

In my dissertation, I have studied one of the yet non-described parts of the grammar of spoken Standard Tibetan: the epistemic modalities. To convey epistemic meanings, spoken Standard Tibetan makes use of lexical and grammatical means (3.1., 3.2.). The latter one, the grammatical expression of epistemic meanings has, in the spoken language, developed into a complex system of epistemic verbal endings. As a result, I concentrated on identifying and classifying these epistemic endings.

Since the present dissertation is concerned with the spoken language, fieldwork was an important part of my research work. Realized between the years 2002 and 2006 mostly in central Tibet but also in the diaspora, this fieldwork confirmed the division of Tibetan verbal endings in two sub-systems: evidential and epistemic. Although they share some functions, mainly the expression of the tense-aspect, they differ in the degree of certainty that the speaker attributes to his utterance.

Furthermore, it has been revealed that there are at least a dozen of various types of epistemic endings commonly used in spoken Standard Tibetan that differ in the degree of certainty, geographic use and frequency (3.2.1.1., Chapter IV.). Altogether, I have described 44 epistemic endings and built their tense-aspect paradigm (3.2.2.4.1.). The paradigm consists of four forms: the perfective past, the present perfect, the imperfective, and the (deontic) future.