

## **Where is a negative marker? A geolinguistic approach towards a grammaticalisation process in Khams Tibetan**

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Generally, Tibetic languages (a.k.a. Tibetan; Tibeto-Burman) have two negative prefixes: *mi* and *ma*. However, many varieties spoken in the southern Khams area, i.e., in the northwestern part of Yunnan Province, China, have more one morpheme as a negative prefix: /ka/. The authors primarily make a hypothesis that this form is derived from an interrogative word, spelt as *ga*, *gar*, or *gang*, denoting ‘where,’ which became a negative prefix through grammaticalisation. Its process might probably have had a construction of a rhetorical question.

The principal discussion in this paper is regarding the dialectal difference regarding the frequency of use of /ka/-prefix. The authors will first draw a linguistic map of the southern Khams area including more than 130 dialect points collected by fieldworks, highlighting four levels: (1) /ka/ appears before almost all verbs; (2) /ka/ appears before a limited number of stative verbs; (3) /ka/ appears as a fossilised verb predicate; (4) /ka/ never appears as a prefix.

(1) are distributed in the administrative centre of Diqing Prefecture, which is the border area with other language area such as Naxi, Yi, and Lisu as well as Chinese; from this area, it forms a concentric circle with dialects with other levels, and the farther they are from Diqing, the less they use /ka/.

This phenomenon suggests that /ka/ might have spreaded from Diqing, in which dialects has completely grammaticalised /ka/ as a prefix, and gradually influenced other dialects following the geographical continuity. The grammaticalisation of an interrogative word might have been triggered as a language contact because local Chinese often uses this type of negation; additionally, local Tibetic languages possess common lexical features, which could boost the grammaticalisation of this morpheme.