into specific semantic classes. Only the suffix *-ge*⁷ based on the Mandarin Chinese generic classifier is retained. It is used with numerals, demonstratives, nominal quantifiers and indefinite singular nouns. Example (11) illustrates the use of *-ge* with demonstratives and numerals:

(11)

- a. *je-ge* *joze*
 this-CLF-GENERIC table
 ‘this table’
 (Elicited)
- b. *awo* *liang-ge* *yida*
 man **two-CLF-GENERIC** together
 zhan-she-ma-li
 stand-RES.AO-RES.PO-SEN.INF
 ‘Two men were standing together.’
 (Wutun narrative 4_Beach)
- c. *nga* *ma* *liang-ge*
 1SG.OBL horse **two-CLF-GENERIC**
 yek
 EXIST
 ‘I have two horses.’
 (Elicited)
 qhichai *liang-ge*

⁷ One of the main reasons of treating *-ge* as a suffix is that it forms a single prosodic entity with the preceding word.

- d. car two-CLF-GENERIC
 ‘two cars’
 (Wutun conversation 2_Thangkas, smoking and car)

Tibetic and Mongolic languages lack numeral classifiers, as illustrated by the examples (12) and (13) from Amdo Tibetan and Bonan:

(12) Amdo Tibetan

<i>ɛajə</i>	<i>tʰuŋtʰuŋ</i>	<i>səq</i>	<i>xsəm</i>
child	small	INDEF	three

‘three small children’

(Sandman and Simon 2016: 102)

(13) Bonan

<i>tʰər</i>	<i>gər</i>	<i>ədəpkə-tɕo</i>
that.out-of-sight	house	collapse-IMP.F.OBJ

‘That house collapsed.’

(Fried 2010: 127)

Classifiers in Sinitic languages are typically used with referential nouns. Referential nouns can be defined as nouns that refer to already identified entities, which can be indefinite (identified by the speaker) or definite (identified by the speaker and the addressee), while non-referential nouns denote arbitrary members of the class of entities described by the noun phrase. Unlike the use of classifiers in elaborate classifier systems, the use of *-ge* in Wutun is not determined by the semantics of its noun referent. However, it still retains its referential meaning. Therefore, it could be analyzed as a referential marker. In (14) the referential noun *qhichai*, ‘a car’ refers to a particular, identified entity, while in (15) the non-referential noun *lhoma* ‘a student’ is a property-denoting nominal that refers to an arbitrary member of the class of entities, and not to any particular student:

<i>je</i>	<i>nian</i>	<i>nga-n-de</i>	<i>dojjai</i>
this	year	1-COLL-ATTR	PN

(14) *qhichai-ge mai-she-lio*
 car-REF buy-RES.AO-PFV

‘This year our Dojjai bought a car.’
 (Wutun conversation 2_Thangkas, smoking and car)

gu lhoma hai-li
 3SG student EQU-SEN-INF

‘S/he is a student.’
 (Elicited)

(15)

Sinitic languages with radically reduced classifier systems include several varieties of Northwest Mandarin spoken in the Western provinces of China, such as Gansu and Qinghai, as well as some dialects spoken in Shanxi and Shandong. These Sinitic varieties have generally lost all of their sortal classifiers with a more specific meaning, and they retain only the generic classifier *-ge*. (Yue 2003: 85). Therefore, the loss of numeral classifiers in Wutun is part of a more general typological change affecting Sinitic languages of Northwest China.

3.2.5 Differential object marking

Languages with differential object marking (DOM) mark overtly some of their O arguments, but not others, according to semantic or pragmatic factors (Aissen 2003: 436). DOM is often based on a hierarchy of animacy or definiteness. It can also be based on exclusively pragmatic factors, such as topicality. This type of pragmatically conditioned DOM is particularly common in Sino-Tibetan languages (Iemmolo 2011: 81, 134, 210). Differential object marking in Wutun is expressed by the morpheme *-ha*, which has cognates in several varieties of Northwest Mandarin spoken in the Amdo Sprachbund, such

as Linxia, Gangou, Tangwang, Xunhua and Huangshui (see Dwyer 1995: 153; Lee-Smith 1996a: 866, 1996b: 876; Zhu et al. 1997: 444; Dede 2007).

The object marker *-ha* is employed with highly affected participants that have a semantic role other than intentional Agent. It is most commonly used with Recipients of ditransitive clauses and Patients of transitive clauses⁸, as in (16) and (17):

- (16) *ana* *enian-ha* *huaiqa-ge* *ka-liao*
 mother child-DOM book-REF give-PFV
 ‘The mother gave the child a book.’
 (Elicited)

- (17) *bianshe-ha* *gek* *qe-she-liao*
 dumpling-DOM dog eat-RES.AO-PFV
 ze-li
 EXEC-SEN-INF
 ‘The dumplings were eaten by a dog.’
 (Elicited)

The use of *-ha* in Wutun is optional, and it is often conditioned by definiteness and identifiability⁹. An argument that has been introduced and integrated into discourse, and is therefore definite and easily identifiable, is more likely to be marked by *-ha* than an argument that is newly introduced. On the first line of (18), the argument *zhawa*, ‘disciple’ is first introduced to the discourse. After it has been introduced and it is therefore definite and identifiable for both the speaker and the addressee, it occurs with the optional dative marker *-ha*, as on the second line of (18):

- (18)
- | | | | | | |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|---------------|-------------|
| <i>zhawa</i> | <i>ta</i> | <i>ra</i> | <i>qhi-zhe</i> | <i>sho-de</i> | <i>kuli</i> |
| disciple | 3SG | also | go-PROSP | say-ATTR | time |

⁸ In addition, *-ha* can be used with Experiencers, Possessors, locative phrases and even with involuntary Agents.

⁹ Iemmolo and Arcodia (2014) have argued that these factors also play an important role in Differential Object Marking in Modern Standard Chinese.

<i>zhawa-ha</i>	<i>ra</i>	<i>nia</i>	<i>xakmo-ge</i>
disciple-DOM	also	2SG.OBL	pearl-REF
<i>ssek-la-ge</i>	<i>ze-ma</i>		
see-INCOMPL-CAUS	do-COORD		

‘When the disciple said that he would also go, they asked (the lama) to also look at the divination ball for him...’
(Wutun narrative 1_Pilgrimage)

The cognates of *-ha* in Sinitic languages of the Amdo Sprachbund may have their origins in topic marking, whose grammaticalization towards optional case marker has been further triggered by DOM in Amdo Tibetan. On the other hand, DOM is also present in Mongolic languages, including Bonan and Mangghuer from the Amdo Sprachbund (see Slater 2003; Fried 2010). Dede (2007) has suggested that *-ha ~xa* is connected to the Mandarin Chinese *bǎ*-sentence. Mandarin Chinese *bǎ*-sentences are based on serial verb constructions with the verb *bǎ* originally meaning ‘take’ and also used for topic. The core meaning of this construction is to highlight a highly affected Patient that is usually handled or manipulated in some way (see e.g., Li and Thompson 1981: 465). The occurrence of *bǎ* has later been explained by being due to topicality (Iemmolo 2011: 222–223), as well as definiteness and identifiability of referents in the discourse (Iemmolo and Arcodia 2014). Example (19) illustrates the use of the *bǎ*-sentence in Modern Standard Chinese. In (19 b) *bǎ* marks a topical Patient:

(19) Modern Standard Chinese

- a.
- | | | | |
|-----------|--------------|-------------|--|
| <i>wo</i> | <i>bo-le</i> | <i>juzi</i> | |
| 1SG | peel-PFV | orange | |
- ‘I peeled an orange.’
(Li 2006: 418)
- b.
- | | | | |
|-----------|------------------|-------------|--------------|
| <i>wo</i> | <i>ba</i> | <i>juzi</i> | <i>bo-le</i> |
| 1SG | DOM | orange | peel-PFV |
- ‘I peeled that orange.’
(Li 2006: 418)

Examples (20) illustrates the Amdo Tibetan dative case *ra*, which expresses differential object marking. Amdo Tibetan marks animate participants that are not Agents, and it is used with both Recipients of ditransitive clauses (as in 20 a) and Patients of transitive clauses (as in 20 b) (Dede 2007: 872–873).

(20) Amdo Tibetan

a. *nor* ***ra*** *rtsva* *byin*
 cow DAT grass give

‘Give the grass to the cattle.’
 (Wang 1995: 16–17)

b. *nor* ***ra*** *rdo* *gis*
 cow DAT stone INSTR
 ma *rgyag*
 NEG hit

‘Don’t hit the cattle with a stone.’
 (Wang 1995: 16–17)

The origins of *-ha* as a topic marker in Wutun is evident from the fact that it is still used in topic-comment constructions, as in (21):

(21) *gu-jhege-ha* *yanza-la-di-li*
 3-PAUC-DOM surprise-INCOMPL-PROGR-SEN-INF

‘(She) is surprised (because of seeing) them (lit. Them, surprised).’
 (Wutun conversation 3_Babies)

My data suggests that the analysis of *-ha* as a topic marker that is on its way towards a grammaticalized case marker, seems plausible. However, several Sinitic languages of the Amdo Sprachbund share the same marker, and the exact source language of this pattern remains unclear.

3.3 Grammatical systems that display a blend of Chinese and Tibetan strategies

In this section, I will discuss some grammatical systems whose compositions cannot be attributed to a single contact language, but rather represent a blend of Sinitic and Tibetic influence. The most obvious examples of this type include the word order of the noun phrase (Section 3.3.1) and aspect marking (Section 3.3.2).

3.3.1 Word order of the noun phrase

Word order of the noun phrase in Wutun is not based exclusively on either Sinitic or Tibetic languages. Instead, it is a blend of strategies from the two language groups. Demonstratives in Wutun can either precede the noun as in Sinitic languages or follow the noun as in Tibetic languages. Consider:

Wutun

<i>je-ge</i>	<i>joze</i>	~	<i>joze</i>	<i>je-ge</i>
this-CLF	table		table	this-CLF
‘this table’			‘this table’	

(Sandman 2016: 43–44, 47)

(22)

Numerals consistently follow the noun as in Tibetic languages:

<i>awo</i>	<i>liang-ge</i>	<i>yida</i>
man	two-CLF	together

zhan-she-ma-li
stand-RES.AO-RES.PO-SEN.INF
‘Two men were standing together.’
(Wutun narratives 4_Beach)

(23)

- (24) *qhichai* *liang-ge*
 car two-CLF
 ‘two cars’
 (Wutun conversation 2_Thangkas, smoking and car)

Adjectives can occur either in attributive phrases that precede the noun (as in 25) or as derived adjectives that follow the noun (as in 26). The first strategy is typical for Sinitic languages, while the second strategy is found in Tibetic languages:

- (25) *da* *je* *kan-la*
 then this look-COND
yak-la-de *ti* *she-li* *qhi-lai*
beautiful-INCOMPL-ATTR place on-LOC go-1.IMP
 ‘Let’s go to a more beautiful place than this one!’¹⁰
 (Wutun narratives 3_Picnic)
- (26) *ngu* *hu*
 1SG flower
yak-la~la-de-ge *mai-lio*
beautiful-INCOMPL~INCOMPL-NMLZ-REF buy-PFV
 ‘I bought a very beautiful flower.’¹¹
 (Elicited)

¹⁰ In this sentence, the construction *kan-la* indicates the comparative. Wutun has a construction *kan-la ~ kan-ra*, which is a compound of the verb *kan* (SM *kàn* 看, ‘to look, to watch’) and the conditional converb *-la ~ -ra*. This construction means literally ‘looking at’ and is used to express one’s point of view

¹¹ In Sino-Tibetan languages, attributive markers are often based on nominalizations (for introduction to grammaticalization paths from nominalizer to attributive, see Yap, Grunow-Hårsta, and Wrona 2011). This is also true for Wutun *-de*. I will gloss *-de* as ATTR=ATTRIBUTIVE when it is used to connect attributive phrases (genitive attributes and relative clauses) to the head noun (as in 25) and the label NMLZ=NOMINALIZER is reserved for cases in which *-de* marks nominalizations occurring as arguments of the clause, derived adjectives (as in 26), subordinate clauses or non-embedded nominalization constructions. Similar glossing is used in many other descriptions of Sino-Tibetan languages (see e.g. Hargreaves 2003: 379 for Kathmandu Newar).

In Amdo Tibetan, as in all Tibetic languages, demonstratives, adjectives and numerals follow the noun, as in (27):

(27) Amdo Tibetan

<i>cajə</i>	<i>tʃʰuŋtʃʰuŋ</i>	<i>səq</i>	<i>xsəm</i>
child	small	INDEF	three
‘three small children’			
(Sandman and Simon 2016: 102)			

To sum up, word order of the noun phrase in Wutun clearly illustrates how both Sinitic and Tibetic languages have contributed to Wutun grammar.

3.3.2 Aspect marking

Another grammatical system that is a blend of Chinese and Tibetan is aspect marking. In Wutun, aspect is a very complex category. It is possible to use more than one aspect marker with the same verb (multiple aspect marking). There are two sets of aspect markers: primary aspect markers and secondary aspect markers. Morphologically zero-marked verbs always entail imperfectivity, as in (28):

(28)	<i>nga</i>	<i>tin-li</i>
	1SG.OBL	(be) sick-SEN.INF
	‘I am sick.’	
	(Elicited)	

In addition, there are four primary aspect markers: perfective *-lio* (as in 29), progressive *-di* (as in 30), patient-oriented resultative *-ma* (as in 31) and prospective *-zhe* (as in 32):

(29)	<i>ngu-jhege</i>	<i>guda</i>	<i>wa-ge</i>	<i>she</i>	<i>zhek-lio</i>
	1-PAUC	there	hill-REF	on	GO-PFV
	<i>ze-li</i>				
	EXEC-SEN.INF				
	‘We climbed up a hill.’		<i>wanlan-di-li</i>		
	(Wutun narratives 3_Picnic)		do-PROGR-SEN.INF		
	3-PAUC	Tibet-LOC			

(30) ‘They are (currently) working in Tibet.’
(Wutun conversation 2_Thangkas, smoking and car)

(31) *hura-li hu dodode zhun-ma-li*
garden-LOC flower many plant-RES.PO-SEN.INF
‘(Somebody) planted a lot of flowers in the garden.’
(Elicited)

(32) *ngu rongbo-li qhi-zhe*
1SG Longwu-LOC go-PROSP
‘I am going to Longwu.’
(Elicited)

In addition to the four primary aspect markers, Wutun has three secondary aspect markers: incompletive *-la* (as in 33), completive *-gu* (as in 34) and agent-oriented resultative *-she* (as in 35):

(33) *ngu ni lai be-ji-li*
1SG 2SG come NEG-reach-SEN.INF
ddo-la-lio
think-INCOMPL-PFV

‘I thought you will not come in time.’
(Elicited)
(34) *gu she zha-gu-lio*
that house explode-COMPL-PFV
ze-li
EXEC SEN.INF

‘That house has exploded.’
(Elicited)
(35) *je nian nga-n-de jashe*
this year 1-COLL-ATTR PN
qhichai-ge mai-she-lio
car-REF buy-RES.AO-PFV

‘This year our Jashe bought a car.’
(Wutun conversation 2_Thangkas, smoking and car)

When secondary aspect markers are used with the primary aspect markers, they are always based in between the verbal stem and the primary

aspect marker. The primary aspect marker, which occurs as the last aspect marking element on the verb, sets the main framework for the temporal structure of the situation, while the secondary aspect marker offers further specification of the temporal structure of the situation within the main framework. Examples (33)–(35) all express terminated situations, which is indicated by the primary aspect marker, perfective *-lio*. However, the terminated situations have different internal structures, which is indicated by the secondary aspect markers, incomplete *-la*, completive *-gu* and agent-oriented resultative *-she*. In (33) the terminated situation has an internal structure of a state that has not led to any results, while in (34) the terminated situation is viewed as a completed event that totally affects the Patient. In (35), the terminated situation has led to some results due to the past actions of the Agent.

The perfective, prospective, completive and agent-oriented resultative aspect markers have their origins in Mandarin Chinese and show resemblance to their Mandarin counterparts both in meaning and function, while incomplete *-la* is a borrowing from Amdo Tibetan. The origin of the patient-oriented resultative aspect marker *-ma* is unknown. The progressive aspect marker *-di* is derived from a combination of the nominalizer *-de* (SM *de* 的) and the existential copula *yek* (SM *yǒu* 有). This construction is built on Chinese grammatical forms that have been reanalyzed to replicate Amdo Tibetan morphosyntactic structure. Amdo Tibetan has a progressive aspect marker based on nominalizer and existential copula, which does not exist in Mandarin varieties (see Sandman and Simon 2016: 118). The origin of the progressive aspect marker is evident from the fact that progressive meaning can still be expressed by the periphrastic construction *-de yek*, and in negating the progressive aspect marker *-di*, the negative counterpart *mi* of the existential copula *yek* is used, as in (36):

(36)

<i>ni</i>	<i>chuang</i>	<i>she</i>
2SG	bed	on
<i>za-de</i>	<i>yek</i>	<i>ya</i>
smoke-NMLZ	EXIST	EMPH
‘Do you smoke in bed?’		

- (37) *ngu* *huan* *xhe-di-yek*
 1SG food drink-PROGR-EGO
 ‘I am eating (personal involvement).’
 (Elicited)
- (38) *ni* *huan* *xhe-di-li*
 2SG food drink-PROGR-SEN-INF
 ‘You are eating (as I see/infer).’
 (Elicited)
- (39) *gu* *huan* *xhe-di-li*
 3SG food drink-PROGR-SEN-INF
 ‘S/he is eating (as I see/infer).’
 (Elicited)
- nianha* *she-wu* *tian* *yek-de* *re*
 blind eye ten-five day EXIST-NMLZ FACT
 ‘The Losar festival lasts for fifteen days.’ (as we all know)
 (Wutun narratives 5_Festivals)
- (40)
- (41) *ni* *ma-ge* *nian-di-yek*
 2SG what-REF read-PROGR-EGO
 ‘What are you reading?’ (addressee’s personal involvement)
 (Elicited)

While the ego and sensory-inferential evidentials are suffixes, the factual evidential is grammatically an auxiliary connected to the preceding verb with the nominalizer *-de*. Ego evidential is typically used with the first person in statements when the action is volitional and allows the speaker’s control (as in 37), as well as in second person statements when the perspective shifts to the addressee (as in 41). Sensory-inferential and factual evidentials are typically used with the second and third person in statements (as in 38–40). The sensory-inferential evidential indicates information based on the speaker’s sensory

perception or inference, while the factual evidential is used for generic, unspecific knowledge that the speaker has accumulated from various sources.

The Wutun ego evidential *-yek* is most probably based on either the Mandarin Chinese existential copula *yǒu* 有 or the Amdo Tibetan existential copula *yod* that also expresses ego evidentiality. The sensory-inferential evidential *-li* can be connected to the Mandarin Chinese modal particle *le* 了, which indicates a change of state. The factual auxiliary *re* resembles the Amdo Tibetan factual equative copula *re* in both meaning and form, and it is one of the most obvious examples of grammatical morphemes borrowed directly from Amdo Tibetan to Wutun.

In addition to ego, sensory-inferential and factual evidentials, Wutun has a distinct evidential for reported information. It indicates that the speaker bases his/her statement on hearsay. The reported information evidential in Wutun is based on the auxiliary *sho*, which is a grammaticalized form of the full lexical verb *sho* ‘to say, to speak’ and a cognate of the Standard Mandarin verb *shuō* (说) ‘to say, to speak’. The use of this speech act verb has a reported evidential in Wutun based on the Amdo Tibetan quotative marker *se*, which is based on the verb ‘to say, to speak’. It is used in combination with egophoric marking as in Wutun (see Sun 1993: 956). When used as reported information evidential, this auxiliary is used in combination with the sensory-inferential marker *-li*, resulting in the form *sho-li* ‘they say’.

- (42) *gu* *she* *zha-gu-lio*
 that house explode-COMPL-PFV

ze-li

EXEC SEN.INF

‘That house has exploded (I saw it).’

- (43) *gu*^(Elicited) *she* *zha-gu-lio*
 that house explode-COMPL-PFV

ze-li ***sho-li***

EXEC-SEN.INF **REP-SEN.INF**

‘That house has exploded, they say (I heard it from other people who saw it).’

(Elicited)

The

egophoric marking system in Wutun shows clear resemblance to that of Amdo

Tibetan, which distinguishes speaker’s volitionally instigated events (ego) from events that the speaker is not part of (non-ego). In non-ego contexts, there is a distinction between plain facts, direct sensory evidence and indirect evidence, such as inference. Also, there is a reported evidential combined with egophoric marking morphemes (Sun 1993: 965). Egophoric marking is an example of a category that is built on partly Sinitic and partly Tibetic grammatical forms, but the underlying syntactic structure and semantic distinctions clearly come from Amdo Tibetan. In addition to Amdo Tibetan and Wutun, egophoricity has been documented in several Mongolic languages of the Amdo Sprachbund, such as Mongghul (Georg 2003), Mangghuer (Slater 2003) and Bonan (Wu 2003; Fried 2010), as well as in Turkic Salar (Dwyer 2000). While Sinitic, Mongolic and Turkic languages generally lack egophoric marking, whereas the category is present in Tibetic languages, it is obvious that the egophoric marking systems in the Amdo Sprachbund replicate the Amdo Tibetan grammatical pattern. While all the egophoric marking systems documented in Mongolic and Turkic languages in the area are binary and only make a distinction between ego and non-ego, the tripartite system of Wutun resembles more closely the elaborate system of Amdo Tibetan, which suggests that it has been acquired via direct contact with a Tibetic language.

3.4.2 Clause combining: the subordination structure

In Sinitic languages, the most important means of combining clauses are serial verb constructions that involve juxtaposed clauses without any intervening markers between them. However, Wutun makes extensive uses of converbs in clause combining as do Tibetic and Mongolic languages. The subordination structure of a causal proposition is one of the best examples of the influence of Amdo Tibetan on Wutun. In Amdo Tibetan, as in other Tibetic languages, the ergative-instrumental case marker suffixed to a nominalized verb is used to express a causal relation between two phrases (as in (44)):

(44) Amdo Tibetan

<i>teraŋ</i>	<i>h₁nam</i>	<i>m₁bab-go-no-gi</i>	<i>ŋa</i>
today	sky[ABS]	fall-IPFV-NMZ-ERG	1SG[ABS]

ϕ *ci*loʋ -ga mə-ⁿ dzjo
 outside-DAT NEG.IPFV-go
 ‘Because it is raining, I will not go outside today.’
 (Sandman and Simon 2016: 108)

In Wutun, a causal relation is expressed by a structure similar to that of Tibetic languages. The Wutun causal structure involves nominalization of the verb using the nominalizer *-de* (which has cognates in all varieties of Mandarin Chinese), together with the use of the comitative-instrumental case marker *-liangge*, (as in 45):

(45)

<i>dak</i>	<i>jhan-lio-de-liangge</i>	
tiger	see-PFV-NMLZ-INSTR	
<i>ren</i>	<i>yidaze</i>	<i>haipa-gu-lio</i>
person	all	(be) afraid-COMPL-PFV
<i>ze-li</i>		
EXEC-SEN.INF		

‘Because of seeing a tiger, all the people were frightened.’
 (Elicited)

The influence of Tibetic manifests itself in the very existence of such converb structures, and in use of the comitative-instrumental case marker. It is interesting to note that while Wutun has not acquired ergativity from Amdo Tibetan, in causal subordination construction, the comitative-instrumental marker *-liangge* resembles the function of ergative marker *-gi* in Amdo Tibetan.

3.5 Grammatical features borrowed from Bonan

In this section, I will discuss the grammatical features that represent the influence of Bonan. Bonan grammatical features in Wutun include nominal number (Section 3.5.1), comitative-instrumental case (Section 3.5.2) and two borrowed grammatical morphemes (Section 3.5.3).

3.5.1 Nominal number

One of the most obvious examples of a grammatical system influenced by Bonan in Wutun is nominal number. Wutun makes a distinction between paucal and plural. Paucal is marked by the suffix *-jhege*. It indicates small numbers, usually three to five entities. The plural marker *-dera*, which also has a variant *-duru*, indicates larger numbers than paucal marker *-jhege*. Consider:

(46)

<i>jashe</i>	<i>da</i>		<i>gu-de</i>		<i>adia</i>	<i>da</i>
PN	and		3SG-ATTR		monk	and
<i>asak-jhege</i>			<i>bijin</i>			
sister-in-law-PAUC			Beijing			
<i>qhi-gu-ma-li</i>						
go-COMPL-RES.PO-SEN.INF						

‘Jashe and the monk and the sister-in-law (of his family) went to Beijing.’
(Wutun conversation 2_Thangkas, smoking and car)

(47)

<i>ren-dera</i>	<i>xaige</i>	<i>xho-li</i>
person-PL	very	good-SEN.INF

‘The people (in this country) are very good.’
(Elicited)

The origin of the paucal marker is the Mandarin Chinese quantifier *ji-ge* (几个), ‘a few’, ‘several’, which has been grammaticalized into a paucal marker due to the influence of Bonan. Bonan has a paucal enclitic =*vula*, which may be connected with number *vuran* ‘three’ + plural enclitic =*la* (Chen and Chinggeltei 1986: 85-86). However, Bonan paucal can be used to refer to larger units than just three referents (Fried 2010: 72–73) and the same is true for Wutun. The origin of Wutun plural marker *-dera* ~ *-duru* is unknown. In Bonan, the plural is marked by an enclitic =*la* which is functionally equivalent but etymologically unrelated to the Wutun plural marker. Examples (48a) and (48b) illustrate the paucal-plural distinction in Bonan:

(48) Bonan

<i>au=vula</i>	<i>silan=da</i>	<i>o-tɛo</i>
man=PAU	Xining=LOC	go-IMPF.OBJ

- a. ‘A few men are going to Xining.’
- b. *au=la silaŋ=da o-tɛo*
 man=PL Xining=LOC go-IMPF.OBJ
 ‘The men are going to Xining.’
 (Fried 2010: 72)

Wutun and Bonan are the only languages of the Amdo Sprachbund that have been documented to have a paucal-plural distinction in their nominal system. While Sinitic languages usually lack an elaborate system of number marking, it is quite likely that Wutun has acquired its nominal number system due to influence from Bonan.

3.5.2 Comitative-instrumental case

The comitative-instrumental case offers another example of Bonan influence on Wutun grammar. The comitative-instrumental case is marked by a bisyllabic element *-liangge*, which is a compound of the Mandarin Chinese numeral *liǎng* (两), ‘two’ and the general classifier *ge* (个). It expresses both accompaniment (as in 49) and instrument (as in 50):

- (49)
- | | | | |
|---------------|---------------------|----------------------|------------|
| <i>ya</i> | <i>lai</i> | <i>Lhamo Yangzhe</i> | <i>lai</i> |
| yeah | come | PN | come |
| <i>yayaya</i> | <i>nini-liangge</i> | <i>qhi-lai</i> | |
| yayaya | grandmother-COM | go-1.IMP | |
- ‘Yeah, come, Lhamo Yangzhe, come. Yeah, yeah, yeah, come with the grandmother!’
 (Wutun conversation 3_Babies)
- (50)
- | | | | |
|--------------------|--------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| <i>gu</i> | <i>agu</i> | <i>shetek-liangge</i> | <i>zhaze</i> |
| that | girl | rock-INSTR | window |
| <i>da-pe-lio</i> | <i>ze-li</i> | | |
| hit-get broken-PFV | EXEC-SEN.INF | | |
- ‘That girl smashed the window with a rock.’
 (Elicited)

The comitative-instrumental case marker in Wutun is a calque from Bonan. Bonan has a grammatical marker =*kala* (*ghwala*) based on the numeral *kar* (*ghwar*), ‘two’, which is functionally very similar to Wutun sociative marker -*liangge* and has probably served as a model of grammaticalization for the Wutun comitative-instrumental case. Consider:

(51) Bonan

<i>ateaŋ</i>	<i>jəɛə=la=kala</i>	<i>daŋ=nə</i>
3SG	key=PL=INST	door=ACC
<i>ne-tɛo</i>		
open-IMPF.OBJ		
‘He used the keys to open the door.’		
(Fried 2010: 60)		

It is interesting to note that the origin of the comitative-instrumental case marker in Wutun appears to be unusual from a cross-linguistic perspective. The number ‘two’ is not mentioned as a source for comitatives and instrumental in recent work on the grammaticalization of comitatives and related categories (e.g., Heine and Kuteva 2002: 329; Stolz, Stroh, and Urdze 2006: 357–361). Widely attested sources for comitatives include the verbs ‘follow’ and ‘take’ and the nouns ‘friend’ and ‘comrade’. The numeral ‘one’ is also mentioned (Stolz, Stroh, and Urdze 2006: 357–361). However, comitative-instrumentals based on numeral ‘two’ are common in the languages of Amdo Sprachbund. They have been documented in Sinitic languages Linxia, Xining and Gangou (Dwyer 1992: 167; Zhu et al. 1997: 445) and Mongolic languages Bonan and Santa (Chen and Chinggeltei 1986: 121–122; Dwyer 1992: 166; Wu 2003: 334; Fried 2010: 60). It seems plausible that the Sinitic languages, which usually lack case, are replicating the Mongolic grammatical pattern. Several genetically unrelated languages spoken in the same geographical area have undergone similar grammaticalization process due to areal interference.

3.5.3 Borrowed grammatical morphemes

While Wutun nominal number and comitative-instrumental case represent grammatical categories built on Sinitic grammatical forms that replicate Mongolic morphosyntactic structure, there are at least two grammatical forms that have obviously been borrowed from Bonan into Wutun. The first one is the interrogative clitic =*mu*, which is used for forming polar questions. This marker represents a grammatical borrowing from Bonan, which has an interrogative marker =*mu* based on the interrogative suffix *-u* and the narrative suffix *-m* (Fried 2010: 259). Consider:

- (52) *gu* *xan* *ni* *getan-lio=**mu***
 that cord 2SG cut-PFV=INTERR
 ‘That cord, did you cut it?’
 (Wutun narratives 1_Pilgrimage)

Another example is the terminative converb *-tala*. When connecting clauses *-tala* expresses the end point of the main action indicated by the final clause:

- (53) *dangma* *zang* *do-tala* *san-ge*
 a long time ago Tibet arrive-TERM three-RE
 yai-ma *shewu* *tian* *yo-de*
 month-COORD fifteen day NEC-NMLZ
 re
 FACT
 ‘In those days, you needed three months and fifteen days to go to
 Tibet.’
 (Wutun narratives 1_Pilgrimage)

This converb has been borrowed from Bonan, which has an identical terminative suffix (Wu 2003: 338). The terminative *-tala* is of common Mongolic origin and it was present already in Middle Mongol (Rybatzki 2003: 77–78). Borrowed grammatical morphemes suggest that Wutun has interacted with Bonan in the past, although most of the present day Wutun speakers do not know Bonan.

4. Summary and discussion

In this chapter, I have discussed the sociohistorical origins of the Wutun people and the structural features of the Wutun language in relation to generally

observed tendencies in mixed languages. From a sociohistorical perspective, the genesis of Wutun shows many similarities to the genesis of other mixed languages. While Wutun was created in bilingual families with Sinitic, Mongolic and Tibetic speakers, at the present day almost all the Wutun speakers are bilingual in local lingua franca, Amdo Tibetan. The communication with neighboring linguistic groups is not an issue, and the Wutun language is rather used as a community language which has important meaning for the group identity, than the language of interethnic communication. From a structural perspective, Wutun belongs to the type of mixed languages that exhibit a high degree of structural mixing. An interesting feature that distinguishes Wutun from many relatively well-documented mixed languages is that its grammar is the result of mixing of at least three languages, Northwest Mandarin, Amdo Tibetan and Bonan. All these languages contribute a significant amount of grammar. Sometimes it is difficult to identify which language is the source of a particular grammatical feature (as observed in Section 3.2.). This is because Wutun is spoken in the context of a Sprachbund and many non-Sinitic features of Wutun (such as word order, agglutinative morphology, lack of numeral classifiers and case marking) are found in both Amdo Tibetan and Mongolic languages. The bulk of Wutun morphemes are of Sinitic origin and many non-Sinitic grammatical categories are built on Sinitic grammatical forms that are reanalyzed to replicate Tibetic or Mongolic morphosyntactic structures. Hence both Amdo Tibetan and Bonan contribute a number of borrowed grammatical morphemes. Another important observation is that there is no clear split between different grammatical systems. All the contact languages contribute to nominal and verbal morphosyntax, clause structure and clause combining. Some of the grammatical systems, such as aspect marking, exhibit a particularly complex blend of Sinitic and Tibetic grammatical forms and strategies. The effect of a Sprachbund situation into mixed language genesis and blended grammatical systems arisen from language contact requires more research. Wutun is a unique result of language contact between Sinitic, Tibetic and Mongolic languages and can contribute to our understanding of mixed language genesis and structural features of mixed languages.

5. List of abbreviations

1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
ATTR	attributive
CAUS	causative
CLF	classifier
COLL	collective
COM	comitative
COMPL	completive
COND	conditional
COORD	coordinative
DOM	differential object marking
EGO	ego
EQU	equative
EXEC	executive auxiliary
EXIST	existential
FACT	factual
IMP	imperative
INCOMPL	incompletive
INSTR	instrumental
INTERR	interrogative
LOC	locative
NEC	necessitative
NEG	negative
NMLZ	nominalizer
OBL	oblique
PAUC	paucal
PFV	perfective
PL	plural
PN	proper name
PROGR	progressive
PROH	prohibitive
PROSP	prospective
REF	referential
REP	reported
RES	resultative
RES.AO	agent-oriented resultative
RES.PO	patient-oriented resultative
SEN.INF	sensory-inferential
TERM	terminative

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