

## Chapter 2

# The origin of comitative adverbs in Japhug

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The aim of this paper is threefold. First, it provides a description of the morphological and syntactic properties of comitative adverbs in Japhug and other Gyalrong languages, a class of adverbs derived from nouns by a combination of prefixation and reduplication. Second, it argues that they result from a two-step derivation, first from noun into proprietive denominal verb, then from that verb into a participial form. The resulting form is later reanalyzed as a single morphological derivation from the noun. Third, this paper contributes to the study of language contact within the Gyalrongic group by showing how one of the two processes for building comitative adverbs in Japhug is borrowed from the neighbouring Tshobdun language.

## Introduction

This paper discusses the origin of comitative adverbs in Japhug and other Gyalrong languages. These adverbs, only attested in the core Gyalrong languages, are a relatively recent innovation in these languages, and provide an interesting case study to investigate the origin of comitative constructions in the world's languages.

The paper contains four sections. First, I provide background information on Japhug and the other Gyalrongic languages. Second, I describe the morphological expression of possession in Japhug nouns, which must be taken into consideration in all types of denominal derivations, including that of comitative adverbs. Third, I discuss the morphological and syntactic properties of comitative adverbs. Fourth, I propose a grammaticalization hypothesis to account for their origin, involving comparison with the closely related Tshobdun language, and show that



the pathway in question has not previously been proposed for comitative markers.

## 1 Japhug and Gyalrongic languages

Japhug (in Chinese Chapu 茶堡) is a Gyalrong language spoken in Mbarkham county, Rngaba prefecture, Sichuan, China. The present study is based on the Kamnyu dialect, whose location is indicated in Figure 1. In addition to Japhug, there are three other Gyalrong languages, Tshobdun (in Chinese Caodeng 草等, Sun 2003), Zbu (aka Showu, in Chinese Ribu 日部, see Sun 2004; Gong 2014) and Situ, the language with the greatest number of speakers and dialectal variation (四土, Lin 1993; Huáng & Sūn 2002; Prins 2011). The Gyalrong languages in turn belong to the Gyalrongic branch of Trans-Himalayan, which also includes Stau and Khroskyabs (see Sun 2000 and Lai 2015).

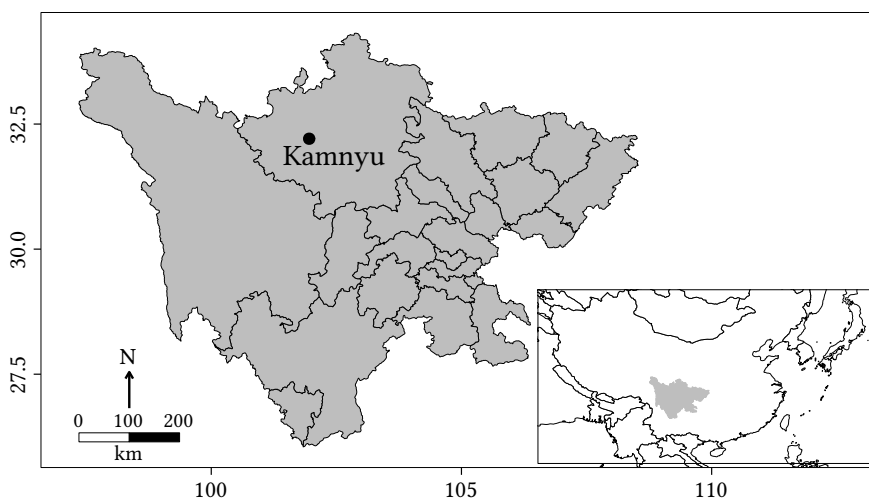


Figure 1: Location of Kamnyu village

The Gyalrong languages, unlike most other languages of the Trans-Himalayan family, are polysynthetic languages with a rich derivational and inflectional verbal morphology (Jacques 2012b; Sun 2014a) and direct-inverse indexation (DeLancey 1981; Sun & Shidanluo 2002; Jacques 2010; Gong 2014), which are argued to be of proto-Trans-Himalayan origin (DeLancey 2010; Jacques 2012a). This morphology is typologically unusual in being mainly prefixing despite Gyalrong languages having strict verb-final word order (Jacques 2013).

## 2 Inalienably possessed nouns

Japhug nouns can be divided into inalienably possessed nouns (IPN) and non-inalienably possessed nouns (NIPN). IPNs differ from NIPNs in that they require the presence of one of the possessive prefixes (Table 1), while NIPNs can appear as their bare stem without any possessive prefix. The IPN / NIPN distinction is not completely predictable: although all body parts and kinship terms are IPNs, we also find nouns referring to (but not all) clothes (*tu-ŋga* ‘clothes’, *tu-xtsa* ‘shoes’, etc), some implements (*tx-mkum* ‘pillow’), and abstract concepts (*tu-sum* ‘thought’, *tu-zuβ* ‘sleep’, *tu-p<sup>h</sup>ur* ‘price’, *tu-nŋa* ‘debt’, *tu-k<sup>h</sup>ur* ‘official position’, etc). Note that IPNs can refer to entities or properties that are not necessarily permanently and definitively associated with the possessor, as is the case with clothes and concepts like ‘debt’ or ‘official position’, but that are not freely removable at least during a period of time (the time of being awake in the case of ‘clothes’, the time of sleeping in the case of ‘pillow’, the period between contracting the debt and repaying it in the case of ‘debt’, etc).

When no definite possessor is present, IPNs take one of the indefinite possessive prefixes *tx-* or *tu-*. The citation form of IPNs is built by combining one of the indefinite prefixes with the noun stem (*tx-lu* ‘milk’, *tu-ŋga* ‘clothes’, *tx-ɾpu* ‘uncle’, *tu-ci* ‘water’). The distribution of the prefixes *tx-* vs *tu-* is lexically determined. When a specific possessor is present, the indefinite prefix is replaced by the appropriate possessive prefix (*u-lu* ‘her/its milk (from her nipple)’, *a-ŋga* ‘my clothes’, *nx-ɾpu* ‘your uncle’, *u-ci* ‘its juice’).

Although the generic possessive prefix *tu-* is homophonous with one of the indefinite possessive prefixes, the two are semantically distinct (compare *tx-se* INDEF.POSS-blood ‘blood’ with *tu-se* GENR.POSS-blood ‘one’s/people’s blood’).

It is possible to turn an IPN into a NIPN by prefixing a definite possessive prefix to the indefinite one, as in *u-tx-lu* 3SG.POSS-INDEF.POSS-milk ‘his milk (to drink)’, *u-tu-ci* 3SG.POSS-INDEF.POSS-water ‘its water (of irrigated water, to a plant)’.<sup>1</sup> NIPNs cannot take indefinite possessive prefixes. However, they are compatible with the human generic possessor prefix *tu-*, as in (1), where the nouns *kha* ‘house’ and *laxtcha* ‘thing’ are NIPNs.

<sup>1</sup>A similar phenomenon is reported in Tshobdun (Sun 1998: 140)

Table 1: Possessive prefixes

Prefix	Person
<i>a-</i>	1SG
<i>ny-</i>	2SG
<i>w-</i>	3SG
<i>tçi-</i>	1DU
<i>ndzi-</i>	2DU
<i>ndzi-</i>	3DU
<i>i-</i>	1PL
<i>nw-</i>	2PL
<i>nw-</i>	3PL
<i>tu-</i> , <i>ty-</i>	indefinite
<i>tu-</i>	generic

- (1) *wuma zo tu-kha cho tu-laxtcha ra*  
 really EMPH GENR.POSS-house and GENR.POSS-thing PL  
*su-nqhi*.  
 CAUS-be.dirty:FACT  
 ‘(Flies) make one’s house and one’s things dirty.’ (25 akWzgumba, 62)

### 3 Comitative derivation

In Japhug, adverbs meaning ‘having X’ or ‘together with X’ can be productively built from various types of nouns.<sup>2</sup> In this section, I first describe the morphological processes involved in the derivation from noun to adverb, and then provide an overview of the use of these adverbs in context.

#### 3.1 Morphology

Comitative adverbs are formed by reduplicating the last syllable of the noun stem and prefixing either *kʸ-* or *kʸyur-*, as in examples such as *χɛʌlmuy* ‘glasses’ ⇒

<sup>2</sup>Comitative adverbs in Japhug have been briefly mentioned in a previous publication (Jacques 2008: 51), but this paper is the first detailed description of this derivation and its uses.

*ký-χελmu-Imuy / kýu-χελmu-Imuy* ‘together with glasses’.<sup>3</sup> No semantic difference between the comitative adverbs in *ký-* and those in *kýu-* has been detected; both are fully productive and can be built from the same nouns.

When the base noun is an IPN, it is possible to build a comitative adverb with the indefinite possessor prefix or with the bare stem. For instance, from *tx-rte* ‘hat’ one can derive both *ký-rtu~rte / kýu-rtu~rte* ‘with his/her hat’ and *ký-tx-rtu~rte / kýu-tx-rtu~rte* ‘with a hat’ the latter bearing the indefinite possessor prefix *tx-*. The inalienable/non-alienable distinction is present in these forms: *ký-rtu~rte / kýu-rtu~rte* means ‘wearing one’s hat’ (2), while *ký-tx-rtu~rte / kýu-tx-rtu~rte* implies that one is not wearing the hat (3).

- (2) *kýu-rtu~rte zo kha u-ŋgu lɣ-tu~ye*  
COMIT-hat EMPH house 3SG-inside PFV-2-come[II]

‘You came inside the house with your hat (on).’ (You were expected to take it off before coming in)

- (3) *laχtcha kýu-tx-rtu~rte zo ta-ndo*  
thing COMIT-INDEF.POSS-hat EMPH PFV:3→3’-take

‘He took the things together with the hat.’ (Not wearing it)

Cognates of the Japhug comitative adverbs have been reported in other Gyalrong languages, in particular Tshobdun *ko-* (Sun 1998: 107), and the comitative adverb derivation can thus be reconstructed back at least to proto-Gyalrong. However, given the dearth of data on languages other than Japhug (in particular in terms of text examples), little external data will be discussed in this paper. A full comparative assessment of the hypotheses laid out here will have to await the publication of fully-fledged grammatical descriptions of all Gyalrong languages.

Comitative adverbs, in any case, appear to be unattested outside of the core Gyalrong languages (even in Khroskyabs, their closest relative, see Lai 2013), and are probably one of the many common Gyalrong morphological innovations.

### 3.2 Syntactic uses

The comitative adverb can either follow (4) or precede (5, 6) the noun over which it has scope. Alternatively, a comitative adverb can occur without a corresponding overt noun (7). However, if the noun is overt, the comitative adverb is contiguous to the NP to which it belongs.

<sup>3</sup>Japhug *χελmuγ* ‘glasses’ is a loanword from Tibetan *œl.mig*; note that reduplication disregards morpheme boundaries (*χελ* ‘glass’ (Tibetan *œl*) is also attested in Japhug).

The NP in question can either correspond to the P (4, 6), the S (5, 7) or even the A (8). This last option is not attested in the text corpus, but speakers have no trouble producing sentences of this type.

- (4) *tx-sno kʻj-ju~jaʃ nu lu-ta-nu*  
 INDEF.POSS-saddle COMIT-hand DEM IPFV-put-PL  
 ‘(Then), they put the saddle with its handles.’
- (5) *pyʃkhu nu u-ku nu nu lu lu tsa ju-fse,*  
 owl DEM 3SG.POSS-head DEM cat a.little SENS-be.like  
*u-mtsioʃ yʃzu ma kʻ-rnu-rna lu lu*  
 3SG.POSS-beak exist:SENS a.part.from COMIT-ear cat  
*u-tu-fse ju-sʃre zo.*  
 3SG.NMLZ:DEGREE-be.like SENS-be.extremely/be.funny EMPH  
 ‘The owl’s head looks a little like that of a cat; apart from the fact that it has a beak, it looks very much like a cat with its ears.’
- (6) *kʻ-thy-lwu-lwa u-zʃm ra ku ny chu~wy-yut pu~wy-ji ri*  
 COMIT-earth 3SG.POSS-root PL also IPFV-INV-bring IPFV-INV-plant but  
*maka tu-ʃoʃ mu~j-cha*  
 at.all IPFV-come.out NEG:SENS-can  
 ‘Even if one takes its root with earth (around it) and plants it, it cannot grow.’
- (7) *kʻ-snu~sno zo kʻ-rɲgu*  
 COMIT-saddle EMPH PFV-lie.down  
 ‘(The horse) slept with its saddle.’ (elicited)
- (8) *lu lu kʻ-rju~rjit ra ku zo βzu to-ndza-nu.*  
 cat COMIT-offspring PL ERG EMPH mouse IFR-eat-PL  
 ‘The cat and its young ate the mouse.’ (elicited)

Nouns incorporated into comitative adverbs lose their nominal status and cannot be determined by relative clauses (including attributive adjectives), numerals or demonstratives. In a sentence such as (9) for instance, the attributive participial relative [*ku~ku-ɲɲ*] ‘all the ones who are evil’ does not determine *kʃu-ɲkhu~ɲkhor* ‘with his subjects’, a syntactic structure which would correspond to the translation ‘with all his evil subjects’. Rather, it determines the head noun together with the comitative adverb, i.e. *rʃlpu kʃu-ɲkhu~ɲkhor* ‘the king with his subjects’, which implies the translation given below.

- (9) *ɾɣlpu kɣɣur-ŋkhuɾ-ŋkhor [kuɾ-kuɾ-ŋɣn]*                      *zo to-ndo tce,*  
king COMIT-subjects            TOTAL~NMLZ:S/A-be.bad EMPH IFR-take LNK  
*tceɳdɣre kuɾ-mɣku*                      *nɯ sɣtɕha kuɾ-kuɾ-sɣ-scit*  
LNK            NMLZ:S/A-be.before DEM place    TOTAL~NMLZ:S/A-DEEXP-be.happy  
*zo jo-tsum            ɲu-ŋu ri kuɾ-maɕhu tce,*  
EMPH IFR-take.away SENS-be LNK NMLZ:S/A-be.after LNK  
*kuɾ-kuɾ-sɣ-mu*                      *zo jo-tsum tce*  
TOTAL~NMLZ:S/A-DEEXP-fear EMPH IFR-take.away LNK  
‘She took the king and his subjects, all the evil ones; in the beginning she  
took them to nice places, but later she took them to fearful places.’  
(slobdpon)

## 4 Grammaticalization pathway

In this section, I first present the propriative denominal derivation in *ayur-* and the infinitival and participial prefix *kuɾ-*. Then, I show that in fact comitative adverbs are synchronically formally ambiguous with the infinitive and the S/A-participle of propriative denominal verbs in some contexts. Finally, I propose that comitative adverbs derive diachronically from the participial forms of propriative denominal verbs, and were then extended to other contexts after reanalysis.

### 4.1 Denominal derivation

Japhug has a rich array of denominal prefixes (Jacques 2014b). One of these prefixes, *ayur-*, derives stative intransitive verbs from both inalienably possessed and non-inalienably possessed nouns. As illustrated by the examples in Table 2, verbs derived with the prefix have meanings such as ‘having X’, ‘producing a lot of X’ or ‘having the same X’ (with plural S). The noun stem is sometimes reduplicated, especially for the first of these meanings.

In some cases, the semantic relationship between the base noun and the derived verb is more metaphorical and not predictable. For instance, from the noun *tur-jav* ‘hand’ one can derive either *ayur-juɾ-jav* ‘having a lot of hands’ (of a bug), while the non-reduplicated form *ayur-jav* means ‘who steals anything (that comes near his hand)’.

Table 2: The denominal prefix *ayur-*

Base noun	Meaning	Denominal verb	Meaning
<i>tu-yli</i>	excrement, manure	<i>ayur-yli</i>	producing a lot of manure (of pigs)
<i>tu-lu</i>	milk	<i>ayur-lu</i>	producing a lot of milk (of cows)
<i>tu-mɲaβ</i>	eye	<i>ayur-mɲaβ</i>	having a lot of holes
<i>tu-ɕnaβ</i>	snot	<i>ayur-ɕnuu-ɕnaβ</i>	be slimy
<i>u-mdoβ</i>	colour	<i>ayur-mdoβ</i>	having the same colour
<i>tu-sum</i>	thought	<i>ayur-sum</i>	get along well
<i>smɲn</i>	medicine	<i>ayur-smɲn</i>	have a medical effect
<i>tu-ɕna</i>	nose	<i>ayur-ɕnuu-ɕna</i>	having a keen sense of smell

## 4.2 S/A participle and infinitive

In Japhug, stative verbs (including the denominal verbs in *ayur-* presented in the previous section) have two homophonous non-finite forms with a prefix *ku-*, the s/A-participle (Jacques 2014b: 5) and the infinitive.<sup>4</sup> The participle appears mainly in participial relatives (including all forms corresponding to attributive adjectives in European languages), as in example (10).

- (10) *tcheme ci ku-pur~pe*                      *ku-mpɕur~mpɕɛr*,  
 girl    a NMLZ:S/A-EMPH~be.good NMLZ:S/A-EMPH~be.beautiful  
*nɣ-ɕya*                      *ku-xtɕur~xtɕi*                      *zo*    *a-nur-tu-ɣβzu*  
 2SG.POSS-tooth NMLZ:S/A-EMPH~be.small EMPH IRR-PFV-2-become  
*smuɣm*  
 prayer  
 ‘May you become a nice and beautiful girl with short teeth.’ (Slobdpon, 261)

The infinitive is used (by some speakers) as the citation form of verbs, and appears in some types of complement clauses and manner subordinate clauses (Jacques 2014a: 271–272; 321–325), as in (11) where *ku-pur~pe*, meaning here ‘nicely’, is a manner subordinate clause comprising a single verb.

<sup>4</sup>The morphological evidence for distinguishing between participle and infinitive is clearer with dynamic verbs, whose infinitive in *ky-* differs from the s/A-participle. Cognates of the participle and the infinitive *ku-* are found in all Gyalrong languages, with only minor differences (see in particular Sun 2014b).



- (11) *ɕyr tɕe ʋzɣmi ni ku-pu~pe zo*  
 evening LNK husband.and.wife DU INF:STAT-EMPH-good EMPH  
*ɕ-ko-nu-ryɣu-ndzi*  
 TRANSL-IFR-AUTO-lie.down-DU  
 ‘In the evening, the husband and the wife laid down in bed nicely.’

### 4.3 Potential ambiguity

Due to the sandhi rule according to which *ku-* combined with *a*-initial verbs yields /*kɣ-*/ in Japhug (Jacques 2004), *s/A*-participles or infinitive forms of denominal verbs in *ayu-* are formally homophonous with comitative adverbs in *kɣyu-*. For example, the form *kɣyurturtax* ‘together with its branches’ from *tx-rtax* ‘branch’ is identical to the participle *kɣyurturtax* ‘the one which has many branches’ found in example (12).

- (12) *si ku-yɣyurturtax ki ku-fse*  
 tree NMLZ:S/A-have.many.branches this NMLZ:S/A-be.this.way  
*ɲu-ɕar-nu*  
 IPFV-search-PL  
 ‘They are searching for a tree which has a lot of branches like this.’ (NOT: ‘a tree with its branches’ in this particular context)

Examples (13) and (14) present a minimal pair contrasting the comitative adverb ‘with his/her children’ on the one hand and the participle ‘having many children’ on the other hand (both derived from the possessed noun *tx-rɣit* ‘child’).

- (13) *icqha tɕ<sup>h</sup>eme nu ku-yɣurɣurɣit ci*  
 the.aforementioned woman DEM NMLZ:S/A-have.many.children INDEF  
*pu-ɲu*  
 PST.IPFV-be  
 ‘This woman had a lot of children.’
- (14) *kɣyu-rɣu-rɣit zo jo-nu-ɕe-nu*  
 COMIT-children EMPH IFR-VERT-go-PL  
 ‘She/They went back with their children.’

### 4.4 Reanalysis

The formal ambiguity between the comitative adverbs on the one hand, and the participles and infinitives of *ayu-* denominal verbs on the other hand, together

with the semantic proximity of the two forms, raise the question of their potential historical relatedness.

An obvious possibility is that comitative adverbs originate from the reanalysis of the s/A-participles of reduplicated *ayur-* denominal verbs. Ambiguous sentences like (12) actually constitute the pivot constructions which allow reanalysis in contexts where both proprietive ('having X') and comitative ('with X') interpretations were possible.

- (15) *si kɣyurturtax* *ɲur-ɕar-nuu*  
 tree NMLZ:S/A-have.many.branches//COMIT-branch IPFV-search-PL  
 'They are searching for a tree which has a lot of branches' ⇒ 'They are  
 searching for a tree and/with its branches'

Starting from such ambiguous sentences, the comitative adverb was extended to nouns without a corresponding proprietive denominal verb. In addition, comitative adverbs incorporating the indefinite possessive prefix were created (such as *kɣyur-tɣ-rtur~rte* 'with his hat'). Forms of this type are clearly distinct from infinitives or participles of denominal verbs, as indefinite possessive prefixes are always deleted during denominal derivation.

I therefore propose the pathway (16) to account for comitative adverbs in *kɣyur-* in Japhug:

- (16) NOUN + PROPERTY DENOMINAL DERIVATION + infinitive/participle → COMITATIVE

Among the possible origins of comitative markers, Heine & Kuteva (2002: 91, 139, 287) includes nouns meaning 'comrade' or verbs such as 'follow' and 'take' and makes no mention of proprietive markers. However, Sutton (1976) has noted etymological connections between proprietive and comitative markers in several languages of Australia, and although none of the standard references on comitative constructions (Stassen 2000; Stolz et al. 2006; Arkhipov 2009) explicitly mention a pathway PROPRIETIVE → COMITATIVE, they all notice the close functional relationship between these two categories, notably in languages of Australia, where both comitative and proprietive cases may exist in the same language (for instance, Djabugay, see Patz 1991).

The pathway presented above accounts well for the comitative adverbs of the type *kɣyur-*, but does not explain the *kɣ̣-* variant, which is actually more common in the corpus.

The comitative adverb marker *kɣ̣-* is anomalous in Japhug in being among the very few prefixes attracting stress, a feature that could indicate fusion of

two syllables (for instance, the negative sensory marker *múj-* probably results historically from the fusion of the negative *mu-* and the sensory prefix *ɲu-*).

If the sound laws of Japhug (Jacques 2004) are applied in reverse, the prefix *kɣɣu-* would go back to pre-Japhug *\*kɛwə-*. We know that in Tshobdun, *\*wə* regularly corresponds to *o*. It is in particular the case of the inverse prefix *o-* (Sun & Shidanluo 2002) which originates from proto-Gyalrong *\*wə*. Through vowel fusion (which also occurs with the inverse prefix), *ko-*, the actual form of the comitative prefix (Sun 1998: 107), is the expected outcome of *\*kɛwə-*. We can therefore safely conclude that (1) the comitative prefixes *kɣɣu-* in Japhug and *ko-* in Tshobdun are cognate and (2) that the grammaticalization in (16) took place before the split of Japhug and Tshobdun, and can be reconstructed at least to their common ancestor.

The comitative prefix *kɣ-* in Japhug, on the other hand, makes no sense from a Japhug-internal perspective. A possible way to explain it, however, is to suppose *borrowing* from Tshobdun *ko-*. Japhug, and especially the Kamnyu variety described in the present paper, has borrowed a few nouns from Tshobdun, as shown by forms such as *qro* ‘ant’, *qaliak* ‘eagle’ and *tuɣo* ‘demon’ instead of expected *\*qroɕ*, *\*qarɣak* (attested in some dialects of Japhug) and *\*tuɣu*, following the sound laws set out in Jacques (2004).

Borrowing of Tshobdun *ko-* as Japhug *kɣ-* is not surprising phonologically. The stress on the prefix in Japhug is probably a trace of the stress on that prefix in pre-Tshobdun, lost due to the strong tendency of Gyalrong languages to stress the final or penultimate syllable (Sun 2005). The vowel *ɣ* rather than *o* is a consequence of the fact that derivational prefixes in Japhug are subject to strong phonotactic constraints: the only possible vowels are either *ɣ* or *u* (and *a*, but only in the case of stem-initial *a-*).

The borrowing hypothesis also accounts for the absence of any discernible difference in function between the two comitative prefixes in Japhug.

## 5 Conclusion

The contribution of this paper is threefold. First, it provides the first detailed description of comitative adverbs in any Gyalrong language. Second, it shows that language contact between Gyalrong languages is not restricted to the lexicon, but actually also involves clear cases of borrowing of grammatical morphemes. Third, it provides an example of evolution with clear directionality from PROPRIETIVE to COMITATIVE.

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