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Asymmetrical Negation in Bumthang

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Abstract

Less inflectional categories are found in negated clauses than are found in affirmative clauses in Bumthang, a Tibeto-Burman language of Bhutan. It is common cross-linguistically for languages to make fewer contrasts in negative clauses than in affirmative ones. In this paper we focus on the less expected appearance of the ergative case in certain negated irrealis clauses, where the use of this case would be ungrammatical in the corresponding affirmative clauses. We sketch the aspectual and case-marking systems of the language, and then present data exemplifying the interaction of case, aspect and polarity, including the use of the ergative with arguments of monovalent verbs in negated irrealis clauses. We conclude by offering an account for the behaviour observed in terms of the pragmatics of implicature.

Keywords

negation, symmetry, asymmetry, ergativity, case, Bumthang, Bhutan, differential subject marking, Tibeto-Burman, East Bodish

Asymmetrical negation in Bumthang[*]

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1 Introduction: asymmetries in negated clauses

This paper describes asymmetries in the use of TAME (tense-aspect-mood-evidentiality) affixes in Bumthang, and the realignment of case marking that occurs in standard negation. We discuss the ways in which negated clauses resemble affirmative clauses with the addition of a negative prefix on the verb, and the ways in which examining the clause as a whole reveals that they are not so symmetrical. Asymmetries in negation are not unusual (Miestamo 2005), but the patterns we present here, involving a use of the ergative case that is quite separate from the patterns found in affirmative clauses, have not been previously reported, and so serve as a valuable addition to typological knowledge.

Studies of standard negation (where negation is defined as changing the truth value of a proposition p to ¬p ('not p'); Payne 1985; Miestamo 2005, amongst others) investigate cross-linguistic variation in the formal means by which declarative verbal main clauses are negated. While in some languages the only formal change involves the addition of a marker of negation (symmetrical negation), Miestamo (2005) exhaustively details the ways in which the negation of a proposition can involve additional change in the clause (asymmetrical negation). Asymmetries in negation can be classified according to the type of structural difference exhibited: paradigmatic asymmetry covers situations in which there is not a one-to-one correspondence between the cells in the affirmative and negative paradigms, while constructional asymmetry refers to situations in which the negated clauses involves the addition or fusion of morphosyntactic elements that were not found in the affirmative (Miestamo 2005: 52).

We focus in this article on paradigmatic asymmetries relating to the encoding of TAME categories. The existence of paradigmatic asymmetries in TAME encoding is not surprising. For

example, aspect is concerned with the internal nature of the event in time, as opposed to where it is situated in time from an external perspective (which is the domain of tense).

After presenting an overview of negation-triggered asymmetries in TAME systems, in section 2 we will describe the basics of Bumthang morphosyntax as relevant for an understanding of this paper, and then continue with a more detailed examination of TAME in Bumthang. The discussion of negation begins in 3.2, where the forms of the negative morphemes, and how they interact with TAME marking on the verb, are presented. In 3.3 we show the ways in which case marking in negative clauses is distributed differently from positive clauses, and offer an explanation for these typologically marked patterns in terms of the pragmatics of implicature in irrealis speech acts.

2 Asymmetrical negation and TAME

Aspect coding can include information about the inception of the event, and can include information about the completion of the event. In a clause with a negated predicate, however, there is no possibility of an inception for that predicate, or a completion of the state or event (or both). Similarly, since tense describes when a state or event takes place, in absolute relation to a reference point in time, it is a less salient contrast to make when an event is negated, since that state or event as described does not take place at any point in the timeline. We shall begin by presenting a few examples of the neutralisation of TAME category contrasts under negation from a brief survey of languages.[1]

Urama (Kiwai; Papua New Guinea) makes a six-way distinction of tense: present and immediate past, near past, intermediate past, distant past, near future, and distant future; has obligatory person marking on verbs, and marks contrasts in evidentiality. In negated clauses, however, the tense system is reduced to non-future versus future, person marking is omitted, and there is no contrast in evidentiality (Craig 2014, Brown et al. 2016). In (1a), we see person and evidentiality overtly marked on the verb, while in (1b), the negative counterpart of (1a), there is no person marking and haka is the only inflected form, marking non-future tense (data from Craig 2014).[2]

> **Urama**
(1a) *Mo   ai-n-omoa=ka.*
       1SG   CERT-1-fall=EVID
       'I (just) fell.' (present/immediate past)

> **Urama**
(1b) *Mo   omoa-i   haka.*
       1SG   fall-DEF   NEG.NFUT
       'I didn't (just) fall.' (non-future)

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[1] Urama, Bukiyip, Maung and Ladakhi data are presented as shown in the original sources, with the addition of capitalisation to the Maung and Ladakhi examples.

[2] Note that Urama also exhibits constructional asymmetry in addition to paradigmatic asymmetry with the use of a negative auxiliary.

Bukiyip (Torricelli; Papua New Guinea) obligatorily marks a realis-irrealis distinction in main clauses (2a) – (2b) (Conrad and Wogiga 1991:15). When these clauses are negated by a bipartite particle, the only grammatical inflection involves the irrealis (2c). This means that negation forces a collapse of the two-way mood contrast in negative clauses to a system with inflection, but no contrasts.

Bukiyip
(2a)   *N-a-nak.*
       he-REAL-go
       'He went.'

Bukiyip
(2b)   *N-ú-nak.*
       he-IRR-go
       'He will go.'

Bukiyip
(2c)   *Wo   n-ú-nak   e.*
       NEG   he-IRR-go   NEG
       'He won't/didn't go.'

In Maung (Iwaidjan; Australia), affirmative clauses make a three-way TAM distinction between an unmarked realis (3a), future tense (3b) and irrealis (3c). This three-way distinction collapses in negation, with irrealis being the sole possible TAM category marked, as seen in (3d) (data from Capell and Hinch 1970; see also Singer 2006).

Maung
(3a)   *ŋi-udba.*
       1SG>3-put
       'I put (it).'

Maung
(3b)   *ŋi-wan-udba.*
       1SG>3-FUT-put
       'I shall put (it).'

Maung
(3c)   *ŋi-udba-ji.*
       1SG>3-put-IRR
       'I can put (it).'

Maung
(3d)   *Marig   ŋi-udba-ji.*
       NEG   1SG>3-put-IRR
       'I do not/will not/cannot put (it).'

The use of irrealis in negative clauses in Maung and Arapesh is not surprising, given the nature of both irrealis mood and negative polarity. Irrealis mood is (by definition) used for coding unrealised events, whether they are hypothetical or future intentions, and negation takes away the possibility of events being realised. For these languages, negated propositions are by nature 'unrealised', and irrealis mood is obligatorily used.

We also see TAME systems in which evidentiality distinctions are neutralised in the negative. In Mỹky (isolate; South America), verbs mark for evidentiality in two of 11 suffixal slots. Indirect evidentiality is optionally encoded in slot 4, and a set of portmanteau subject suffixes in slot 7 encode visual/nonvisual evidentiality for second (and third in paradigm II) person subjects in declarative clauses. As negation is also realised in slot 4, it forms one system with the indirect evidential suffixes in the same slot. Furthermore, the visual/nonvisual subset of suffixes in slot 7 appear to be incompatible with slot 4 suffixes, leading to the loss of all evidentiality distinctions in negated clauses (Monserrat and Dixon 2003).

Paradigmatic asymmetries in negation relating to TAME are not restricted to neutralisation of categorical distinctions. Ladakhi (Tibetic, Tibeto-Burman; north west India) maintains the distinction between future and perfective through the use of different negative prefixes despite the loss of suffixal TAME marking. The future auxiliary *-yin* in (4a) and perfective suffix *-s* in (4c) correspond to the negative prefixes *mi-* (4b) and *mə-* (4d), respectively (data from Koshal 1979).

Ladakhi

(4a) | *ŋe* | *thore* | *əbəə* | *yige* | *ɖi-yin.* |
|------|---------|--------|--------|-----------|
| 1SG.ERG | tomorrow | father.DAT | letter.ABS | write-AUX |

'I will write a letter to (my) father tomorrow.'

Ladakhi

(4b) | *ŋe* | *thore* | *əbəə* | *yige* | *mi-ɖi.* |
|------|---------|--------|--------|----------|
| 1SG.ERG | tomorrow | father.DAT | letter.ABS | NEG1-write |

'I will not write a letter to (my) father tomorrow.'

Ladakhi

(4c) | *Miyi* | *ʂpečhə* | *ɖi-s.* |
|--------|----------|---------|
| man.ERG | book.ABS | write-PFV |

'The man wrote the book.'

Ladakhi

(4d) | *Miyi* | *ʂpečhə* | *mə-ɖi.* |
|--------|----------|----------|
| man.ERG | book.ABS | NEG2-write |

'The man did not write the book.'

The languages presented in this section all exhibit paradigmatic asymmetries in negation. Urama shows a massive reduction in tense marking possibilities and a neutralisation of person marking and evidentiality in negated clauses. Bukiyip and Maung both indicate an absolute preference for irrealis in the negative. In Mỹky, the negation markers compete with indirect evidentials, leading to a neutralisation of evidentiality in the negative. Negated future and perfective

are expressed using negative prefixes instead of the regular affirmative suffixes in Ladakhi. These examples show that negation can interacts, and affect, systems of tense, aspect, mood or evidentiality in a wide selection of languages.

3 Bumthang

Bumthang is a Tibeto-Burman language of north-central Bhutan, spoken by approximately 30,000 people (van Driem 2015; additional earlier work on Bumthang includes Michailovsky and Mazaudon 1994). Typologically, Bumthang has a flexible SOV word order, which is dependent on pragmatics (Donohue and Donohue 2016). Examples illustrating word order and case marking choices in basic sentences in Bumthang, taken from the Ura dialect, are given in (5) – (8).[3]

Monovalent clause

(5)   *Utui*   *jauya*   *khwé-gang-é*   *ha-ning*   *ling-za.*
     IMM.DIST   bird   water-watercourse-GEN   vicinity-ABL   fly-IPFV
     'Those birds are flying from the river.'

Bivalent clause

(6)   *Ama-i*   *zama*   *thapsang-nang-ó*   *kher-za.*
     mother-ERG   food   kitchen-inside-ALL   make-IPFV
     'Mother is cooking food in the kitchen.'

Preposed topic

(7)   *Zama*   *khatsa*   *nak-khan,*   *gon-i*   *kher.*
     food   spicy   COP-REL   3SG-ERG   make:IMPERS.IRR
     'Spicy food, she (always) makes.'

Postposed antitopic

(8a)   *Gonegi*   *thong-na*   *suja-dé.*
     3PL.ERG   drink-IMPERS.PFV   butter.tea-DEF
     'They drank it, the butter tea.'

(8b)   *Ngii*   *thong(-s)*   *suja-dé.*
     1PL.ERG   drink-PERS.PFV   butter.tea-DEF
     'We drank it, the butter tea.'

(8c)   *Suja-dé*   *thong-na*   *ama-i.*
     butter.tea-DEF   drink-IMPERS.PFV   mother-ERG
     '(She) drank the butter tea, Mother (did).'

In addition to showing preferences in word order, examples (6) – (8) illustrate the use of ergative case on the A arguments (as opposed to unmarked Ss and Ps), and the variation in inflection

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[3] Data was collected from 2013 – 2017, in Canberra (Australia), and in both Thimphu and Ura (Bhutan).

on the verb. Verbs do not inflect for agreement or tense, but are suffixed for aspect and what we are calling a 'personal/impersonal' contrast,[4] which is used to show a range of contrasts similar to those described in research on evidentiality, egophoricity, and conjunct/disjunct systems.

We will first detail the TAME system found on Bumthang verbs, before moving to an investigation of how negation is encoded in this section. We will then look at the distribution of ergative case marking in negated clauses and provide an explanation for the observed patterns.

3.1 TAME in Bumthang

The paradigm of TAME suffixation on Bumthang verbs, showing both aspect/mood and personal/impersonal contrasts, is shown in Table 1 (additional aspectual contrasts are formed using complex predicates).[5] In addition to the segmental material, there are also particular tonal melodies associated with each inflectional cell. These melodies combine with the melody of the root, or else override the melody of the root. We can see that while Table 1 contains cells for the personal and impersonal inflection in all three aspect/mood categories, there is no personal/impersonal contrast in the imperfective; consequently, the imperfective will not be split in subsequent tables.[6]

Category	Morphology
Irrealis, impersonal	V
Irrealis, personal	V-*sang*
Imperfective, impersonal	V-*za*
Imperfective, personal	V-*za*
Perfective, impersonal	V-*na*
Perfective, personal	V-*s*

Table 1. Core TAME inflectional categories on verbs.

Aspect and mood form a three-way contrast distinguishing stages of inception or completion of an event, which is then mediated for personal involvement with the proposition. Examples (9a) – (9c) show the compatibility of different aspect-mood categories with a range of temporal expressions. Although *-na* is only compatible with *dema* 'yesterday', and not *yamba* 'tomorrow' or *dara* 'now' (9a), data which might be used to argue that *-na* is a (past) tense marker, we find that *-za* is compatible with any of *yamba*, *dema* and *dara* (9b). In (9c) we see that *-sang* is most felicitous with *yamba*, but can occur with *dara* (note that a felicitous reading of the use of *dara* 'now' with an irrealis-marked

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[4] Yliniemi (2017) uses the terms personal/neutral to refer to the same contrast; other authors describing this egophoric/non-egophoric contrast use the terms conjunct/disjunct (Hale 1980, Hargreaves 1991). We have used 'personal/impersonal' because we find that in Bumthang there is a separate 'neutral' suffix, *-mo* (not discussed here) which can be used when the speaker does not commit to an egophoric stance. The suffix *-mo* does not allow the inflectional possibilities seen in Table 1.

[5] Other peculiarities of verbal phonology include an absolute preference for monosyllabic roots (compared to a tendency towards disyllabicity in nominals, and trisyllabicity in adjectives), the possibility (under inflection) of CCC onsets (otherwise not permitted in the language), and limited vowel harmony operating between the root and certain suffixes.

[6] The closely related language Khengkha maintains a personal/impersonal contrast in the imperfective, with the suffixes *-lo* 'IMPERS.IPFV' and *-za* 'PERS.IPFV'.

verb would be a situation where an event is about to occur, rather than a situation where it is occurring at the present moment). There is no one-to-one correspondence with the use of any particular temporal reference and any particular TAME category, which would be expected for a tense system.[7]

(9a) *Gon   * yamba / dema / * dara   krong-ning   ra-na.*
       3SG   tomorrow / yesterday / now   village-ABL   come-IMPERS.PFV
       'She came from the village * tomorrow / yesterday / * now.'

(9b) *Gon   yamba / dema / dara   krong-ning   ra-za.*
       3SG   tomorrow / yesterday / now   village-ABL   come-IPFV
       'She will be / was / is coming from the village tomorrow / yesterday / now.'

(9c) *Gon   yamba / * dema / ? dara   krong-ning   ra-sang.*
       3SG   tomorrow / yesterday / now   village-ABL   come-PERS.IRR
       'She will come from the village tomorrow / * yesterday / ? now.'

The perfective and imperfective categories can be further disambiguated by investigating their interaction with telicity. We see in (10a) – (10b) that *bae* 'cough' is compatible with both perfective and imperfective aspect, with different interpretations (the only reading of (10b) is as an atelic event, involving a series of coughs). However, a telic interpretation of *bae* 'cough' is only felicitous when the clause is perfective (10c). The imperfective suffix is not grammatical with an explicitly telic interpretation (10d). See Wyatt (2017) for further discussion.

(10a) *Gon   bae-na.*
        3SG   cough-IMPERS.PFV
        'She coughed.'

(10b) *Gon   bae-za.*
        3SG   cough-IPFV
        'She's coughing.'

(10c) *Gon   rap   thék   bae-na.*
        3SG   time   one   cough-IMPERS.PFV
        'She coughed once.'

(10d) * gon   rap   thék   bae-za
        3SG   time   one   cough-IPFV
        'She's coughing once.'

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[7] As perfective aspect encodes endpoints of events, its use on a main clause verb necessitates that the action happened in the past. However, the reverse is not true: we see in (9b) that imperfective verbs can be used with past time reference. The imperfective affix simply encodes the ongoing nature of an event, regardless when it happens. Irrealis suffixes encode neither the inception nor the completion of an event, as evidenced by its non-compatibility with past temporal markers and its semi-compatibility with present temporal markers in (9c).

The second dimension of TAME marking in the main clause paradigm is a personal/impersonal contrast. This egophoric distinction encodes a speaker's personal involvement with an event or proposition (or lack thereof). Examples of the use of the impersonal and personal suffixes can be seen in (9d) (based on (9a)) and (9e). In (9d), the impersonal is used in a statement about an event in which the speaker was not necessarily involved, or did not personally witness. In (9e), the involvement of the speaker requires that the personal perfective suffix is used on the verb. This inflectional choice is also available when reporting an event with a second or third person participant. For example, if there was more personal involvement in (9d) – for instance, if the speaker had accompanied the subject – then *Gon dema krongning ras* would be appropriate, with the personal perfective. On the other hand, there are few contexts in which *?ngat dema krongning rana*, using impersonal forms with a 1SG subject, would be acceptable.

(9d) *Gon*   *dema*   *krong-ning*   *ra-na.*
      3SG   yesterday   village-ABL   come-IMPERS.PFV
      'She came from the village yesterday.'

(9e) *Ngat*   *dema*   *krong-ning*   *ra-s.*
      3SG   yesterday   village-ABL   come-PERS.PFV
      'I came from the village yesterday.'

3.2 Verbal negation

Negation in Bumthang is marked by a prefix on the main verb. There are two prefixes, *mé-* and *ma-*, which we gloss with 'NEG1' and 'NEG2' respectively. The prefixes contrast in terms of TAME specification. The prefix *mé-* 'NEG1' undergoes partial vowel harmony. The negation markers are the only prefixes found in Bumthang, with all other affixation being suffixal.

Bivalent clauses do not exhibit any changes in argument marking when negated. The only change between (6) (repeated below) and (11) is the addition of the negative prefix *mé-* 'NEG1' on the verb in (11). We can also see that, apart from the addition of the prefix, (11) is identical to (6) in terms of verbal morphology, and so the affirmative-negative pair shows a symmetrical pattern of negation.

      Simple negation: bivalent verb
(6)   *Ama-i*   *zama*   *thapsang-nang-ó*   *kher-za.*
      mother-ERG   food   kitchen-inside-ALL   make-IPFV
      'Mother is cooking food in the kitchen.'

(11) *Ama-i*   *zama*   *thapsang-nang-ó*   *mé-kher-za.*
      mother-ERG   food   kitchen-inside-ALL   NEG1-make-IPFV
      'Mother is not cooking food in the kitchen.'

Not all affirmative-negative pairs are symmetrical; after examining other pairs we observe that there are fewer inflectional contrasts available in negated clauses. In (12b), the negative counterpart of (12a), we can see that the addition of *ma-* 'NEG2', which is the only negative prefix

compatible with perfective events, cooccurs with a difference in TAM suffixing, with *-za* rather than *-na* being used (note that, as set out in Table 1, the suffix *-za* in affirmative clauses marks the imperfective, not the perfective). Attempting to negate (12a) symmetrically, with only the addition of the negative prefix, results in the ungrammatical (12c). The contrasts that are possible in negated clauses are shown in full in Table 2.

Affirmative

(12a)　*Ama-i*　　　*zama*　*kher-na.*
　　　　mother-ERG　　food　make-IMPERS.PFV
　　　　'Mother cooked food.'

Negative

(12b)　*Ama-i*　　　*zama*　*ma-kher-za.*
　　　　mother-ERG　　food　NEG2-make-IPFV
　　　　'Mother didn't cook food.'

(12c)　* *ama-i*　　　*zama*　*ma-kher-na*
　　　　mother-ERG　　food　NEG2-make-IMPERS.PFV
　　　　'Mother didn't cook food.'

Example (12b) involves a verb formally marked with the imperfective affix, but which is interpreted as perfective. The distinction between impersonal perfective and imperfective aspect is maintained in negative clauses, but the formal contrast is displaced from the suffix to the choice of prefix. As we can see by comparing (12b) and (11), the choice of negative prefixes on the verb correlates with the perfective/imperfective aspectual distinction, despite the verbs in both clauses having the same imperfective suffix. In this way the aspectual contrasts are maintained, even though the suffixes do not perform this function on their own.

Some inflectional distinctions are neutralised in the negative. (13a) and (13b) show the use of the two different irrealis choices in Bumthang, with only (13a) being segmentally indicated. The impersonal form is not compatible with a first person participant, as shown in (13c) (see also the discussion in 2.1). When negated, however, no suffix appears on the verb in the counterpart of both (13a) and (13b). (13d) shows the difference in inflection seen in (13a) and (13b) is not recoverable in the negative verb forms, with the same negative prefix used to encode both personal and impersonal categories. Just as the impersonal perfective *-na* cannot be used with a negated verb, it is similarly ungrammatical for the personal irrealis suffix *-sang* to appear with a negated verb, (13e). As such, we can say a lack of an aspectual suffix on a negated verb simply encodes irrealis, and the personal/impersonal contrast cannot be made in these forms.

(13a)　*Ngat*　*yamba*　　*Chogor-o*　　　　*gae-sang.*
　　　　1SG　　tomorrow　　Chamkhar-ALL　　　go-PERS.IRR
　　　　'I will go to Chamkhar tomorrow.'

(13b)　*Gon*　*yamba*　　*Chogor-o*　　　　*gae.*
　　　　3SG　　tomorrow　　Chamkhar-ALL　　　go.IMPERS.IRR
　　　　'She will go to Chamkhar tomorrow.'

(13c)   * *ngat*   *yamba*   *Chogor-o*   *gae.*
      1SG   tomorrow   Chamkhar-ALL   go.IMPERS.IRR
      'I will go to Chamkhar tomorrow.'

(13d)   *Yamba*   *Chogor-o*   *mé-gae.*
      tomorrow   Chamkhar-ALL   NEG1-go.IRR
      '(I/She) will not go to Chamkhar tomorrow.'

(13e)   * *yamba*   *Chogor-o*   *mé-gae-sang.*
      tomorrow   Chamkhar-ALL   NEG1-go-PERS.IRR
      '(I) will not go to Chamkhar tomorrow.'

We can summarise the differences in inflection between affirmative and negative clauses with Table 2. There are five suffixal contrasts in affirmative clauses, including the Ø cell in the paradigms for the impersonal irrealis. In negative clauses, neutralisation of contrasts means that there are only three suffixal contrasts, showing that the system is asymmetrical.

Negative prefixes show a two-way contrast between perfective *ma-* and non-perfective *mé-*. If the verb is marked with *mé-* 'NEG1', then the imperfective is overtly marked by suffix (see Table 1), and the lack of suffixation is interpreted as irrealis (with the contrast between personal and impersonal neutralised). If the verb is marked with *ma-* 'NEG2' then the personal/impersonal contrast is indicated by the choice of suffix, *-za* or *-s* (not *-na* or *-s*, respectively, as is found in the affirmative). This is a case of paradigmatic displacement, since while the TAME categories are being maintained, there is not a one-to-one correspondences in the affixes used. The affix that only marks imperfective aspect in the affirmative is used in negative clauses with *ma-* to express the impersonal perfective.[8]

Category	Affirmative	Negative
Irrealis, impersonal	V	*mé*-V
Irrealis, personal	V-*sang*	*mé*-V
Imperfective (impers/pers)	V-*za*	*mé*-V-*za*
Perfective, impersonal	V-*na*	*ma*-V-*za*
Perfective, personal	V-*s*	*ma*-V-*s*

Table 2. Affirmative and negative verbal inflection

Table 2 also demonstrates a difference in how verbal morphology is organised in affirmative and negative clauses. When marking TAME in affirmative clauses, speakers first choose one of the three aspectual possibilities (irrealis, imperfective or perfective), which is then realised together with the personal/impersonal contrast with a portmanteau morpheme in the irrealis and perfective (but not in imperfective). In negative clauses, by contrast, the first choice determining the suffix is whether the event is personal perfective (the most strongly asserted category) or not, and if not then the

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[8] Another interpretation of the data is to suggest that *-sang* and *-na* cannot be used with negated verbs because they are inherently specified as being affirmative. This alternative way of specifying the morphemes does not affect the data or analysis presented here.

speaker codes for irrealis (no suffix) or 'other' (suffixed *-za*). The prefixes are strictly distributed according to perfective/non-perfective aspect.

The combination of paradigmatic neutralisation and displacement shows that, in Bumthang, there are clear asymmetries between affirmative and negative clauses in terms of verbal possibilities. Negative clauses mark less inflectional distinctions than affirmative clauses with a mixture of a negative prefix and a reduced set of main clause TAME suffixes.

3.3   *Case marking in the negated clause*

Case marking in Bumthang is dependent on various semantic and pragmatic factors such as focus, subject person and number, and telicity of the verb (Donohue and Donohue 2016, 2019). As is common in ergative languages, the case assignment process interacts with aspectual distinctions made by the verb in ways that are familiar from studies of many other languages (e.g. Malchukov and de Hoop 2011). Arguments in affirmative clauses do not appear with ergative case when irrealis, while the same arguments perfective clauses are always licensed for ergative marking, particularly with third person arguments. Imperfective clauses do not require the use of the ergative. Data illustrating these points for the core TAME categories are presented in (14); importantly, we can see that the use of the ergative is only required in (14d) and (14e), with perfective examples.

(14a)   *Yak*   *tiwa*   *zu.*
         yak   grass   eat.IMPERS.IRR
         'Yaks eat grass.'

(14b)   *Yak*   *tiwa*   *zu-sang.*
         yak   grass   eat-PERS.IRR
         'The yak will eat the grass.'

(14c)   *Yak*   *tiwa*   *zu-za.*
         yak   grass   eat-IPFV
         'The yak is eating the grass.'

(14d)   *Yak-i*   *tiwa*   *zu-na.*
         yak-ERG   grass   eat-IMPERS.PFV
         'The yak ate the grass (I infer).'

(14e)   *Yak-i*   *tiwa*   *zu-s.*
         yak-ERG   grass   eat-PERS.PFV
         'The yak ate the grass (I know).'

Since negation interacts with aspect marking in Bumthang by reducing the use of perfective-marking morphology (following cross-linguistic trends for negated clauses to be treated as irrealis, or non-finite), we might expect that there would be variation in the ergative marking of pragmatically unmarked clauses conditioned by negation. These expectations are not met. We can see from examples (15a) – (15d) that negative bivalent clauses, corresponding to (14a) – (14e) above, assign

ergative case in the same manner as affirmative bivalent clauses. The irrealis and imperfective clauses do not assign ergative case, as expected, and the negated perfective sentences in (15c) – (15d) both display ergative marking, despite (15c) being formally marked with the same imperfective suffix seen in (15b) (see Tables 1 and 2).

(15a) *Yak*　　　*tiwa*　　　*mi-zu.*
　　　yak　　　grass　　　NEG1-eat.IRR
　　　'Yaks don't eat grass.' / 'The yak won't eat the grass.'[9]

(15b) *Yak*　　　*tiwa*　　　*mi-zu-za.*
　　　yak　　　grass　　　NEG1-eat-IPFV
　　　'The yak isn't eating the grass.'

(15c) *Yak-i*　　　*tiwa*　　　*ma-zu-za.*
　　　yak-ERG　　　grass　　　NEG2-eat-'IPFV'
　　　'The yak didn't eat the grass (I infer).'

(15d) *Yak-i*　　　*tiwa*　　　*ma-zu-s.*
　　　yak-ERG　　　grass　　　NEG2-eat-PERS.PFV
　　　'The yak didn't eat the grass (I know).'

Ignoring for now the different possibilities of pragmatic marking of case described in Donohue and Donohue (2016), the 'basic' case marking paradigm is shown in Table 3. Arguments serving an A role in irrealis clauses do not receive ergative case marking, whereas it is obligatory for agents in perfective clauses. While it is not impossible for ergative case marking to be regular, the pattern shown in Table 3 is not unexpected, in terms of the patterns found in other languages of the area.

Category	Affirmative	Negative
Irrealis, impersonal	*Yak zu.*	*Yak mi-zu.*
Irrealis, personal	*Yak zu-sang.*	*Yak mi-zu.*
Imperfective	*Yak zu-za.*	*Yak mi-zu-za.*
Perfective, impersonal	*Yak-**i** zu-na.*	*Yak-**i** ma-zu-za.*
Perfective, personal	*Yak-**i** zu-s.*	*Yak-**i** ma-zu-s.*

Table 3: Case marking in affirmative and negative pragmatically neutral bivalent clauses

Ergative case assignment in imperfective clauses only occurs in pragmatically marked instances. In (15e) – (15f), the subject is pragmatically focused, and so the ergative is licensed in an imperfective clause that would not otherwise permit such marking.

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[9] While the affirmative clauses in Bumthang distinguish these two readings (without negation), the inadmissibility of the personal suffix -*sang* in negated clauses renders clauses of this sort ambiguous.

(15e)   *Yak-i*   *thiwa*   *mi-zu-za.*
         yak-ERG   grass   NEG1-eat-IPFV
         '*It's the yak* that isn't eating the grass (something else is).'

(15f)   *Yak-i*   *thiwa*   *zu-za.*
         yak-ERG   grass   eat-IPFV
         '*It's the yak* that is eating the grass (not something else).'

A different picture emerges when we consider case marking in monovalent clauses. Clauses headed by non-active verbs are rare but are invariably not marked for case. In active clauses, we see the sporadic use of the ergative, in a pattern familiar from many other languages of the Himalayas (e.g. DeLancey 1985; Michailovsky 1997; Li 2007; Tournadre 1991) and beyond (e.g. Gregores and Suárez 1967; Van Valin 1990; Mithun 1991; Donohue and Wichmann 2008). Examples (16a) – (16e) show the possibilities for the use of the ergative in affirmative clauses with monovalent verbs. As with the ergative case in clauses with bivalent verbs, we find a preference for the ergative in perfective clauses, and a very strong dispreference against marking NPs in imperfective or irrealis clauses. Unlike the arguments of bivalent verbs in the perfective, a sentence such as *Jawya lingna* 'The birds flew away', (16d), is perfectly grammatical, but lacks the identification focus (cf. Lambrecht 1994) that is marked by the ergative case present in *Jawyai lingna*.[10]

(16a)   * *jawya-i*   *ling.*
         bird-ERG   fly.IMPERS.IRR
         For: 'The birds will fly.'

(16b)   * *jawya-i*   *ling-sang.*
         bird-ERG   fly-PERS.IRR
         For: 'The birds will fly.'

(16c)   * *jawya-i*   *ling-za.*
         bird-ERG   fly-IPFV
         For: 'The birds are flying.'

(16d)   *Jawya(-i)*   *ling-na.*
         bird-ERG   fly-IMPERS.PFV
         'The birds flew (away) (I infer).'
         'I infer that it was the birds that flew away.' (with the ergative)

(16e)   *Jawya(-i)*   *ling(-s).*
         bird-ERG   fly-PERS.PFV
         'The birds flew (away) (I know).'

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[10] By contrast, **gone sujadé thongna* (compare with (8a) and (8c)), with the subject represented by an absolute pronoun, is completely ungrammatical. See Donohue and Donohue (2016) for further details.

Based on the data in (15a) – (15d), showing that negation does not affect the assignment of ergative case, we might expect a similar pattern for ergative case assignment in negative monovalent clauses. However, we see an entirely different pattern from bivalent clauses (affirmative or negative) and affirmative monovalent clauses. In negative monovalent clauses, the subject in the *irrealis* clause takes ergative marking (17a), while it is not an option for imperfective (17b) or perfective clauses (17c), (17d). We discuss the motivation for this at the end of this section.

Ergative marking in negative monovalent clauses

(17a)   *Jawya-i*   *mi-ling.*
           bird-ERG   NEG1-fly.IRR
           'The birds will not fly (away).'

(17b)   * *jawya-i*   *mi-ling-za.*
           bird-ERG   NEG1-fly-IPFV
           'The birds aren't flying (away).'

(17c)   * *jawya-i*   *ma-ling(-s).*
           bird-ERG   NEG2-fly-PERS.PFV
           'The birds didn't fly (away) (I know).'

(17d)   * *jawya-i*   *ma-ling-za.*
           bird-ERG   NEG2-fly-'IPFV'
           'The birds didn't fly (away) (I infer).'

This is the opposite of what is expected from the behavior of the ergative in Bumthang bivalent clauses, seen in (14) and (15), where case marking possibilities were unaffected by negation. The data in (16) and (17) are also unexpected from a cross-linguistic perspective, since the ergative is preferred in past or perfect(ive) clauses (eg. Dixon 1994). Table 4 shows the distribution of ergative marking in affirmative and negative clauses for the different TAME inflections with both bivalent and monovalent verbs, using the noun *jawya* 'bird' and the verbs *zu* 'eat' (bivalent) and *ling* 'fly' (monovalent), inflected per the summary in Table 2. We can see that while the ergative case *-i* cannot appear in affirmative irrealis clauses, in negated clauses it appears in exactly this environment with monovalent verbs (while being banned from appearing in realis environments).

Bivalent	Affirmative	Negative
Irrealis, impersonal	*Jawya zu.*	*Jawya mizu.*
Irrealis, personal	*Jawya zusang.*	*Jawya mizu.*
Imperfective	*Jawya(-**i**) zuza.*	*Jawya(-**i**) mizuza.*
Perfective, impersonal	*Jawya-**i** zuna.*	*Jawya-**i** mazuza.*
Perfective, personal	*Jawya-**i** zus.*	*Jawya-**i** mazus.*

Monovalent	Affirmative	Negative
Irrealis, impersonal	*Jawya ling.*	*Jawya-**i** miling.*
Irrealis, personal	*Jawya lingsang.*	*Jawya-**i** miling.*
Imperfective	*Jawya lingza.*	*Jawya milingza.*
Perfective, impersonal	*Jawya-**i** lingna.*	*Jawya malingza.*
Perfective, personal	*Jawya-**i** ling(-s).*	*Jawya maling(-s).*

Table 4. Case marking possibilities in bivalent and monovalent active clauses

An explanation for this unusual distribution involves examining the reasons a speaker would utter a negated irrealis clause. An affirmative statement about a past or perfective event is a description of the speaker's perception of a real world event; a negative statement about a past or perfective event is a description of a speaker's comment about a contra-indicated state of affairs in the real world. Neither of these speech acts comes with a particular pragmatic implicature, since they both represent potential factual descriptions or perceptions of factual descriptions of the world. The world described in an irrealis clause is a different matter, as the events are necessarily unrealised (whether affirmative or negative). As such, the Bumthang irrealis is commonly used to describe wishes and desires, so that (13a) could equally be translated as 'I want to go to Chamkhar tomorrow' (repeated below). The impersonal irrealis can be interpreted as a description of a habitual event, so that a modified version of (13b) which omits *yamba* 'tomorrow', expresses a state rather than an ongoing activity (13f). The egophoric contrast here represents personal investment in an event which is not realised; if an event is not going to be realised, there is little reason to be personally invested in it.

(13a) *Ngat*   *yamba*   *Chogor-o*   *gae-sang.*
       1SG   tomorrow   Chamkhar-ALL   go-PERS.IRR
       'I will go to Chamkhar tomorrow.'
       'I want to go to Chamkhar tomorrow.'

(13f) *Gon*   *Chogor-o*   *gae.*
       3SG   Chamkhar-ALL   go.IMPERS.IRR
       'She (frequently/regularly) goes to Chamkhar.'

These interpretations contrast with the interpretations of perfective and imperfective clauses. In perfective and imperfective clauses there is inherent reference to a real-world state of affairs, while in the irrealis clauses there is no such reference; to extend and butcher L.P. Hartley's prose, if the past is a foreign country, the unrealised time is not even an incorporated entity. And while it is grammatical to talk about unrealised wishes or habitual activities in the negative, to do so asserts a particular prominence assigned to that event by the speaker. Since the sentences does not describe an existing state of affairs (or its absence), such an utterance comes with marked pragmatic implicature. As has been mentioned earlier, ergative case marking is linked to pragmatic salience (Donohue and Donohue 2016), with focused As (and agentive Ss) being eligible for ergative case. In the case of a negated irrealis clause, the whole utterance is pragmatically marked, and so the ergative case is used (and, being a case, can only be assigned to the argument, and not the verb). It is an idiosyncrasy of Bumthang that ergative case is obligatory in negated irrealis clauses, and not perfective or imperfective clauses. It is a further particularity of Bumthang grammar that this applies for monovalent clauses, and not bivalent; presumably the applicability of other constraints on ergative case assignment in turn constrain against obligatory case assignment in irrealis clauses with bivalent verbs.

4.   Conclusions

We have seen that Bumthang shows asymmetries in negated clauses, in both verbal marking and case assignment. Firstly, there is a reduction in the number of aspectual contrasts maintained by verbal suffixes, with *-na* 'IMPERS.PFV' and *-sang* 'PERS.IRR' not appearing in the negative paradigm. However, the use of two different negative prefixes partly compensates for the loss of the overt suffixal distinction, as the combination of the affixes *ma-* 'NEG2' and *-za* 'IPFV', in opposition to the *ma-* 'NEG2' + *-s* 'PERS.PFV' combination, allows speakers to continue to contrast the personal/impersonal distinction in the perfective. This personal/impersonal distinction is not maintained in the negated irrealis. We have also seen that the ergative case distribution involved in negation asymmetries in Bumthang reverse more widely reported patterns of asymmetries (see also Donohue 2006). While case marking in bivalent clauses is unaffected by negation, we have seen that in clauses with a monovalent verb the ergative case is grammatically required in negated irrealis contexts, rather than being preferred in perfective clauses as predicted (from cross-linguistic tendencies which are instantiated in Bumthang affirmative clauses).

Finally, we should note that although the Bumthang patterns reported here have not been repeated in descriptions of other languages of Bhutan (or beyond), this does not mean that we will not find additional examples of these cross-linguistically unusual patterns with further work on the languages of this region.

ABBREVIATIONS

1	first person	IMM	immediate
2	second person	IMPERS	impersonal
3	third person	IPFV	imperfective
ABS	absolutive	IRR	irrealis
ABL	ablative	NEG	negative
ALL	allative	NEG1	first negative
AUX	auxiliary	NEG2	second negative
CERT	certainty	NFUT	non-future
COP	copula	PERS	personal
DAT	dative	PFV	perfective
DEF	definite	PL	plural
DIST	distal	REAL	realis
ERG	ergative	REL	relative
EVID	evidential	SG	singular
FUT	future		

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