Nominal Inflections in Tsum: An Areal-Typological Perspective

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Abstract

This article has examined the inflectional affixes in Tsum in areal-typological context of Tibetan languages spoken in the Himalayan region. Tsum nouns inflect for the biological gender, number, classifier, classifier and emphatic marker, definiteness and case. As expected in Tibetan languages, a number of nouns end in -po and -mo to mark the biological gender. In addition to the numeral classifier -po, Tsum also possesses the numeral classifier plus the emphatic marker -kar attaching to the numeral. The plural marker is added to the last element of the noun phrase, rather than to the head nouns. Tsum shares all the case forms with Written Tibetan. These case forms are also shared by a number of immediate and distant Tibetan neighbours of Tsum.

Keywords: Tibetan, Classifier, Gender, Case, Definitenes.

1. Introduction and Typological Features

Tsum is a Tibetan variety spoken in northern Gorkha, Nepal. The Tsumbas are recorded as one of the nationalities by Government of Nepal as Siyars. *Ethnologue* (Eppele 2012) has classified Tsum as: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Western Tibeto-Burman, Bodish, Central Bodish, Central, gTsang. Similarly, Bradley (1997) classifies Tsum as : Tibeto-Burman, Western TB, Bodish, gTsang, Tsum, and Nubri is its closest neighbour. Only a few materials directly related to the Tsum language are available, viz. Dhakal and Donohue (2015), Liu (2015), Donohue and Dhakal (2016). Typologically, Tsum shares a number of features of central Tibetan languages. Tsum is an SOV language, tonal like other languages spoken in the buffer zone between Nepal and China (cf. Hildebrandt 2007), and is heavily monosyllabic. Some constituents precede the head nouns in noun phrase structure whereas others follow them. Liu (2015) reports that there are as many as eight distinct tones in Tsum, and this is typologically interesting. There are different sets of plain and honorific nouns ni Tsum like in other Tibetan languages (cf. DeLancey 1998; Denwood 1999). The honorific nouns are typically used to refer to the monks, and monasteries whereas plain nouns are used elsewhere.

2. Gender

We don't find the grammatical gender in Tsum. While the masculine nouns end in *-pa* feminine nouns end in *-ma*. Examples follow.

(1)   *ghjalbo* 'king'   *ghjalmo* 'queen'
        tʃawo 'rooster'   *tʃaũ* 'hen'
        pho 'male, or husband'   *mo* 'female, or wife'
        ki 'dog'   *kimu* 'bitch'
        ʃara 'young man'   *nadzuŋ* 'young.girl'

The marking of biological gender with these suffixes is common in Tibetan varieties. For example, the feminine nouns end in *-mo* in Ladhaki (cf. Koshal 1979:56). The suffix *-ma* and *-pa* frequently occur with the masculine and feminine nouns respectively. The suffixes *-po, -mo*

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are evident in Kyirong Tibetan for expressing biological gender (Huber 2002), and it is also found in Gyalsumdo (cf. Dhakal 2015). The gender distinction is also evidenced in the third person singular pronoun. The biological feminine gender ending in *-mo* is also found in Lowa, viz. *pì* 'male calf, *pìmo* 'female calf'; *rau* 'male goat', *ramo* 'female goat'. The biological gender marking is attested in a number of Tibetic languages (cf. Benedict 1972:96, LaPolla 2003:27). The third person singular pronoun *kho* 'he' contrasts with the third person singular feminine pronoun *mo* 'she'.

3. Numeral Classifiers
There is a native system of numeral classifier in Tsum. There are two numeral classifier in Tsum, viz. *-bo* and *-kar*. The numeral classifier *-bo* or its variation (*-wo*) is optionally attached to the numerals in noun phrase constructions. The nouns in Tsum are counted in numeral-plus-classifier. The classifier is found with both the human and non-human nouns, and also with both animate and inanimate nouns. We see that the classifier is attached to the numerals (2-3). The numeral classifiers have not been reported in some Tibetan varieties, such as Dongwang Tibetan (Bartee 2007:221).

(2) ghortsa   sum-bo
     house   three-CLF
     'three houses'
(3) bhõ   sum-bo leu-dzuŋ
     girl   three-CLF   come-PST.DJ
     'Three girls came.'

In addition to the general numeral classifier, the classifier *-kar* in Tsum also retains the definite (and emphasis) meaning. There are two emphasis markers that appear with nouns, viz. *-kar, -gar* and *-raŋ -ŋ*. While the emphatic marker *-kar* occurs only with the numerals, the distribution of *raŋ* is wider in the discourse. The appearance of *-kar* obligatorily substitutes the classifier *-po, -bo*.

(4) khoŋ   ɲi-kar   mala   pau-so
     they   two-CLF   down   climb.down-PST.DJ
     'Both of them climbed down.'

(5) khoŋ   sum-gar si-so
     they   three-CLF   die-PST.DJ
     'Three of them died.'

Since both of the classifiers occur both with human and non-human nouns, and with animate and inanimate nouns, it is not easy to tease apart their distributional restrictions. Although they seem to be mutually substitutable, the distribution has some restrictions. Consider the following example.

(6) no   sum-gar-ki   ghortsa   dal-so
     brother   three-EMPH-GEN house   fall-PST.DJ
     'The houses of the three brothers fell.'
The fact that the suffix *-kar* is an emphatic suffix can be attested by the following piece of evidence. First, the phrase *no sum-gar-ki ghortsa* 'the houses of the three brothers' contains the emphatic suffix *-kar*. Now, this cannot be replaced by *no sum-bo-raŋ-ki ghortsa.* 'brother three-

CLF-EMPH-GEN house'. It is also to be noted that the suffix *-kar* cannot be followed by the emphatic suffix *-raŋ*. These two piece of evidence, the fact that the suffix cannot be followed by the emphatic marker alone, and this cannot be followed by classifier *-po* followed by the emphatic marker prove it. It is also interesting to note that the numeral classifier *-kar* is used in Nubri for the same function, such as *bhø-pa som-kar* 'Tibet-NMLZ three-CLF.EMPH'. And, this is also evident in Yohlmo (Hari 2010:25).

The emphasis suffix *-ŋ* appears not only in nominal morphology but also in verb morphology and also with other parts of speech. The suffix also literally means 'also'. The emphasis suffix seems to have been originated from the word *raŋ* 'only'. The lexical word is used not only with nouns, but also with other categories. The suffix *-ŋ* used in example can be substituted by the lexical word *raŋ* 'only'.

(7)   kho-ŋ   ḍho-dzi
        he-EMPH go-NPST.CJ
        'He also goes.'

4. Definiteness

The definiteness marker is *-de* in Tsum. This is also realized as *-re*. This might have been connected with the frozen suffix *-du* in some Tibetan varieties (cf. DeLancey 2003:274). This is also referred to as 'definite determiner' referring to 'that' or 'this very specific' (Beyer 1992: 206). This can be contrasted with the lexical word *lala* 'some, any' which specifies the indeterminate meaning.

(8)   di   mi-de   tsum   ke   ʃe-naŋ
        this   man-DEF   Tsum   language   know-NPST.CJ
        'This man understands the Tsum language.'

(9)   hala   hu-ŋan   mi-re   halta   tshulta   dzhe
        that side   go-NMLZ   man-DEF   this.side   that.side   look.PST
        'The man who went there looked here and there.'

(10)   ŋə-i   tʃela   tʃik   ŋí-dzuŋ
        I-ERG   thing   one   get-PST.DJ
        'I got something.'

The definiteness is also attached to adjectives as in the expression, such as *nepo-de pγ-so* [bad-DEF go-PST, 'The bad one went.']. The definiteness mentioned above can be contrasted with the indefiniteness expression in Tsum. This is expressed in the expression, such as, *ŋə-i tʃela tʃik ŋí-dzuŋ* [I-ERG thing one get-NPST ('I got something.')]. The numeral *tʃik* 'one' that appears after the noun expresses the indefiniteness. The definiteness marking is common in Tibetan varieties of the region, such as in Kyirong Tibetan (Huber 2002:70). The definiteness marking is Gyalsumdo is *-ko* (Dhakal 2015:21), and thus different from the definite marker in Tsum. This definiteness marker is also attested in Nubri as shown in (11).

Nubri
(11)   dʒhip-ruk   nakpo-di   bu   ʃà-soŋ
        hen-DIM   black-DEF   insect eat-PST.DJ
        'The chicks ate the insects.'

Other Tibetan languages also make use of the definite marker (article), for example, Hile Sherpa make use of *tí* for the same function (Graves 2007:185).

5. Plural Marker
The singular is unmarked whereas the plural is morphologically coded. Tsum makes a difference between singular and plural by making use of two plural markers, viz.-*kja* and -*dem.* The plural suffix -*dem* is also realized as -*rem* and it is phonologically conditioned. The human nouns can host both of these suffixes to change them into plural but the non-human nouns only host the suffix -*dem.* An example follows (12).

(12)   *pu*   'boy'   *pu-kja*   'boys'   *pu-dem* 'boys'
            bhõ   'girl'   *bhõ-kja*   'girls'   *bhõ-dem* 'boys'
            mi   'man'   *mi-kja*   'men'   *mi-dem* 'men'

The same thing applies to non-human nouns (13).

(13)   *bhawo*   'cow'   *bhawo-kja*   'cows'   *bhao-dem* 'cows'
            ra   'goat'   *ra-kja*   'goats'   *ra-dem*   'goats'
            ka   'pillar'   *ka-kja*   'pillars'   *ka-dem*   'pillars'

In a noun phrase, the plural marker is attached to the last constituent of the noun phrase. This is common in many Tibetan languages and varieties (cf. DeLancey 2003). Examples follow (14-15).

(14)   tʃau-ru   nakpo   sum-gi   bu   se-so
            hen-DIM black   three-ERG   insect   eat-PST.DJ
            'Three black chickens ate the insects.'

(15)   tsum-pa-rem-gi   gomba-la   tshokpa   tʃho-ŋan-ba
            Tsum-NMLZ-PL-ERG   monastery-LOC   worship do-NMLZ-NMLZ
            'Tsum people worship in monasteries.'

Although the head noun in (14) is 'chicken', the ergative is added to the last constituent *sum* 'three'. Also note that the derivational suffix -*ru* is attached to the nouns to derive diminutive noun[1]. It is to be noted that a number of constituents in the noun phrase follow the nouns in noun phrase construction in Tsum. Examples follow.

(16)   ra   nakpo-rem   tʃhoŋ   pʏ-so
            goat   black-PL run   go-PST.DJ
            'The black goats went.'

(17)   bhedza   tʃhima-rem   ghortsa-la   hjop
            child   small-PL house-LOC   COP
            'The small children are at home.'

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[1] The diminutive ending in -*u* is reported in Tibetan languages (Beyer 1992:70). Thisis a productive suffix in deriving the diminutive nouns in Tsum. Matisoff (2003: 485) suggests that high vowels are associated with smallness.

In the discourse, the plural marker may be attached to the adjectives and other categories . In addition, the plural suffix is also attached to any nominal categories, and noun clauses in wider discourse context (18-19).

(18)   nepo-rem   pʏ-so
        bad-PL   go-PST.DJ
        'The bad ones have gone.'

(19)   kirõ-wa-rem   dhanda   tsum-la   mijoŋba
        Kyirong-NMLZ-PLthese.days   Tsum-LOC   NEG.go.PST
        'The Kyirong people do not come to Tsum these days.²'

The plural marker is also attached to adjectives when the adjective alone indicates the noun phrase. Between these plural suffixes, the plural suffix with -k has cognates with other Tibetan. For example, Dongwang Tibetan has the plural marker -kĩ and -tshæ53 (2007:254), -kja, -kjak in Lowa, -ca or -dza in Kyirong Tibetan. The plural suffixes are slightly different in some other languages, such as -ja in Gyalsumdo, -wa in Sherpa, and -kja in Nubri. It is not easy to find the cognates of the plural suffix with other neighbouring languages.

6. Case Markers
Case relation in Tsum is shown by case markers and postpositions. By case, we mean "a system of marking dependent nouns for the type of relationship they bear to their heads (Blake 2001: 1). Tsum is a ergative-accusative language". While the subject of the intransitive clause is null-marked, the agent of the transitive clause is marked with the ergative case (20-21).

(20)   kju-ru   sum   lau-so
        dog-DIM-Ø   three   come-PST.DJ
        'Three black puppies came.'

(21)   pasaŋ-i   kupkja   tʃá-so
        Pasang-ERG   chair   break-PST.DJ
        'Pasang broke the chair.'

Like in other Tibetan varieties, the case marker is attached to the final element of the noun phrase, rather than to the head nouns (cf. DeLancey 3003:273). For example, the head noun is tʃau-ru 'chicken' in (14) but the ergative case -gi is attached to the numeral tʃìk 'one'. Tsum nouns inflect for ergative, genitive, dative-accusative (object), locative, and allative case as illustrated below. The pronouns and demonstratives also inflect similarly for different cases.

6.1 Nominative Case
Nominative case is unmarked in Tsum. The subject of the intransitive is in the nominative case (22). As mentioned in (7.5), if the object is inanimate, or unspecific, it is in the nominative case. We see that the subject of intransitive clause in (22) is *gho* 'door', whereas it is *kheŋun* 'old man' in (23).

(22)   gho   bhe-so
        door   open-PST.DJ
        'The door opened.'

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² The the negative verb *mijoŋba* can be glossed as 'mi-hoŋ-ba, NEG-COME-NPST'.

(23) kheŋuŋ   ʃi-so
      old.man die-PST.dj
      'The old man died.'

6.2 Ergative Case

Tsum is an ergative-absolutive language. The ergative is coded by the ergative maker *-i, -gi*, or *-ki*. The agent of the transitive clause codes the ergative case (24-30). There is a case syncretism between ergative, instrumental, and genitive case in Tsum.[3] They are glossed differently on the semantic basis for the sake of clarity in this paper. The ergativity is consistently marked in Tsum and is not simply conditioned by the pragmatic and semantic factors unlike some other Tibetan varieties, such as Ladakhi (cf. Zeisler 2012). The subject of the transitive clause codes the ergative marker. Some examples follow.

(24) ŋe-ki   dho   jur-pa
      we-ERG stone   throw-PST.CJ
      'We threw the stone.'

(25) me-i   pedza   tʃik   ṭa-ŋənba
      grandfather-ERG Tibetan.texts   one   read-NPST.HAB
      'My grandfather reads a book (Tibetan text).'

(26) kho-i   lu   tʃik   ghjar-so
      he-ERG   song   one   sing-PST.DJ
      'He sang a song.'

The ergative marker *-i* is difficult to realize if the noun which host the ergative marker ends in *-i*. Since Tsum does not have show contrast in vowel length, the ergative marker is assimilated to the preceding vowel as shown in (27).

(27) amtʃi-i   ŋà-la   taktse   taŋ-so
      doctor-ERG   I-DAT   examination   do-PST.DJ
      'The doctor examined me.'

(28) ki-i   ŋà-la   mú-dzuŋ
      dog-ERG I-DAT   bite-PST.3SG.1SG
      'The dog bit me.'

If the noun phrases are coordinated, the last NP takes the ergative marking. An example follows.

(29) mi   hjamu   dak   ḍhoŋbiã-rem-gi   lu   ghjar-ki
      man   good   and   soman-PL-ERG   song   sing-PROG
      'Beautiful men and women are singling.'

6.3 Instrumental Case

As mentioned before, there is a case syncretism between ergative and instrumental in Tsum. The instrument case is also marked with *-i, -gi*, or *-ki*. Instrument and genitive marker *-ki* is found in central Tibetan dialects (Tournadre 2014:260). Examples follow.

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[3] I have discussed and presented different functions of these case markers under separate sub-sections for convenience and for practical reasons.

(30)   ŋə-i   tari-ki   ʃiŋ   ʃa-wa
        I-ERG   axe-INST wood   split-PST.CJ
        'I split the wood with the axe.'[4]

(31)   kho-i   preka   riŋbu-i   ki-la   dhuŋ-so
        he-ERG stick   long-INST   dog-DAT hit-PST.DJ
        'He hit the dog with the stick.'

The case marker *-ki* as an instrument marker is also used to refer to the material with which something is made from. Examples follow.

(32)   mukpa-gi   nam   ka   dza   re
        cloud-INST   sky   stop   keep   COP
        'The sky is covered with the cloud.'

(33)   moʈor-ki   kho-i   kaŋba-la   tar-so
        motor-INST   he-ERG   leg-ACC   hit-PST.DJ
        'The motor hit his leg.'

6.4 Genitive Case
The genitive phrases in Tsum formed two ways. First, genitive is formed by juxtaposing the possessor and possessed noun in that order. The possessor nouns does not take the genitive case in this case. Examples follow.

(34)   mi   bhidza   tʃik
        man   child   one
        'Man's one child'

(35)   sonam   bhidza   gompa-la   hi
        Sonam   child   gompa-LOC   COP
        'Sonam's child is good in studies.'

Second, the marker in Tsum is *-i*, *-gi*, *-ki.* The genitive is marked in the possessor with the genitive marker. Thus, the genitive phrase is formed with the genitive marked possessor noun followed by the possessed nouns. The genitive marked noun (possessor) precedes the possessed items (nouns). The genitive *-ki*, *-gi, -i* is common in Central Tibetan (DeLancey 2002:272).

(36)   kho-i   lakpa-la ʈa   mo
        he-GEN   hand-LOC   blood   COP
        'His hand has blood in it.'

(37)   ŋə-i   awa-gi   tøtuŋ   nepo   hi
        I-GEN   father-GEN   shirt   dirty   COP
        'My father's shirt is dirty.'

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[4] The first person singular pronoun *ŋà* is realized as *ŋəi* when it is in ergative, or in genitive case.

The suffix *-gi, -gis, -i* , which mark these languages are also common in some other languages spoken in Tsum speaking areas. Lowa also shares the genitive including the ergative-instrumental marking *-ki, -gi*. Kyirong Tibetan also contains the ergative marker *-ge* although it also has the suffix *-ɛ* for the same function (Huber 2002:72). The ergative-instrumenal case is *-ki* in Gyalsumdo, and the same marker is used for the genitive (Dhakal 2015). It is *-gi, -ki, -i, -ri* in Lowa both for ergative-instrumental and also for genitive. Sherpa also has the same affixes for the ergative, instrumental and genitive (Sherpa 2011:32-34).

6.5 Dative Case
There is a case syncretism between dative-accusative and locative in Tsum coded with *-la*. The recipient (indirect object) of a ditransitive clause codes the dative case *-la* as shown in (38-39)[5].

(38) ŋə-i   atʃe-i   ŋà-la   partse   té-dzuŋ
      I-GEN   elder.sister-ERG I-DAT   camera   give-PST.3SG.1SG
      'My elder sister gave me a photograph.'

(39) mi   tʃik-i   kho-la   ɲa   té-so
      man   one-ERG he-DAT   fish   give-PST.DJ
      'A man gave him a fish.'

The first person pronoun *ŋà* is the indirect object whereas *partse* 'camera' is the direct object in (12). Similarly, the recipient is *kho* 'he' in (39). The direct object of a ditransitive clause codes the dative case (38). The dative-locative *-la* is common in Central Tibetan (DeLancey 2003:274).
The accusative (absolutive) case is also the same, viz. *-la* in Tsum. The accusative case is suffixed to animate object which is casually affected. If the pronoun appears in the object position in a transitive clause, it receives the accusative case (40-43).

(40) pu-de   bhõ-la   thú-so
      boy-DEF girl-DAT collide-PST.DJ
      'The boy collided with the girl.'

(41) ŋə-i   kho-la   tar-bo
      I-ERG   he-DAT   hit-PST.CJ
      'I hit him.'

The definite animate object always receives the accusative case.

(42) kho-i   ŋə-i   lakpa-la tar-dzuŋ
      he-ERG   I-GEN   hand-ACC   hit-PST.3SG.3SG
      'The man hit my hand.'

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5 Tsum differs significantly from others in the finite verbs. For example, both the subject and objects are coded in the transitive and ditransitive clauses in Tsum, (Dhakal et al. 2016), and this differs significantly from the conjunct/disjunct marking in Tibeto-Burman languages (cf. Hale 1980; DeLancey 2003).

The suffix -la is also used for beneficiaries (indirect object). Unless it is specific and definite, the inanimate (direct) objects do not receive the accusative case. So, example (44) doesnot receive the accusative.

(43) kho-i   dzhola-ne   ʈã   ʈã   tøn-sa
      he-ERG bag-ABL   money   money   take.out-PST
      'He took out only money from the bag.'

(44) ŋə-i   kho-i   pharwa   tʃa-wa
      I-ERG   he-GEN   cup   break-PST.CJ
      'I broke his cup.'

Dative subjects are used in Tsum. The dative subjects are used with experiencer verbs as shown in (45).

(45) ŋà-la   dʒi
      I-DAT   be.afraid
      'I am afraid.'

The possession in the possessive clause is shown by the dative-marked subject in Tsum. This is common in other Tibetan languages (46-47).

(46)   ŋà-la   pedza   sum   hjop
      I-DAT   book   three   COP
      'I have three books.'

(47)   kho-la   bhiʈu   mep
      he-DAT   child   NEG.COP
      'He has no children.**'**

The suffix -la is used in a number of different languages of the region, and it is also used in written Tibetan as well (see Table 1). Nubri, a close neighbour of Tsum also makes use of the same marker for the same function.

Nubri
(48)   **me**-ki   ɲija-la   tame   suŋ-soŋ
      grandfather-ERG   we-ACC   story   tell-PST.DJ
      'Grandfather told us the story.'

The dative marker -la is found in Kyirong Tibetan (2002:78), in Lowa, Gyalsumdo (Dhakal 2015), in Sherpa (Sherpa 2011:33-34) and Yohlmo (Hari 2010: 26).
6.6 Locative Case
The locative in Tsum is -la. Locative shows the location of time or space. Location of space is shown in (49-50). Also note that the derivational suffix -pa is used to derive nouns from nouns. In example (49), the noun bhøpa 'Tibetan' is derived from bhø 'Tibet'.

(49)   bhø-pa   tʃu-dzø   tʃik   tsum-la   lau-dzuŋ

Tibet-NMLZ   ten-around   around   Tsum-LOC   come-PST.DJ
'Approximately ten Tibetans came in Tsum.'

(50)   tsum-la   ŋimu-la   khjape   me
            Tsum-LOC   afternoon-LOC   cold   COP.NEG
            'It is not cold in Tsum in the afternoon.'

The locative marker is also used with which the speaker does an activity. An example follows. This shows that the person dance following the tune of the song. In the same way, the locative is also used to show the allative function (51-52).

(51)   ŋə-i   tshetuŋ-la   tʃhom
            drum-GEN   tune-LOC   dance
            'Dance with the drumbeat.'

(52)   ŋà   ghotsa-la   tok-po
            I   house-LOC   return-PST.CJ
            'I returned home.'

The emphatic location is expressed with -*laŋ* , or -*lam*. An example follows (53).

(53)   pu-kja   bhø-lam   ɖwa
            boy-PL   Tibet-LOC.EMPH go
            'The boys go right to Tibet (as opposed to other places).'

Some postpositions and adverbs terminate in -*la* in Tsum, and this is common in these langauges, such as *naŋla* 'in', *wala* 'below', *ŋala* 'in front', *tiŋla* 'finally', *hjala* 'above', *mala* 'down', *hwala* 'down', *kolela* 'slowly' among others. Since there is a case syncretism in locative, dative, and accusative, Tsum and other Tibetan varieties share this suffix. Such nouns are called relator nouns.

6.7 Ablative Case
Ablative is marked with -*ni*. The ablative marker shows the source from which something comes. The people's departing point is the village in (54) and the source of information is Nima in (55).

(54)   mi   ghadzin daŋ   hjul-ni   leu-dzuŋ
            man   many   EMPH   village-ABL   come-PST.DJ
            'Many people came from the village.'

(55)   ŋà-i   tsum   ke   nima-ni leu-wa
            I-ERG   Tsum   language   Nima-ABL   learn-PST.CJ
            'I learnt the Tsum language from Nima.'

The ablative is also used to show that the thing is made up of something. In example (56), the clothing is made up of sheep (wool). It is therefore marked with the ablative marker -*ni*.

(56)   ghø   lu-ki   pal-ni   dzwa
            cloth   sheep-GEN   wool-ABL   make

'The clothing (bakhkhu) is made from the wool of sheep.'

There are strikingly similar ablative case form among these languages. For example, the ablative is -*ni* in Nubri, -*ne* in Lowa, -*ne* in Gyalsumdo (2015:21), and Yohlmo (Hari 2010:26) and Sherpa (Sherpa 2011:31). See the ablative case in Written Tibetan (Table 1).

6.8 Allative Case
Allative is marked with -*thu* 'upto'. The allative is generally attached to the inanimate nouns (57).

(57) kho-i   ŋà-la   tʃhorten-thú   ʈhi   pɣ-so
      He-ERG I-DAT   monastery-ALL   lead   go-PST.DJ
      'He led me upto the monastery.

We find similar form in Nubri (58).

(58) ŋà   dhotaŋ   thuk   phin   hin
      I   Philing   upto   go   COP
      'I went upto Philing.'

The allative is also formed with *thu* 'with' in Gyalsumdo (Dhakal 2015:23). It is thus obvious that the allative case form is similar to other languages as well.

6.9 Comitative Case
The comitative postposition in Tsum is *dala* 'with'. The comitative case shows the accompaniment. The verb agrees with the first subject (59-60).

(59) kho   ŋài-dala   dhø-so
      he   I-with sit-PST.DJ
      'He stayed with me.'

(60) **mo**   **dordze**   **dala**   **leu-dzuŋ**
      she   **Dorje with**   **come-PST.DJ**
      'She came with Dorje.'

The comitative case forms in Tsum is *dala* 'with'. Nubri makes use of the different postposition for this, viz. *ɲumu* 'with'.

7. Case Markers of Tsum and Written Tibetan
For a little studied Tibetan language like Tsum, one wonders whether it has retained more conservative case forms, or case forms are evolved and diverged much more from those of Written Tibetan (cf. Bartee 2007), and classical Tibetan (DeLancey 2003). A comparison of the case forms of Tsum with written Tibetan is given in Table 1. The case forms in Tsum are given in the first column, and case roles are listed in the second column. The case forms as they are found in Written Tibetan are given in the third column. Table 1 is taken and adapted from Bartee (2007:259). The Tsum case markers have been added later on.

Table 1: Case markers in Tsum and Written Tibetan
(adapted from Bartee 2007:259).

Tsum	Case roles	Written Tibetan
-i, -gi, -ki	Ergative	gis, kyis, gyis, 'is, yis
	Instrumental	
	Genitive	
0	Absolutive	0
-la	Dative	la, su, ru, tu, du, na, r
	Locative	
-thu	Allative, human	la, su, ru, tu, du,na, r
-la	Objective	la
dala	Comitative	dang

The case forms in Tsum seem to be conservative and do not show much divergence from written Tibetan. For example, it is not surprising to find cognates of the ergative, instrumental and genitive (viz. *-i, -gi, -ki*) in Tsum. We find clear correspondences of these forms with Written Tibetan. The locative case form *-la* in Tsum is also similar to the form found in written Tibetan. As mentioned before, all Tibetan varieties have the locative *-la* in the Himalayan region. Although the comitative postposition *dala* 'with' is slightly different from *daŋ*, it seems plausible that they are obvious cognates. The case forms show strikingly similar forms as they are also discussed in Hill (2011).

8. Summary and Conclusion

This article has presented the inflectional features of nouns in Tsum in an areal-typological perspective. A comparison is made with some adjacently related Tibetan varieties although the data from distantly related languages are also considered. Tsum nouns inflect for gender, number, classifier, case, and emphasis, and definiteness. Tsum has two classifiers, *-po*, and *-kar*, both of which are found in some Tibetic languages of the area. The definiteness marking is common in Tibetan languages, and this function is served by *-de* in Tsum. It is interesting to note that the Tsum retains the case forms which have clear correspondences with Written Tibetan. The case syncretism is found in ergative-instrumental and genitive. Similarly, the case syncretism is also evident between the dative, accusative, and locative. Although a number of Sinospheric languages spoken in Sino-Nepal border are not fully documented and studied, the inflectional suffixes of nouns resemble to other lesser-studied languages of the region. Many of these languages preserve the conservative case forms, and show little divergence from Written Tibetan.

9. Abbreviations

ALL: allative; CLF: classifier; COP: copula; DEF: definiteness; DIM: diminutive; EMPH: emphatic; ERG: ergative; GEN: genitive; INST: instrumental; NEG: negative; NPST: non-past; PL: plural; PROG: progressive; PST: past

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