

Today:

- Based on my original fieldwork on Tibetan, I pursue the hypothesis that *wh-yin.na'ang* FCIs transparently involve the ingredients in (3): a *wh*, copula, conditional, and *even*.
- This motivates a **new approach to the semantics of universal free choice**, which does not stipulate its quantificational force, and leads to a new insight into subtriggering effects.
- ▶ These and similar facts from Dravidian languages and Japanese motivate a novel syntax/semantics for the interpretation of **adverb clauses in argument positions** and their subsequent grammaticalization.

Roadmap §2 Preliminaries • §3 Interpreting • §4 Enforcing • §5 Conclusions and extensions

2 Preliminaries

2.1 *Wh*-quantification (in Tibetan)

I first consider the uses of *wh*-words in Tibetan:

(5) **Tibetan is *wh*-in-situ; no bare *wh* indefinites:**

ཐུགས་སྐོལ་སྲུ་སྐྱེའུ་སོང་པས།

Thugs.spro-la *su* slebs-song(-pas?)
party-DAT who arrive-AUX-Q

'Who came to the party?' / *'Someone came to the party.'

(6) ***Wh*-EVEN NPI:** (see Erlewine and Kotek 2016)

ཐུགས་སྐོལ་སྲུ་ཡང་སྐྱེའུ་མ་སོང།

Thugs.spro-la *su-yang* slebs-*(ma)-song.
party-DAT who-EVEN arrive-NEG-AUX

'No one came to the party.'

I employ the framework for *wh*-quantification in Alternative Semantics in my work in progress; see e.g. Erlewine 2019.

- *Wh*-words have an alternative set ranging over its domain but no ordinary value (Ramchand 1997, Beck 2006, Kotek 2014):

(7) a. $\llbracket su/who \rrbracket^{\circ}$ undefined

b. $\llbracket su/who \rrbracket^{\text{alt}} = \{\text{Tashi, Sonam, Migmar...}\}$

(8) a. $\llbracket \text{TP} \rrbracket^{\circ}$ undefined

b. $\llbracket \text{TP} \rrbracket^{\text{alt}} = \{\wedge^{\wedge} \text{Tashi came...}, \wedge^{\wedge} \text{Sonam came...}, \wedge^{\wedge} \text{Migmar came...}\}$

- Focus particles such as *EVEN* can't compose with (8) because they require a defined ordinary value (the prejacent).

(13) *Wh-yin.na'ang* takes a nominal and a simplex *wh*-word:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>a. ཁ་ལག་ག་རེ་ཡིན་ནའང་
 [(kha.lag) ga.re] yin.na'ang
 food what YIN.NA'ANG
 'any (of the) food'
 lit. 'even if {the food/it} is what'</p> | <p>b. ཕུ་གུ་སུ་ཡིན་ནའང་
 [(phru.gu) su] yin.na'ang
 child who YIN.NA'ANG
 'any child / of the children'
 lit. 'even if {the child/it} is who'</p> |
|--|--|

Wh-yin.na'ang in argument position

Again, the morphology of *yin.na'ang* suggests that *wh-yin.na'ang* is a copular conditional clause, plus EVEN.

- But *wh-yin.na'ang* is in an argument position! This is clear in examples like (14) where *wh-yin.na'ang* takes dative case:

- (14) ཡང་མ་ཕུ་གུ་སུ་ཡིན་ནའང་ལ་སྐད་ཆ་བཤད་གྱི་རེད།
 Pad.ma [(phru.gu) su **yin.na'ang**]=la skad.cha bshad-kyi-red.
 Pema child who YIN.NA'ANG=DAT speech talk-IMPF-AUX
 'Pema talks to **anyone** / **any** child.'

Wh-yin.na'ang is a clausal structure in an argument position which describes that argument; in other words, a *head-internal relative* or *amalgam* (Lakoff 1974; see also Kluck 2011):

- (15) John is going to I think it's Chicago on Saturday. (Lakoff 1974: 324)

...but many approaches to head-internal relatives and amalgams will not apply here, as the embedded clause is a *conditional* clause.

- I adopt the Shimoyama 1999 anaphora approach for (Japanese) head-internal relatives: the clause is interpreted as adjoined to the main clause at LF, with its surface position interpreted as a pronoun.⁵

- (16) a. Literal (14): Pema talks to [even if {*pro*/the child}₇ is who] ⇒
 b. LF: [even if {*pro*/the child}₁'s who], she talks to *them*₁ ⇒
 EVEN [if {*pro*/the child}₁'s who, she talks to *them*₁]

(I discuss the meaning of this coindexation below.)

⁵ Rahul Balusu notes that Hirsch 2016 seems to have independently proposed an analysis much like (16) for the interpretation of English *ever* free relatives. See also LeGrand 1975: 55 for discussion of earlier intuitions relating free choice item descriptions to conditional clauses.

3 Interpreting *wh-yin.na'ang*

I now elaborate on the interpretation of a *wh-yin.na'ang* FCI, staying with (14):

(17) **Unpacking *wh-yin.na'ang* in (14):**

- a. Literal (14): Pema talks to [even if {*pro*/the child} is *who*] \Rightarrow
 b. LF: EVEN [if [ϕ \exists [{*pro*/the child}_{*i*} is who]],
[ψ IMPF [Pema talks to *pro*_{*i*}]]]

I take the nominals *pro* and 'child' a.o. here to take situation variables. I follow the formalization in Elbourne 2013:

(18) [DP [THE [NP child]] s]

(19) $\llbracket \text{THE} \rrbracket = \lambda P_{\langle e, \langle s, t \rangle \rangle} . \lambda s : \exists ! x [P(x)(s)] . \iota x [P(x)(s)]$ (Elbourne 2013: 35)

Note that Tibetan has bare noun definites and no overt definite determiner.

(20) ϕ in (17) with definite description:⁶

- a. $\llbracket \phi \rrbracket^o = \lambda s_s : \exists ! x [x \text{ child in } s]$
 $\quad . \iota x [x \text{ child in } s] = \text{Tashi} \vee \iota x [x \text{ child in } s] = \text{Sonam} \vee \dots$
 b. $\llbracket \phi \rrbracket^{\text{alt}} = \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \lambda s_s : \exists ! x [x \text{ child in } s] . \iota x [x \text{ child in } s] = \text{Tashi}, \\ \lambda s_s : \exists ! x [x \text{ child in } s] . \iota x [x \text{ child in } s] = \text{Sonam}, \dots \end{array} \right\}$

Similarly, I take *pro* be a definite with salient property *P*:

(21) ϕ in (17) with null *pro*:

- a. $\llbracket \phi \rrbracket^o = \lambda s_s : \exists ! x [P(x)(s)]$
 $\quad . \iota x [P(x)(s)] = \text{T} \vee \iota x [P(x)(s)] = \text{S} \vee \dots$
 b. $\llbracket \phi \rrbracket^{\text{alt}} = \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \lambda s_s : \exists ! x [P(x)(s)] . \iota x [P(x)(s)] = \text{Tashi}, \\ \lambda s_s : \exists ! x [P(x)(s)] . \iota x [P(x)(s)] = \text{Sonam}, \dots \end{array} \right\}$

Below, I refer to these definites or *pro* as “THE *P*.” (The coindexation above reflects the reference to the shared property *P*.)

(22) **Final LF for (14):** (revised from (17))
 EVEN [if [ϕ \exists [THE *P* is who]], [ψ IMPF [Pema talks to THE *P*]]]

- I model the habitual imperfective in (22) as a universal quantifier over “characteristic” sub-situations (\leq_{ch}) (Cipria and Roberts 2000, Arregui et al. 2014).

(23) ψ in (22):

$$\begin{aligned} \llbracket \psi \rrbracket^o &= \text{IMPF}_{\text{habitual}} (\llbracket \text{Pema talks to THE } P \rrbracket^o) \\ &= \lambda s_s . \forall s' [s' \leq_{\text{ch}} s \rightarrow \text{Pema talks to THE } P \text{ in } s'] \end{aligned}$$

⁶ I simply model the copula as an equational = here.

- I take the conditional clause to restrict the domain of the modal/temporal quantifier (Lewis 1975, Kratzer 1979, 1986, von Stechow 1994).

(24) “If ϕ , ψ ” in (22):

$$\begin{aligned} \llbracket \text{if } \phi, \psi \rrbracket^o &= \lambda_{s_s} . \forall s' \left[\begin{array}{c} s' \leq_{\text{ch}} s \\ \wedge \llbracket \phi \rrbracket^o(s') \end{array} \rightarrow \begin{array}{c} \text{Pema talks to} \\ \text{THE } P \text{ in } s' \end{array} \right] \\ &= \lambda_{s_s} . \forall s' \left[\begin{array}{c} s' \leq_{\text{ch}} s \wedge \exists !x[P(x)(s')] \\ \wedge \left(\begin{array}{c} \iota x[P(x)(s')] = T \vee \\ \iota x[P(x)(s')] = S \vee \dots \end{array} \right) \rightarrow \begin{array}{c} \text{Pema talks to} \\ \iota x[P(x)(s')] \text{ in } s' \end{array} \right] \end{aligned}$$

“In any and all ‘normal or usual’ sub-parts of the current situation/world with a unique child, Pema talks to that child.”

We derived the expression of universal free choice from the ingredients in *wh-yin.na'ang*: **wh + copula + conditional (+ EVEN)**!

How did this happen?

- **The universal force of the FCI comes from the modal/temporal operator** — here, imperfective — restricted by the conditional.
- The universal force here is not stipulated as in Menéndez-Benito 2005, 2010 or Rawlins 2008a,b, 2013, nor does it need to be derived using a strengthening procedure as in Chierchia 2013 and Szabolcsi 2019.

4 Enforcing universal force

The approach just presented derives \forall -FC, parasitic on a universal modal/temporal operator. This raises two questions:

Q1: What if the conditional restricts a possibility modal?

Q2: What about in episodic descriptions? In necessity statements?

- **EVEN ensures that the conditional in *wh-yin.na'ang* must restrict a universal modal/temporal operator.**

The role of EVEN

Consider the denotation of “if ϕ , ψ ” for example (14) above and its alternatives:

(25) “If ϕ , ψ ” for (14), schematically:

$$\text{a. } \llbracket \text{if } \phi, \psi \rrbracket^o = \lambda_{s_s} . \forall s' \left[\dots \wedge \left(\begin{array}{c} \iota x[P(x)(s')] = \text{Tashi} \vee \\ \iota x[P(x)(s')] = \text{Sonam} \vee \dots \end{array} \right) \rightarrow \dots \right]$$

“In any and all ‘normal or usual’ sub-situations with a unique child, Pema talks to that child.”

$$b. \llbracket \text{if } \phi, \psi \rrbracket^{\text{alt}} = \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \lambda s_s . \forall s' [\dots \wedge \iota x [P(x)(s')] = \text{Tashi} \rightarrow \dots], \\ \lambda s_s . \forall s' [\dots \wedge \iota x [P(x)(s')] = \text{Sonam} \rightarrow \dots], \dots \end{array} \right\}$$

“In any and all ‘normal or usual’ sub-situations with a unique child who is Tashi/Sonam/..., Pema talks to that child.”

- Notice that $\llbracket \text{if } \phi, \psi \rrbracket^{\circ}$ in (25a) asymmetrically entails each alternative in $\llbracket \text{if } \phi, \psi \rrbracket^{\text{alt}}$ (25b). **EVEN** [if ϕ, ψ] then introduces a satisfiable (trivial) scalar inference.

Wh-yin.na'ang with a possibility modal

(26) “If ϕ, ψ ” with ϕ restricting a possibility modal in ψ :

$$a. \llbracket \text{if } \phi, \psi \rrbracket^{\circ} = \lambda w_s . \boxed{\exists w'} \left[\dots \wedge \left(\begin{array}{l} \iota x [P(x)(w')] = \text{Tashi} \vee \\ \iota x [P(x)(w')] = \text{Sonam} \vee \dots \end{array} \right) \wedge \dots \right]$$

“There is an accessible world with a unique child where Pema talks to that child.”

$$b. \llbracket \text{if } \phi, \psi \rrbracket^{\text{alt}} = \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \lambda w_s . \boxed{\exists w'} [\dots \wedge \iota x [P(x)(w')] = \text{Tashi} \wedge \dots], \\ \lambda w_s . \boxed{\exists w'} [\dots \wedge \iota x [P(x)(w')] = \text{Sonam} \wedge \dots], \dots \end{array} \right\}$$

“There is an accessible world with a unique child who is Tashi/Sonam/..., where Pema talks to that child.”

- Here each alternative in (26b) is logically stronger than the prejacent. **EVEN will lead to an unsatisfiable presupposition!** This blocks the *wh-yin.na'ang* FCI from involving a conditional restricting a possibility modal, in a method similar to ensuring negative polarity dependency with **EVEN** as in Lahiri 1998.

Wh-yin.na'ang FCIs do (unsurprisingly) cooccur with possibility modals, though:

(27) *Wh-yin.na'ang* FCI with deontic possibility modal:

ངའི་བྱི་ཁལ་ག་རེ་ཡིན་ནའང་བཟོག་གི་རེད།

Nga-'i khyi [(kha.lag) ga.re yin.na'ang] za-**chog**-gi-red.

1sg-GEN dog food what YIN.NA'ANG eat-ALLOWED-IMPF-AUX

‘My dog is allowed to eat anything / any food.’

- In such cases, I propose that the conditional in *wh-yin.na'ang* must be associated with the imperfective aspect *-gi-*, leading to universal quantification scoping over the deontic possibility modal: $\forall > \text{ALLOWED}$.

Episodic descriptions

(28) *Wh-yin.na'ang* is ungrammatical in episodic descriptions:

*བྱ་ཤིས་ད་ལྟ་ཁལ་ག་རེ་ཡིན་ནའང་བཟོག་ཆོར་སོད།

bKra.shis da.lta [(kha.lag) ga.re yin.na'ang] bzas-tshar-song.

Tashi now food what YIN.NA'ANG eat-finish-AUX

Intended: \approx ‘Tashi finished eating **any** food right now.’

Episodic descriptions claim the existence of a particular event: here, that there was completion of eating, in the past halo of ‘now.’

- ▶ There is no modal/temporal operator which supplies universal force and thus the preja-cent will not be less likely than its alternatives, so *EVEN* cannot be satisfied. (There may be a high covert necessity modal, which is insufficiently granular...)

On subtriggering

The current analysis may suggest the availability of *wh-yin.na’ang* in statements with necessity modals, contrary to fact:

(29) *Wh-yin.na’ang* marked in necessity statements:

?? བྱེད་རང་སློན་ག་རེ་ཡིན་ནའང་ཟ་དགོས་རེད།

Khyed.rang [sman ga.re yin.na’ang] za-**dgos**-red.
2sg medicine what YIN.NA’ANG eat-must-AUX

Intended: ≈ ‘You **must** take *any* medicine.’

- ▶ I suggest that the deontic necessity modal as in (29) does quantify over situations/worlds that are granular enough to allow restriction by the uniqueness presupposition of the definite:

(30) Impossible LF for (29):

EVEN [if [ϕ \exists [THE P is what]], [ψ *MUST* [you eat THE P]]]

Notably, *wh-yin.na’ang* in necessity statements are improved by further modification, e.g. *sub-triggering* (LeGrand 1975):

(31) *Wh-yin.na’ang* improved with subtriggering:

བྱེད་རང་སློན་པ་སྤྲད་པའི་སློན་ག་རེ་ཡིན་ནའང་ཟ་དགོས་རེད།

[[_{RC} sman.pa sprad-pa-’i] sman ga.re yin.na’ang] za-**dgos**-red.
doctor give-REL-GEN medicine what YIN.NA’ANG eat-must-AUX

‘[You] **must** take *any* medicine [that the doctor gives [you]].’

I suggest that, here, an alternate source exists:

(32) Alternate LF with indefinite specificational subject:

EVEN [if [ϕ \exists [A P is what]], [ψ *MUST* [you eat THE P]]]

We know that indefinite specificational subjects are marked unless they have what Comorovski (2007) calls “indirect contextual anchoring”; see also Mikkelsen 2005: ch. 8 and Milway 2020:

- (33) a. *A doctor is John. (Heycock and Kroch 1999: 379)
b. ✓One person who might help you is Mary. (Higgins 1973: 270)

- ▶ I pursue the possibility that “subtriggering” is a reflection of this anchoring requirement on indefinite specificational subjects.

Summary and theoretical implication:

► **A new approach to universal free choice:**

- parasitic on an existing universal/necessity operator via the conditional,
- enforced by the logical properties of *EVEN*,
- interpreting an adjunct (conditional) clause in an argument position, inspired by Shimoyama’s approach to head-internal relative clauses.

See also its further formalization in Erlewine 2020b.

5 Conclusion and extensions

Here I investigated the syntax/semantics of universal FCIs in Tibetan.

► **∀-FCIs can be derived from these ingredients:**

(3)	ཡིན་	ན་	ཡང་
	WH + yin	+ na	+ yang
	COPULA	CONDITIONAL	EVEN

Cross-constructural and cross-linguistic support:

The expression *yin.na’ang* ཡིན་ན་འང་ has two other uses:

(34) **Counterexpectational discourse particle ‘however’:**

བཟུ་ཤིས་དགེ་ཆེན་རེད། ཡིན་ན་འང་སྤང་པོ་མི་འདུག།

bKra.shis dge-rgan red. **Yin.na’ang** spyang.po mi-’dug.
Tashi teacher COP YIN.NA’ANG clever NEG-AUX

‘Tashi is a teacher. **However**, [he] isn’t smart.’

(35) **Concessive scalar focus particle:**

དེབ་གཅིག་ཡིན་ན་འང་ལྷོག་ན་ཡིག་ཚད་མཐར་འཁྲུལ་གྱི་རེད།

[Dep [gcig]_F **yin.na’ang** klog-na] yig.tshad mthar.’khyol-kyi-red.
book one YIN.NA’ANG read-COND exam succeed-IMPF-AUX

≈ ‘[If [you] read **even/at least** [one]_F book], [you] will pass the exam.’

Tibetan *yin.na’ang* has three functions:

1. *Yin.na’ang* counterexpectational discourse particle
2. *X yin.na’ang* concessive scalar focus particle
3. *wh yin.na’ang* universal free choice item

► All three uses can be derived compositionally from its ingredients:

- (3) ཡིན་ ན་ ཡང་
 yin + na + yang
 COPULA CONDITIONAL EVEN

See Erlewine 2020a for further discussion and analysis.

Extensions:

- If this is really derived from the independent conventional semantics for the copula, conditional, and *even*, we might expect similar expressions in other languages.

Balusu (2019, 2020) shows this to be true in a range of Dravidian languages!

For example, Telugu *ai-naa* = COP-EVEN.IF has three functions:

1. *Ai-naa* counterexpectational discourse particle
2. *X ai-naa* concessive scalar focus particle
3. *wh ai-naa* universal/existential free choice item

! But there are subtle differences! For example, Telugu *wh ai-naa* also allows \exists -FCI ('somebody or other') readings. See Balusu 2019, 2020.

Japanese *demo* has three functions:

1. *Demo* counterexpectational discourse particle
2. *X demo* concessive scalar focus particle / 'for example'
3. *wh demo* universal free choice item

See the handout's Appendix for some data and one particularly striking parallel between Tibetan *yin.na'ang* and Japanese *demo*.

! But there is a subtle difference! *Demo* has a 'for example' use (Watanabe 2013). See Appendix in handout.

A complication is that Japanese *demo* may not be a synchronically productive combination of copula, conditional, and *even*.

- Hiraiwa and Nakanishi (2021) propose that the Japanese surface form *demo* is a conventionalized contraction of *dear-te-mo*, which is transparently COP-COND-EVEN. But the proposed contraction is not a productive process. (But see also Oda 2021 for another view.)
- The success of the decomposition for Tibetan *yin.na'ang* — from its ingredients, COPULA + CONDITIONAL + EVEN — is valuable for understanding this class of expressions, **both synchronically productive and not:**
 - We might find other cases where the morphology and semantics are quite transparent (Dravidian?)
 - and for others, it offers an explanation for *why* a language bundles such meanings together, even if its morphology is now calcified (Japanese).

ཐུགས་རྗེ་ཚེ། *Thank you!*

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Appendix: Japanese *demo*

- (36) **Counterexpectational discourse particle ‘however’:** ≅ (34)
 Tashi-wa se-ga takai. **Demo** atama-wa yoku-nai.
 Tashi-TOP height-NOM high DEMO head-TOP good-NEG
 ‘Tashi’s tall. **However**, [he] isn’t smart.’
- (37) **Concessive scalar focus particle:** ≅ (35)
Context: Don’t worry, the test is easy.
 [Hon-o [is-satsu / ??san-satsu]_F **demo** yom-eba]
 book-ACC one-CL three-CL DEMO read-COND
 shiken-ni gookaku su-ru (yo).
 exam-DAT pass do-NONPAST YO
 ≈ ‘[If [you] read **even just** one book], [you] will pass the exam.’
- (38) **Wh universal free choice item:** ≅ (14)
Context: Pema is very friendly.
 Kanojo-wa [**dare-to demo**] hana-su.
 she-TOP who-DAT DEMO talk-NONPAST
 ‘She talks to **anyone**.’

A fascinating parallel between Japanese and Tibetan *wh*-FCI:

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| <p>(39) <i>Dou</i> is manner ‘how’:
Chibetto-ni dou ik-u-no?
Tibet-DAT how GO-NONPAST-Q
‘How will you go to Tibet?’</p> | <p>(40) བོད་ལ་གང་འདྲ་འགོ་ཡ་ཡིན།
Bod-la gang.’dra ‘gro-ya-yin?
Tibet-DAT how GO-FUT-AUX
‘How will you go to Tibet?’</p> |
| <p>(41) <i>Dou-demo</i> can’t be used for ‘any way’:
*Dou-demo ik-u (yo).
how-DEMO GO-NONPAST YO
Intended: ≈ ‘I will go however/in any way.’</p> | <p>(42) *གང་འདྲ་ཡིན་ནའང་འགོ་ཡ་ཡིན།
Gang.’dra yin.na’ang ‘gro-ya-yin.
how GO-FUT-AUX GO-FUT-AUX
Intended: ≈ ‘I will go however/in any way.’</p> |
| <p>(43) <i>But dou-demo</i> can express strong in-difference:
Dou-demo ii (yo).
how-DEMO good YO
‘Anything is fine.’ (I don’t care / That doesn’t matter)</p> | <p>(44) གང་འདྲ་ཡིན་ནའང་འགྲིག་གི་རེད།
Gang.’dra yin.na’ang ‘grig-gi-red.
how GO-FUT-AUX alright-IMPF-AUX
‘Anything is fine.’
(Speaker comment: ‘I don’t care.’)</p> |

However, Japanese *demo* as a focus particle has a ‘for example’ use that Tibetan *yin.na’ang* lacks:

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| <p>(45) Teramura 1991 in Watanabe 2013: 207:
John-ni-demo kik-ou.
John-DAT-DEMO ask-HORT
‘Let’s ask John, for example.’</p> | <p>(46) *བཀྲ་ཤིས་ཡིན་ནའང་ལ་འདྲི་གོ།
bKra.shis-yin.na’ang-la ‘dri-go.
Tashi-YIN.NA’ANG-DAT ask-HORT
literally ‘Let’s ask <i>yin.na’ang</i> Tashi.’</p> |
| <p>(47) Watanabe 2013: 208:
Kaze-demo hii-ta-no?
cold-DEMO catch-PAST-Q
‘Did you catch a cold, for example?’</p> | <p>(48) *ཁྱེད་རང་ཚམ་པ་ཡིན་ནའང་བརྒྱབ་འདུག་གས།
Khyed.rang cham.pa yin.na’ang
you cold YIN.NA’ANG
brgyab-’dug-gas?
build-AUX-Q
literally ‘Did you catch <i>yin.na’ang</i> a cold?’</p> |
| <p>(49) Ocha-demo nomi-masu-ka?
tea-DEMO drink-POLITE-Q
‘Would you like to get tea, for example?’</p> | <p>(50) *ཁྱེད་རང་ཡིན་ནའང་འཇུང་ཡ་ཡིན་པས།
Khyed.rang cha yin.na’ang
you tea YIN.NA’ANG
’thung-ya-yin-pas?
dring-FUT-AUX-Q
literally ‘Will you drink <i>yin.na’ang</i> tea?’</p> |