



Inflection of Finite Verbs in Mongghul

Vesa Åkerman

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the finite verb in Mongghul, a Mongolic language principally spoken in Qinghai (青海) Province, in Northwest China. The finite verb in Mongghul is inflected for mood, aspect/tense and speaker involvement. In the imperative mood only is the person of the subject distinguished, and speaker involvement is an aerial feature that Mongghul shares with a number of neighboring languages. Of particular interest to the reader is that the author—having spent five years on site learning the language—brings to light several discoveries that contradict previously published analyses, as well as advances several new features of the language not yet published. Among these are: The perfective aspect marker *-wa* marks the clause for subjective speaker involvement, and is the counterpart to *-jia*. The main function of *-jii* is to mark a state. The future tense suffix *-m/-n* can be used with a first person subject only in irrealis situations, or when the intention of the speaker is less definite. In addition, the speaker, functioning as a referent in a clause, may also trigger subjective speaker involvement marking.

Contents

Abbreviations and Symbols

0. Introduction

- 0.1 Language Family Identity, Location and Number of Speakers
- 0.2 Content and Breadth of Analysis

1. Mood

- 1.1 Declarative Mood
 - 1.1.1 Negative Clause
 - 1.1.2 Copulas
- 1.2 Interrogative Mood
- 1.3 Imperative Mood
 - 1.3.1 Second Person Imperatives
 - 1.3.2 First Person Imperatives
 - 1.3.3 Third Person Imperatives

2. Tense and Aspect

- 2.1 Perfective Aspect Suffixes –wa, –jii, and –jia
- 2.2 Imperfective Aspect Suffixes –nii and –na
- 2.3 Imperfective Aspect Suffix –nu/–ni
- 2.4 Imperfective Aspect/Future Tense marker –m/–n
 - 2.4.1 –m/–n as Imperfective Aspect marker
 - 2.4.2 –m/–n as Future Tense marker
- 2.5 Future Tense Suffixes –gunii and –guna
- 2.6 Perfective Participle –san in Finite Use

3. Subjective/Objective Involvement Distinction

- 3.1 General Rules in Marking Speaker Involvement
 - 3.1.1 Marking Speaker Involvement in Declarative Clauses
 - 3.1.2 Marking Speaker Involvement in Interrogative Clauses
 - 3.1.3 Marking Speaker Involvement in Copula Clauses
- 3.2 Manipulation of the Basic System
 - 3.2.1 Clauses with First Person Subjects Receiving Objective or Neutral Marking
 - 3.2.2 Clauses with Second and Third Person Subjects Receiving Subjective Marking
- 3.3 Subjective/Objective Marking in a Converb + Auxiliary Construction (‘*du-wa*’ and ‘*x-jia*’)
- 3.4 Conclusion

4. Summary

References

Additional Resources

Abbreviations and Symbols

ABL	Ablative case
ACC	Accusative case
AUX	Auxiliary verb
CAUS	Causative
CMPLZR	Complementizer
COM	Comitative case
COND	Conditional
COP	Copula
DAT	Dative case
EMPH	Emphatic
FUT	Future tense
GEN	Genitive case
HAB	Habitual aspect
HORT	Hortative
IMPER	Imperative
IMPERF	Imperfective aspect
INDEF	Indefinite
LOC	Locative case
NEG	Negative
NOMLZR	Nominalizer
OBJ	Objective
PAST	Past tense
PERF	Perfective aspect
PL	Plural number
POSS	Possessive
PROHIB	Prohibitive
PRT	Final particle
PURP	Purpose
QUEST	Question
QUOTE	Quotative
REFLPOSS	Reflexive Possessive
SG	Singular number
SUBJ	Subjective
VOL	Voluntative
1	First person
2	Second person
3	Third person
Ø	Zero morpheme
*	Ungrammatical form
?	Marginally acceptable form
()	Meaning inferred from context
[]	Phonetic transcription

0. Introduction

0.1 Language Family Identity, Location and Number of Speakers

Mongghul belongs to the Mongolic family of languages, and is principally spoken in Qinghai (青海) Province, in Northwest China. In wider circles, however, it is known as the *Tu Language* (土族语). Historically Mongghul has been considered as one of the two principal dialects of the Tu language, and spoken by the largest group of the Tu nation (土族). Today, however, what once was labeled as two ‘dialects’ is now considered by many scholars to be two distinct languages, viz., Mongghul, and Mangghuer, the latter spoken in Minhe County in Qinghai Province. Most Mongghul speakers, on the other hand, live in Huzhu (互助) Tu Autonomous County. The current number of speakers of Mongghul is not easy to determine. It has been estimated to be as high as 150,000 individuals and as low as 50,000 (Georg 2003:287).

The major portion of the language data in this study consists of more than 900 sentences written down from conversations over a four-year period. During the first three years, I made weekly visits to a village in Donggou district, located in Huzhu Tuzu Autonomous County, Qinghai Province (青海省海东地区互助土族自治县东沟乡大庄村). And then, during the last year of my investigation, my wife and I, along with our two children, actually lived in Huzhu, a town within walking distance to Dazhuang (seven km). Thus, it is from the point of view of one who participated in speaking the daily language of the Mongghul community that I present this paper. Only a small portion of my data was actually elicited text. In addition, I also recorded and transcribed four narrative stories, one of which a folktale that totaled over 230 sentences. My interaction with the Mongghul community occurred during the years 2002 to 2005.

All data is from the Donggou (东沟) area, where the Halchighol dialect—recognized as the standard dialect of Mongghul—is spoken. Also worthy of note is that sentences recorded during my visits to Dazhuang village came from many individuals, but mostly from two men: Diao Zhong (刁忠), and Dong Yajun (董亚军). Diao Zhong (b.1944, d. 2006) was a former primary school teacher and lived his entire life in Dazhuang village. Dong Yajun is a middle-aged farmer. He has also lived his entire life in the same village, except for the few years he studied at a middle school in Weiyuan (威远), the only town in Huzhu. Three of the narrative stories, on the other hand, were told by Hu Zongxian (胡宗显), at that time an elderly village leader, known as one of the more talented story-tellers of Dazhuang village. Initial transcription and then translation from the tape was done by Diao Zhong. The fourth narrative story was told by this same gentleman.

Published grammatical descriptions of Mongghul are, for the most part, a recent phenomenon. Among these descriptions (listed from oldest to most current) are those of: Smedt and Mostaert (1964), Zhaonasi (1981), Qinggeertai (1988, 1991), Üjiyediin (1994), Georg (2003), and Faehndrich (2007).

0.2 Content and Breadth of Analysis

In this paper¹ I shall focus my analysis on the finite verb in Mongghu. My discussion is organized in four parts: In section 1, I describe mood in finite verbs; in section 2, aspect and tense; in section 3, speaker involvement; and lastly in section 4, a summary of my findings.

Throughout my paper I bring to light several discoveries that contradict previously published analyses, and I advance several new features of the language not yet published. Below I list some of the most significant findings:

- The description of the role of the perfective aspect markers *-wa*, *-jii* and *-jia* clearly differs from earlier descriptions. The perfective aspect marker *-wa* actually marks the clause for subjective speaker involvement, and is the counterpart to *-jia*. The main function of *-jii* is to mark a state (section 2.1).
- Next to the imperfective aspect suffixes *-nii*, *-na* and *-m/-n*, still another imperfective aspect suffix, viz., *-nu/-ni* can be found, and this suffix is neutral to speaker involvement (section 2.3).
- The future tense suffix *-m/-n* can be used with a first person subject only in the irrealis mood, or in those situations that may not be clearly irrealis, but where the speaker is apparently less definite (section 2.4.2).
- Subjective marking never occurs in a negative main clause, except with copula verbs (section 3.2.1.2).
- Subordinate clauses are always marked for subjective speaker involvement, regardless of the subject (section 3.2.2.1).
- Speaker, being just a referent in a clause, may also trigger subjective speaker involvement marking (section 3.2.2.2).

1. Mood

The finite verb of Mongghul distinguishes between declarative, interrogative, and imperative moods. In the following subsections each of these moods are discussed in turn.

1.1 Declarative Mood

In table 1 below, I illustrate Mungghul aspect/tense suffixes in the declarative mood. Notice that the suffixes are divided into three categories according to how the verb is marked for speaker involvement; viz., subjective, objective and neutral. In addition, the verb roots used in my examples are: *you* ‘walk/go’, *sou* ‘sit’, and *mudie* ‘know’; the reason being that certain aspect

¹ I am indebted to Keith Slater of *SIL International*, East Asia Group, whose comments and suggestions in writing this paper have been invaluable. I also want to extend my thanks to Diao Zhong (刁忠) and Dong Yajun (董亚军), and their families, who assisted me in learning Mongghul and in whose home I was always welcome.

suffixes only occur with specific kinds of verbs. Therefore different verb roots must be utilized to illustrate the range of suffixes. Suffix *-m/-n* marks either imperfective aspect or future tense, depending on whether it occurs with a stative verb or a dynamic verb. Suffix *-jii* usually marks stative aspect, but sometimes it can also mark perfective aspect. Suffix *-jia*, on the other hand, usually marks perfective aspect, but it can also mark a state.²

	Perfective	Imperfective	State	Future
Subjective	<i>you-wa/ you-jii</i>	<i>you-nii</i>	<i>sou-jii</i>	<i>you-gunii</i>
Objective	<i>you-jia</i>	<i>you-na</i>	<i>sou-jia</i>	<i>you-guna</i>
Neutral		<i>mudie-m/mudie-n mudie-nu/mudie-ni</i>		<i>you-m/you-n</i>

Table 1 Declarative Verb Forms

In section 2, I discuss in detail the highlighted tense/aspect suffixes above, and in section 3, speaker involvement. Directly below, I present an overview using examples of each kind of suffix in a typical sentence:

- (1) *Bu re-wa*
1:SG come-SUBJ:PERF
I came.
- (2) *Tie re-jia*
3:SG come-OBJ:PERF
He came.
- (3) *Bu nie youbii-nu wari-jii*
1:SG this pen-ACC take/hold-SUBJ:STATE
I am holding this pen.
- (4) *Bu you-nii*
1:SG walk-SUBJ:IMPERF
I am walking.
- (5) *Ngan you-na*
3:SG walk-OBJ:IMPERF
He is walking.
- (6) *Qi tie-nu tani-m*
2:SG 3:SG-ACC know-IMPERF
You know him.

² Note, as stated earlier, my analysis of the suffixes *-wa*, *-jia*, and *-jii* clearly differs from what has previously been published. I shall discuss the relationship between these suffixes in sub section 2.1 below.

- (7) *Bu mudie-ni*
1:SG know-IMPERF
I know.
- (8) *Bu you-gunii*
1:SG go-SUBJ:FUT
I'll go.
- (9) *Tie you-guna*
3:SG go-OBJ:FUT
He'll go.
- (10) *Tie you-m*
3:SG go-FUT
He'll go.³

1.1.1 Negative Clause

There are two ways to form a negative clause:

1. by adding the negative particle *ii/lii* immediately before a *finite* verb
2. by adding the copula verb *gui/gua* after a *nonfinite* or *finite* verb

When an event is negated prior to the present time, the copula verb *gui/gua* is used. With both the future tense suffix *-guna* (marking objective speaker involvement) and with the imperfective aspect suffix *-ni/-nu*, the particle *ii/lii* occurs. With the future tense/imperfective aspect suffix *-m/-n*, both negation strategies are possible.

Notice that, neither the future tense suffix *-gunii* (marking subjective speaker involvement), nor the imperfective aspect suffixes *-nii* and *-na*, occur in negative clauses. In negating clauses with these suffixes, the future tense/imperfective aspect suffix *-m/-n* occurs instead.

Negative clauses, which negate an event prior to the present time, are always formed with the copula *gui/gua*, occurring after the verb. The verb then appears in nonfinite form with the suffix *-ji*:

- (11) *Bu duo kurdulaa Mongghul pujig suri-ji* *gui*
1:SG now ever Mongghul letter study-IMPERF SUBJ:NEG:COP
I have never studied the Mongghul writing system.
- (12) *Tie qigudur re shda-ji* *gua*
3:SG yesterday come can-IMPERF OBJ:NEG:COP
He couldn't come yesterday.

³ Here and below, as with examples (9) and (10) where glosses are identical, a definite difference in nuance has not been made at the writing of this paper.

A verb ending with the future tense suffix *-guna* is negated by adding the particle *ii/lii* immediately before it, as in (13).

- (13) *Bu muula-sa tie malang ii re-guna*
 1:SG think-COND 3:SG tomorrow NEG come-OBJ:FUT
 I think that he will not come tomorrow.

A verb ending with the imperfective aspect suffix *-ni/-nu* is also negated by the preceding particle *ii/lii*:

- (14) *Bu ii mudie-nu*
 1:SG NEG know-IMPERF
 I don't know.

With the future tense/imperfective aspect suffix *-m/-n*, either the particle *ii/lii* occurs immediately before the verb, as in (15), or the copula *gui/gua* occurs after the verb, as in (16). Notice too, when clauses with the future tense suffix *-gunii*, or with either the imperfective aspect suffixes *-nii* or *-na* are negated, the suffix *-m/-n* occurs instead. In (17), (18) and (19) I present examples of this occurring. That is: *bu you-gunii* → *bu ii jou-m/bu you-nii* → *bu ii you-m/bu jou-m gui*:

- (15) *Bu lii mudie-m tiengula weiu gui ha*
 1:SG NEG know-IMPERF 3:PL SUBJ:COP:QUEST SUBJ:NEG:COP PRT
 I don't know if they are at home or not.
- (16) *Ngan die-gu durla-n gua*
 3:SG eat-NOMLZR like-IMPERF OBJ:NEG:COP
 He doesn't like the food.
- (17) *Bu ii you-m*
 1:SG NEG go-FUT
 I will not go.
- (18) *Bu ii you-m, moor tirie-de hamburaa-nii*
 1:SG NEG walk-IMPERF road side-LOC rest-SUBJ:IMPERF
 I am not walking; I'm resting by the road.
- (19) *Bu you-m gui, moor tirie-de hamburaa-nii*
 1:SG walk-IMPERF SUBJ:NEG:COP road side-LOC rest-SUBJ:IMPERF
 I am not walking; I'm resting by the road.

1.1.2 Copulas⁴

For the copula verbs the declarative forms are presented in Table 2:

	Positive Equational and Attributive	Negative Equational	Negative Attributive
Subjective	<i>ii/wei</i>	<i>puxii</i>	<i>gui</i>
Objective	<i>wa</i>	<i>puxia</i>	<i>gua</i>

Table 2 Declarative Copula Forms

The form of the copula *wa* varies according to the preceding word. That is, the consonant /w/ assimilates to preceding consonants /m/, /n/, /l/ and /r/. Thus, the copula becomes *ma*, *na*, *la* and *ra* respectively.

In (20) to (28) I illustrate examples of different copulas in different environments:

- (20) *Bu Zhonggui kun ii*
1:SG China person SUBJ:COP
I am Chinese.
- (21) *Ngan Zhonggui kun na*
3:SG China person OBJ:COP
He is Chinese.
- (22) *Nie shafa juolan ii*
this sofa soft SUBJ:COP
This sofa is soft (I assume).
- (23) *Nie hadong wei*
this hard SUBJ:COP
This is hard (I assume).
- (24) *Nie shafa juolan na*
this sofa soft OBJ:COP
This sofa is soft.
- (25) *Bu Zhonggui kun puxii*
1:SG China person SUBJ:NEG:COP
I am not Chinese.

⁴ Here I follow Slater's (2003) distinction between equational and attributive copulas. They are identical in the positive, but differ in the negative.

- (26) *Tie Zhonggui kun puxia*
 3:SG China person OBJ:NEG:COP
 He is not Chinese.
- (27) *Nie kun tigii szaliu gui*
 this person so clever SUBJ:NEG:COP
 This person is not so clever (I think).
- (28) *Daaran gua*
 cold OBJ:NEG:COP
 It is not cold.

Earlier in section 1.1.1 one of the two ways to negate a verb that I illustrated was to add the negative attributive copula *gui/gua* after the verb. The main verb in this clause may occur in either a nonfinite or finite form, as in (29) and (30); or it may occur in finite form, as in (31) and (32) respectively below:

- (29) *Bu tie-nu tie sge-ji gui*
 1:SG 3:SG-ACC there see-IMPERF SUBJ:NEG:COP
 I didn't see him there.
- (30) *Tie sou-ji suri-ji gua*
 3:SG sit-IMPERF study-IMPERF OBJ:NEG:COP
 He is not used to (it).
- (31) *Bu guai-n gui*
 1:SG run-FUT SUBJ:NEG:COP
 I will not run.
- (32) *Sier luan xi-m gua*
 money a:lot go-FUT OBJ:NEG:COP
 You don't need much money.

In possessive clauses, the verb *wei* may also behave like an ordinary verb; that is, receiving the objective imperfective aspect suffix *-na*. Below I present a number of examples, where in some cases the verb is in an uninflected form, and in other cases in an inflected form:

- (33) *Ndaa fu-nge wei-na*
 1:SG:DAT book-SG:INDEF have-OBJ:IMPERF
 I have a book.
- (34) *Ndaa malgha-nge wei-Ø*
 1:SG:DAT hat-SG:INDEF have
 I have a hat.

- (35) *Bu qimu szaghagu-nge wei-na*
 1:SG 2:SG:DAT question-SG:INDEF have-OBJ:IMPERF
 I have a question for you.
- (36) *Bu tigiinga szaghagu-nge wei-Ø*
 1:SG such question-SG:INDEF have
 I have a question.
- (37) *Qi amahaange warma wei-na?*
 2:SG how:much weight have-OBJ:IMPERF
 What is your weight?
- (38) *Qimu sier wei-na*
 2:SG:DAT money have-OBJ:IMPERF
 You have money.
- (39) *Ngan-du sier wei-na*
 3:SG-DAT money have-OBJ:IMPERF
 He has money.

In the few examples of *wei* occurring in an existential clause that I have encountered, it invariably occurs in the inflected form. However, one would need additional data to state conclusively whether or not an uninflected form in existential clauses is also possible.

- (40) *Nie durong wei-na, budangulo-nu ndiriexi*
 This still exist-OBJ:IMPERF 1:PL-GEN here
 It is still here where we are.

1.2 Interrogative Mood

The syntactic pattern of an interrogative clause is the same as that of the corresponding declarative clause. With the wh-questions ‘who’, ‘what’, ‘when’ etc., the clause occurs with normal declarative morphology; i.e., the question word occurs in the same position as where the constituent being questioned would normally appear in a declarative clause:

- (41) *Ngan yaan daaldi-na?*
 3:SG what sell-OBJ:IMPERF
 What is he selling?

The general rule in declarative clauses is that the verb is marked for subjective speaker involvement with first person subjects and for objective speaker involvement with second and third person subjects. In interrogative clauses, however, the general rule is different: subjective marking is used in second person questions, and objective marking in first and third person questions. Nevertheless, in interrogative clauses, exceptions to these basic rules are much more frequent than they are in declarative clauses. In 3.1.2 I shall discuss this in greater detail.

Interrogatives, other than wh-questions, are formed in two ways depending on how the verb is marked for speaker involvement; namely:

1. —by replacing the final vowel of the tense/aspect suffix in the finite verb with *u* or *uu*. This applies to *subjective* speaker involvement forms of the finite verb, as well as to forms that are *neutral* to speaker involvement. With the copula verb *wei* (marked for subjective speaker involvement), *u* does not replace the last vowel, but rather is added at the end of this copula. In the imperfective aspect/future tense suffix *-m/-n*, there is no final vowel, and *uu* is added after the declarative suffix. Also noteworthy is that in all my data an occurrence of the alternate *-nuu* form of this suffix never occurs.

In Table 3 I present these interrogative suffixes and the copula verb, each contiguous to its respective declarative form:

	Declarative	Interrogative
Subjective perfective	<i>-wa</i>	<i>-wuu</i>
Subjective imperfective	<i>-nii</i>	<i>-niu</i>
Subjective state	<i>-jii</i>	<i>-jiu</i>
Subjective future	<i>-gunii</i>	<i>-guniu</i>
Neutral imperfective	<i>-ni/-nu</i>	<i>-nu</i>
Neutral imperfective	<i>-m/-n</i>	<i>-muu</i>
Neutral future	<i>-m/-n</i>	<i>-muu</i>
Subjective copula	<i>wei</i>	<i>weiu</i>

Table 3 Subjective and neutral forms of finite verb suffixes and copula in the declarative vs. interrogative mood.

2. —by affixing the interrogative particle *nu* to the end of the finite verb or a copula verb. This mechanism applies to *objective* speaker involvement forms of the finite verb and the copula verb. Table 4 illustrates these interrogative suffixes and the copula verb contiguous to their respective declarative forms.

	Declarative	Interrogative
Objective perfective	<i>-jia</i>	<i>-jia-nu</i>
Objective imperfective	<i>-na</i>	<i>-na-nu</i>
Objective future	<i>-guna</i>	<i>-guna-nu</i>
Objective copula	<i>wa</i>	<i>wa-nu</i>

Table 4 Objective forms of finite verb suffixes and copula in declarative vs. interrogative mood.

In (42) to (48) I illustrate interrogatives of the first category; that is, verbs marked for subjective speaker involvement or neutral to speaker involvement:

- (42) *Qi re-wuu?*
2:SG come-SUBJ:PERF:QUEST
You have come? (typical greeting)
- (43) *Tangula tie qirie-du sou-jiu?*
2:PL there next:to-LOC sit-SUBJ:PERF:QUEST
Are you living over there?
- (44) *Qi wazar Minyuen-de sou-niu?*
2:SG city Minyuan-LOC sit-SUBJ:IMPERF:QUEST
Do you live at Minyuan in the city?
- (45) *Qi Mongghul uguo mudie-nu?*
2:SG Mongghul language know-IMPERF:QUEST
Do you know (how to speak) Mongghul?
- (46) *Qi dii ii die-muu?*
2:SG again NEG eat-FUT:QUEST
You don't eat anymore?
- (47) *Qi niudur xi-guniu, malang xi-guniu?*
2:SG today go-SUBJ:FUT:QUEST tomorrow go-SUBJ:FUT:QUEST
Do you go today, or tomorrow?
- (48) *Qi laosi weiu?*
2:SG teacher SUBJ:COP:QUEST
Are you a teacher?

In (49) to (52) I illustrate interrogatives of the second category; that is, verbs marked for objective speaker involvement:

- (49) *Bu qimu dangla-a xi-jia-nu?*
1:SG 2:SG:DAT block-PERF go-OBJ:PERF-QUEST
Am I blocking your way?
- (50) *Ghar kuri-na-nu?*
Hand reach-OBJ:IMPERF-QUEST
Can (your) hand reach (it)?
- (51) *Nie-nu moxi shda-guna-nu?*
This-ACC read can-OBJ:FUT-QUEST
Can you read this?
- (52) *Ngan Zhonggui kun na-nu?*
3:SG China person OBJ:COP-QUEST
Is he Chinese?

When the verb suffix is *-wuu*, and it is preceded by the vowel /u/, the duplicated vowel sound may contract, as in example (53) (Note that ‘*du-u*’ is phonemically /duu/).

- (53) *Qi diel nghua-a bur-aa du-wuu/du-u?*
 2:SG clothes wash-PERF finish-PERF become-SUBJ:PERF:QUEST
 Have you finished with washing clothes?

In section 2.5 one will see that the subjective future tense suffix *-gunii* may also occur for the shorter form *-gui*, as in (128) and (129). Here, the interrogative of this form follows the same pattern as other suffixes marked for subjective speaker involvement, i.e.: *-gui* → *-guu*.

- (54) *Roula-a du-guu?*
 turn-PERF become-SUBJ:FUT:QUEST
 Shall I turn it?

Table 5 below illustrates verb morphology for the interrogative mood. Once again, I utilize different verb roots, since certain aspect suffixes occur only with specific kinds of verbs. The verb roots used here are *you* ‘walk/go’, *sou* ‘sit’, and *mudie* ‘know’.

	Perfective	Imperfective	State	Future
Subjective	<i>you-wuu</i>	<i>you-niu</i>	<i>sou-jiu</i>	<i>you-guniu</i>
Objective	<i>you-jia-nu</i>	<i>you-na-nu</i>	<i>sou-jia-nu</i>	<i>you-guna-nu</i>
Neutral		<i>mudie-nu</i> <i>mudie-muu</i>		<i>jou-muu</i>

Table 5 Interrogative Verb Forms

The interrogative forms of copulas are presented in Table 6. Note that the form of the copula *wa* varies according to the preceding word, and that /w/ assimilates to preceding consonants /m/, /n/, /l/ and /r/. The interrogative form of the copula becomes respectively: *ma-nu*, *na-nu*, *la-nu* or *ra-nu*.

Subjective	<i>weiu</i>
Objective	<i>wa-nu</i>

Table 6 Interrogative Copula Forms

1.3 Imperative Mood

The verb in the Imperative mood occurs in agreement with the person of the subject, and it is not inflected for tense, aspect or speaker involvement.

First person, second person, and third person subjects each occur with their own imperative morphology. These forms are summarized in Table 7, and then described in the following three subsections.

	Morphological Form
Second Person (Imperative)	-Ø
First Person (Voluntative)	- <i>ya</i>
Third Person (Hortative)	- <i>lahgi</i>

Table 7 Imperative Verb Morphology

1.3.1 Second Person Imperatives

Second person imperatives are created from the bare stem of the verb:

- (55) *Quogon die-Ø!*
 a:bit eat-IMPER
 Eat a little bit!

An important exception to this rule is that in the most commonly heard imperative word ‘come!’ the root changes. That is, the root of the verb is normally *re*, but changes in the imperative form to *ra*. The reason for this is most likely phonological. Specifically, word final vowel /e/ is often followed by an offglide [ʰ], as in the example: *kilie* [kʰiˈlieʰ] ‘say’. Thus, for our common imperative ‘come’, [reʰ] over time has likely become: [ra].

A negative imperative is formed by adding the prohibitive particle *bii/bie* ‘do not’ immediately before the verb:

- (56) *Qi wusi-re bii sou-Ø!*
 2:SG grass-LOC PROHIB sit-IMPER
 Don’t sit on the grass!

1.3.2 First Person Imperatives

First person imperatives are formed with the voluntative suffix *-ya*. An example of this is given in (57):

- (57) *Bu qimu kurgie-ya*
 1:SG 2:SG:DAT see:off-VOL
 I’ll see you off.

Similar to first person imperatives, a negative imperative is formed by adding the prohibitive particle *bii/bie* immediately before the verb:

- (58) *Bii gulie-ya*
 PROHIB talk-VOL
 Let’s not talk (about it).

1.3.3 Third Person Imperatives

Third person imperatives are formed with hortative the suffix *-lahgi*. An example of this is given in (59):

- (59) *Tie uruo-ji re-lahgi*
 3:SG enter-IMPERF come-HORT
 Let him come in.

Like second and first person imperatives, third person imperatives are also negated with the prohibitive *bii/bie*:

- (60) *Tie bii re-lahgi*
 3:SG PROHIB come-HORT
 Don't let him come!

2. Tense and Aspect

In the Mongghul tense/aspect system there are only two suffixes marking tense, both of which mark future tense. In all other cases aspect suffixes occur.

2.1 Perfective Aspect Suffixes *-wa*, *-jii*, and *-jia*

In previous studies of Mongghul the verbal suffix *-wa* was classified as indicating past tense (Qinggeertai 1991:224, Georg 2003:299). For illustrative purposes I gloss the next three examples; i.e., (61) to (63), following the analysis of these linguists. I then present several observations that are at variance to theirs:

- (61) *Bu re-wa*
 1:SG come-PAST
 I came.

The suffixes *-jia* and *-jii* have been analyzed as marking perfective aspect (Qinggeertai 1991:226, 261, 262), where *-jii* also marks subjective speaker involvement and *-jia* objective speaker involvement. Qinggeertai also analyzes each as a converb + auxiliary construction (Qinggeertai 1991:226); i.e., as (*-ji*) + auxiliary verb (*-a* or *-i*). I illustrate his analysis in the following examples (62) and (63):

- (62) *Tie re-ji-a*
 3:SG come-IMPERF-OBJ:AUX
 He came.
- (63) *Bu nie youbii-nu wari-ji-i*
 1:SG this pen-ACC take-IMPERF-SUBJ:AUX
 I picked up this pen.

Note that the auxiliary verb in each of the examples above indicates speaker involvement. The

finite verb is marked either for subjective or objective speaker involvement, or it is neutral to it. When the verb is marked for speaker involvement, an indicative clause with first person subject and interrogative clause with second person subject is marked for subjective speaker involvement. Elsewhere, the clause is marked for objective speaker involvement. This generally is what one might observe on the surface. However, upon a more in-depth study, one is led to the conclusion that the manner in which the subjective/objective system works is more complex. I shall address those complexities in detail in section 3.

At this point I would only add that, whereas Qinggeertai (1991) and Georg (2003) have analyzed the suffix *-wa* as neutral to speaker involvement, and *-jii* and *-jia* as two counterparts (viz., one marking the subjective and the other the objective speaker involvement), my observations reveal two major problems with this analysis: First, *-wa*, which is a very common suffix, rarely occurs with a second or third person subject; and secondly, the suffix *-jii* occurs very rarely, when you would expect it to be a commonly used suffix ...if, indeed, it is the counterpart of *-jia*.

In all my data I found no occurrences of *-wa* with a third or second person subject. It was only after eliciting, that I discovered that it might be used with a non-first person subject. Thus—although suspect—it is possible to say:

- (64) ?*Tie re-wa*
 3:SG come-PAST
 He came.

However, one more commonly hears:

- (65) *Tie re-jia*
 3:SG come-OBJ:PERF
 He came.

On the other hand, with a first person subject, *-wa* is in most cases used when referring to past events, the same way as *-jia* is most commonly heard with second and third person subjects.

-jii usually occurs with a first person subject, but its use is very limited. My impression is that its use is limited to certain kinds of verbs or specific contexts. One cannot grammatically say, for instance:

- (66) **Bu re-jii*
 1:SG come-SUBJ:PERF
 I came/I have come

But one rather says:

- (67) *Bu re-wa*
 1:SG come-SUBJ:PERF
 I came/I have come.

Thus, when looking at the data, it seems more logical to conclude that *-wa* and *-jia* are two counterparts, viz., *-wa* marking the subjective and *-jia* marking the objective speaker involvement. Each also marks perfective aspect.

- (68) *Budangula tirge sou-waa xi-wa*
 1:PL car sit-PERF go-SUBJ:PERF
 We went by car.
- (69) *Bu qimu turong sge-wa*
 1:SG 2:SG:DAT first:time see-SUBJ:PERF
 I saw you then the (very) first time.
- (70) *Ningiji jiu si ghuor hui shdag jia-lgha-jia bei*
 this:way then COP two time sign see-CAUS-OBJ:PERF EMPH
 This was the second time he showed a sign.
- (71) *Tie qigudur re-jia*
 3:SG yesterday come-OBJ:PERF
 He came yesterday.

To further substantiate that *-wa* and *-jia* are two counterparts (and not *-jii* and *-jia*) in the subjective/objective system, I offer the following examples:

- (72) *Bu sunoshda-ji qi muxi xingji-sa bazar xi-jia*
 1:SG hear-IMPERF 2:SG before week-ABL city go-OBJ:PERF
 I heard that last week you went to the city.
- (73) *Qi bazar-sa tirge sou-waa re-wuu?*
 2:SG city-ABL car sit-PERF come-SUBJ:PERF:QUEST
 Did you come by car from the city?

The finite verb in indicative clauses with a second person subject is marked for objective speaker involvement. However, in interrogative clauses it is marked for subjective. If *-jia* and *-jii* were the two counterparts, one would expect suffix *-jii* to occur in the interrogative clause rather than suffix *-wuu* (*-wa* + QUEST). That does not occur. My observation is that in interrogative clauses, as well as in declarative clauses, the suffix *-jii* only occurs with certain verbs, such as *sou* ‘sit/live’

- (74) *Qi anjii sou-jii?*
 2:SG where sit-SUBJ:STATE
 Where do you live?

Another relevant fact is that in *Mangghuer*, a closely-related language, Slater (2003:116) presents the subjective and objective perfective aspect markers: *-ba* and *-jiang*, which appear to me to be cognates of *-wa* and *-jia* in Mongghul. Yet another argument is that only subjective

forms appear in subordinate clauses, and *-wa* is one of them, which I illustrate in section 3.2.2.1 below.

I mentioned earlier that it is also possible to have the suffix *-wa* occur with a non-first person subject, even though those occurrences are rare (i.e., when there seems to be nothing indicating subjective speaker involvement). A possible explanation for this could be that originally *-wa* occurred as a neutral marker for a past event, which later took on the function of marking subjective speaker involvement.

What then is the role of *-jii*? It apparently marks the clause for subjective speaker involvement. Although it has been earlier defined as the *general* counterpart of *-jia*, I disagree with that analysis. Even though in certain environments it appears to function as its counterpart, most often it does not. Rather, it usually refers to a present, ongoing event. Thus, I propose that it marks a state, when *-wa* and *-jia* mark perfective aspect. In the following paragraphs I develop my evidence for this hypothesis:

In all the data available to me, the suffix *-jii* occurs only 17 times; 10 of which with the verb *sou* ‘sit/live’. Below I present examples of each of the different kinds of situations and verbs where this suffix occurs.

In (75) and (76) I illustrate a verb that expresses an on-going action that is achieved by completing another action. That is, the speaker is holding a pen in (75), after having taken it in his hand. Or, in (76) the speaker is currently sitting, after having sat down. Both examples refer to a present, ongoing, situation. In situations as presented in examples (75) and (76), the suffix *-jii* is the only suffix used to express a present, continuous state. When the imperfective aspect suffix *-nii* occurs, the meaning of the clause changes. Using *-nii* in the first example would then indicate that the speaker is in the middle of the action of picking up the pen. He/she hasn’t completed the action, and thus is not yet holding the pen in his/her hands. And in (76), *sou-nii* would communicate that the speaker is going to sit down.⁵

(75) *Bu nie youbii-nu wari-jii*
 1:SG this pen-ACC take/hold-SUBJ:STATE
 I am holding this pen.

(76) *Bu sou-jii*
 1:SG sit-SUBJ:STATE
 I am sitting.

I propose that *-jii* marks a state. What may speak against this hypothesis, however, is that *-jii* is used only in clauses marked for subjective speaker involvement. Thus, in a clause such as (77), it is not possible to use *-jii*, but rather *-jia* must be used.

⁵ Note that the perfective aspect suffix *-wa* would also be possible. However, the meaning of the verb would change. *Wari-wa* refers to the past action of taking away the pen, not to the action of picking up the pen.

- (77) *Tie sou-jia*
 3:SG sit-OBJ:STATE
 He is sitting.

In this context then, *-jia* occurs in a clause that refers to a present, ongoing situation. We could explain this by the fact that the ongoing situation (i.e., “sitting” in our example) is achieved by completing another action of sitting down. In the same way, holding a pen is achieved by the completed action of picking up the pen. But then, we could also think of *-jii* as marking perfective aspect, referring to a completed action. My hypothesis is that *-jia* marks a state here. It would then have another function in addition to marking perfective aspect.

Below I present additional examples of those clauses in which the suffix *-jii* occurs, in order to better illustrate the place that *-jii* serves in the landscape of aspect suffixes. I shall also discuss how (or if) the meaning of a clause might change with different aspect suffixes.

In examples (78) and (79) the imperfective forms *dangla-nii* and *hamburaa-nii* are also possible. These have the same meaning as *dangla-jii* and *hamburaa-jii*.

- (78) *Bu wari-m gui, hamburaa-jii*
 1:SG work-IMPERF SUBJ:NEG:COP rest-SUBJ:STATE
 I am not working; I’m resting.

- (79) *Bu lausi dangla-jii*
 1:SG teacher serve:as-SUBJ:STATE
 I am teacher.

In (80) the suffix *-jii* can also be replaced with the subjective imperfective aspect suffix *-nii*.⁶

- (80) *Bu tie-nu sge-jii*
 1:SG 3:SG-ACC see-SUBJ:STATE
 I am waiting for him/her.

In (81) *-jii* is the only suffix that can occur in this position. Also, when referring to a situation in the past, *-wa* is not possible.

- (81) *Bu jilaa-jii*
 1:SG remember-SUBJ:STATE
 I remember.

In (82) and (83) I present a different reason for using this suffix, which is unrelated to the kinds of verbs I utilize in my examples below. Here we have a third person subject, and in section 3 one will see that, when the speaker is personally involved (e.g., by assuming something, as is contextually the case,) subjective marking occurs with second and third person subjects. In (83) the speaker does not know whether the person has come. What he/she does know is that the

⁶ Note that with the perfective aspect suffix *-wa*, the meaning of the verb would change; i.e., *bu tienu sge-wa* means: ‘I saw him/her’. Here then *-jii*, which marks a state, is also the only option to refer to the past action of waiting.

person was supposed to come. Thus, in these examples, where subjective marking is triggered by the speaker's assumption, the subjective suffix *-jii* is used, and not *-wa*.⁷

(82) *Tiengula gar-du ntiraa-jii*
 3:PL room-DAT sleep-SUBJ:PERF
 They are sleeping in the room (I assume).

(83) *Tie qigudur re-jii*
 3:SG yesterday come-SUBJ:PERF
 He came yesterday (I assume).

Note that each of the examples from (74) to (81) can be seen as referring to a state. In (82) and (83) it seems more likely that the objective perfective aspect marker *-jia* is simply replaced by its subjective counterpart.

Earlier I suggested that *-jii* is a stative aspect marker. It also marks a clause for subjective speaker involvement. An objection to this hypothesis, if it held true, was that there would be stative markings occurring only in those clauses marked for subjective speaker involvement. However, it appears that *-jia*, which usually marks perfective aspect and objective speaker involvement, can with some verbs also mark a state and objective speaker involvement, as it does in (77). Furthermore, as I have just indicated, it appears that *-jii* can also function as the subjective counterpart to the suffix *-jia*.

Putting this all together, I conclude that:

- *-wa* marks the clause for subjective speaker involvement and for perfective aspect.
- *-jia* marks the clause for objective speaker involvement. The main function of *-jia* is to mark perfective aspect, and it also functions then as the counterpart of *-wa*. However, with certain verbs, it can also mark a state. It functions as a stative aspect marker with verbs that describe an ongoing situation; that is, one that is achieved by completing another action, as in the example of “sitting down” in example (77) above.
- *-jii* marks the clause for subjective speaker involvement. Its main function is to mark a state, but it may also be used as the subjective counterpart of the objective perfective aspect suffix *-jia*. This occurs in declarative clauses with second and third person subjects, where subjective speaker involvement is expressed by replacing *-jia* with *-jii*.
- And, if this hypothesis regarding stative marking is true, why is it that *-jia* functions as a stative aspect marker only with certain kinds of verbs, when *-jii* is a common stative aspect marker in clauses marked for subjective speaker involvement? The explanation is that for subjective speaker involvement, separate suffixes marking perfective aspect

⁷ However, one would need additional data to definitively state whether or not this always holds true, or if *-wa* could possibly also mark subjective speaker involvement in similar contexts. In section 3.2.2.1 I shall present examples where *-wa* occurs with a non-first person subject in *subordinate clauses*, marking the clause for subjective.

(*-wa*) and stative aspect (*-jii*) occur, when the objective speaker involvement suffix *-jia* fills both functions. Furthermore, in a clause with certain verbs such as one sees in example (77) above, there is no confusion about whether *-jia* refers to an action that is happening at the moment, or to a past event (i.e., if there are no discourse elements that would make one conclude that the event is in the past); and thus, *-jia* occurs marking a state. With other types of verbs utilizing *-jia*, this suffix marks the clause for perfective aspect (and usually refers to a past event). Therefore the objective imperfective aspect suffix *-na* must occur to describe an ongoing situation.

2.2 Imperfective Aspect Suffixes *-nii* and *-na*

The suffixes *-nii* and *-na* mark the verb for imperfective aspect.⁸ Suffix *-nii* marks the clause for subjective speaker involvement, while *-na* marks objective as illustrated below. Usually the clause refers to a present situation or to a habitual event, but not always. This anomaly is illustrative in example (91).

- (84) *Bu you-nii*
1:SG walk-SUBJ:IMPERF
I am walking.
- (85) *Tie you-na*
3:SG walk-OBJ:IMPERF
He is walking.
- (86) *Bu iidaadu ula ghari-la xi-nii*
1:SG often hill climb-PURP go-SUBJ:IMPERF
I go often to climb hills.
- (87) *Budangula iidaade shigaangi qii dian-nu sghou-du*
1:PL often mostly seven:o'clock-NOMLZR time-DAT
uqi-nii
eat-SUBJ:IMPERF
We usually eat at seven o'clock.
- (88) *Saayuo niiman sara manta-na*
potatoes eight month dig-OBJ:IMPERF
Potatoes are dug up in August.

⁸ Worthy of note is that Qinggeertai (1989:67) analyzes *-nii* and *-na* as a progressive verbal adverb, i.e., a (*-n*) + auxiliary (*-ii/-a*) construction, where the auxiliary marks the subjective/objective perspective (speaker involvement). In addition, according to Wu (1996:60-61), several related languages—among them, Mongolian, Dagur, Yogur, and Dongxiang—seem to utilize the same mechanism (i.e., imperfective particle + auxiliary) to indicate a progressive aspect.

As I noted earlier in section 1.1.1, the imperfective aspect suffixes *-nii* and *-na* do not occur in negative clauses. When the clause is negated, the neutral imperfective aspect suffix *-m/-n* is used instead:

- (89) *Bu you-m gui, moor tirie-de hamburaa-nii*
 1:SG walk-IMPERF SUBJ:NEG:COP road side-LOC rest-SUBJ:IMPERF
 I am not walking; I'm resting by the road.
- (90) *Tie you-m gua, moor tirie-de hamburaa-na*
 3:SG walk-IMPERF OBJ:NEG:COP road side-LOC rest-OBJ:IMPERF
 He is not walking; he's resting by the road.

-nii and *-na* usually refer to a present situation or to a habitual event, but sometimes they refer to a past event:

- (91) *Qigudur⁹ dianshi-re kilie-na niudur tingera uro-guna*
 yesterday television-LOC say-OBJ:IMPERF today sky rain-OBJ:FUT
 Yesterday they said on the TV that it would rain today.

In the following examples I illustrate differences in meaning, when the subjective imperfective aspect suffix *-nii* is replaced by the subjective stative aspect suffix *-jii* (discussed in the previous section).

- (92) *Bu nie youbii-nu wari-nii*
 1:SG this pen-ACC take-SUBJ:IMPERF
 I am picking up this pen.

Here the action to which the speaker refers is picking up the pen. The person is already moving his/her hand towards the pen in order to take hold of it, and is in the process of picking it up. Thus, the imperfective aspect is utilized. When the suffix *-jii* is used, the speaker is referring to the resulting state of holding the pen:

- (93) *Bu nie youbii-nu wari-jii*
 1:SG this pen-ACC take-SUBJ:STATE
 I am holding this pen.

2.3 Imperfective Aspect Suffix *-nu/-ni*

The imperfective aspect suffix *-nii* has certain restrictions. When the verb is a non-control verb, this suffix usually does not occur. In a clause, as in (94) below, it is possible to have the suffix *-nii* occur, but such an occurrence is quite rare. Usually one hears the imperfective aspect suffix *-nu/-ni*, as in:

⁹ Note here that the time adverbial *qigudur* 'yesterday' gives the time reference, which is not indicated in the verbal suffix.

- (94) *Bu mudie-nu*
 1:SG know-IMPERF
 I know.

It seems to me—as I have glossed in the following two examples—that the two forms, *-nu* [–nu] and *-ni* [–nə], do not exhibit any difference in meaning:

- (95) *Bu tie-nu muula-nu*
 1:SG 3:SG-ACC think-IMPERF
 I miss her/him.

- (96) *Bu tie-nu muula-ni*
 1:SG 3:SG-ACC think-IMPERF
 I miss her/him.

Parenthetically, this suffix has not been mentioned in any published studies of Mongghul of which I am aware. However, many Mongolic languages have similar sounding cognates, but those cognates seem to have more to do with the suffix *-m/-n*, which I shall discuss in the next section (2.4).

In my database the suffix *-nu/-ni* —with only one exception—occurs with a non-control verb, as we can see in the following examples. It occurs in contexts where, if you would have a control verb, instead of a non-control verb, subjective imperfective aspect suffix *-nii* would occur:

- (97) *Bu biesi-nu*
 1:SG be:happy-IMPERF
 I am happy.

- (98) *Bu diannao yongla-gu mudie-nu*
 1:SG computer use-NOMLZR know-IMPERF
 I know how to use a computer.

- (99) *Bu qi-nu sgil-nu wari ada-nu*
 1:SG 2:SG-GEN heart-ACC catch can't-IMPERF
 I can't trust you.

- (100) *Bu ... kama-la da lii suri-lde-nu*
 1:SG anyone-COM also NEG study-RECIPR-IMPERF
 I ... haven't come to know anyone.

- (101) *Bu tie-nu durla-ni*
 1:SG 3:SG-ACC like-IMPERF
 I like her.

- (102) *Bu tie-nu tani-ni*
 1:SG 3:SG:ACC know-IMPERF
 I know him.

In (103) I present an example of this suffix in an interrogative clause, with a second person subject:

- (103) *Qi amahgii maha die-gu durla-nu?*
 2:SG how meat eat-NOMLZR like-IMPERF
 How do you like to eat meat?

An interrogative clause with a second person subject implies subjective marking. But in the example above, where a non-control verb occurs—*durla* in this case¹⁰—the clause is not marked for subjective. Instead, the same verb form is used as for a first person subject in a declarative clause.

One may ask, what would explain the need for the additional imperfective aspect suffix, in addition to *-nii* and *-na*? I shall demonstrate in section 3 that subjective speaker involvement is characterized—as the name implies—by the fact that the speaker is personally involved. With non-control verbs involvement of the speaker is less clear, and in section 3 I will also illustrate that even though non-control verbs can be marked for subjective speaker involvement, usually they are not. This explains the absence of *-nii* here. And, if utilizing the subjective imperfective aspect marker *-nii* is not possible, what about its objective counterpart *-na*? In section 3 I shall show that objective marking is used with a first person subject, (a) when the speaker indicates that he/she is not in control of the event, (b) that he/she doesn't want to assume responsibility for it, or (c) when otherwise he/she wants to distance him/herself from the event. With non-control verbs, not being in control does not lie in the circumstance, but is inherent in the verb. In situations, as illustrated in examples (94) to (103), the speaker doesn't take distance from the event or doesn't deny responsibility; therefore there is no need for objective marking, and thus *-na* never occurs. On the other hand, as I just noted, a non-control verb resists being marked for subjective speaker involvement, and thus, I propose, the neutral imperfective aspect suffix *-nu/-ni* occurs.

I have one example in my data of *-nu/-ni* occurring with a third person subject, and where the verb is a control verb, namely:

- (104) *Iidaa-waanu, tie ama da ii kilie-nu*
 be:tired-PERF 3:SG what also NEG say-IMPERF
 Being tired, he didn't say anything.

One might ask: why is it used here with a control verb, and with a third person subject? The answer, in part, is found in the previous section where I observed that imperfective aspect

¹⁰ Beside occurring with the verb *durla* 'be like', the suffix *-nu* also occurs with the following non-control verbs in my database: *ada* 'cannot', *biesi* 'be happy', *mudie* 'know', *shda* 'can', *sunoshda* 'hear', *surilde* 'become acquainted with one another', *tani* 'know a person'.

suffixes *-nii* (subjective) and *-na* (objective) never occur in a negative clause. Thus, whether control verb or not, or whether third person subject or not, **ii kilie-na* and **ii kilie-nii* can never occur. But rather the imperfective aspect/future tense suffix *-m/-n* is found in this position (i.e., *ii kilie-m*). In addition, *ii kilie-m* usually communicates that the person doesn't *want* to speak, and thus never occurs in this situation either.

On the other hand, this verb rarely occurs in perfective aspect, even when referring to past events. These two reasons might explain the use of suffix *-nu* in this context. Another solution could be that even though *kilie* is a control verb, contextually it occurs here in a non-control situation (i.e., the person speaking merely refrains from comment due to fatigue), and therefore *-nu* is used instead of *-m*.

The objective imperfective aspect suffix *-na* doesn't imply control or involvement, as its counterpart *-nii* does. I assume that this is the reason why it is used in declarative clauses with second and third person subjects, also with non-control verbs:

- (105) *Tie diannaoyoungla-gumudie-na*
 3:SG computer use-NOMLZR know-OBJ:IMPERF
 He knows how to use a computer.

2.4 Imperfective Aspect/Future Tense Suffix *-m/-n*

The tense suffix *-m/-n* has cognates in all Mongolic languages (Wu 1996:58). For example it occurs in Mongolian as: *-na/-ne*, in Dagur as: *-n*, in Baonan as: *-m/-na/-n*, in Dongxiang as: *-nə/-mu*, in Mangghuer as: *-ni*, etc. And in a majority of these languages, including Mongghul, this suffix refers both to present and future time. In Mangghuer, however, it is reported to function exclusively as a future tense marker (Slater 2003:213-214).

It would appear that the two forms, *-m* and *-n*, are alternative forms without any difference in meaning. Some scholars propose that, in related languages, the two forms have different functions, but other scholars dispute that proposition (Wu 1996:63-65).

In Mongghul, as in other related languages, this suffix refers to the present situation or to general facts, when it is used with a stative verb. For example, in a discussion of Mongolian languages, Wu (1996:60) states: "...the semantic meaning of a verb takes an important role because a stative verb indicates a situation prolonged over a much longer period of time than just the present moment of speech". On the other hand, when used with a dynamic verb, *-m/-n* refers to a future time.

2.4.1 *-m/-n* as Imperfective Aspect Marker

In section 2.2 above I presented the imperfective aspect markers *-nii* and *-na*, and in 2.3 the imperfective aspect marker *-nu/-ni*. Among the three markers, *-nii* marked the clause for subjective speaker involvement, *-na* for objective, and *-nu/-ni* was the neutral marker. At this point—although briefly mentioned earlier in this paper (0.2) and (2.3)—I introduce yet another imperfective aspect marker; viz., *-m/-n*. This marker is also neutral to speaker involvement, as

well as, its use closely resembles that of the suffix *-nu/-ni* in other aspects. In addition, similar to related languages, this Mongghul aspect marker usually occurs with stative verbs, as I illustrate below:

- (106) *Bu mudie-m*
 1:SG know-IMPERF
 I know.
- (107) *Tie muxi shda-m*
 3:SG read can-IMPERF
 He can read.
- (108) *Bu qimu sge-m*
 1:SG 2:SG:DAT see-IMPERF
 I see you.

Wu's (1996:60) assertion that with stative verbs this suffix refers to a timeless fact, rather than to the present time, seems to be supported by the response I received from a native speaker, when I presented him with the following examples, and asked his opinion as to what the difference might be between the two:

- (109) *Bu muxi shda-m*
 1:SG read can-IMPERF
 I can read.
- (110) *Bu muxi shda-nu*
 1:SG read can-IMPERF
 I can read.

My Mongghul language assistant answered that (109) addresses the *general fact that the speaker can read*, while in (110) the speaker tells us that he/she *can understand* something that he/she is reading *at the moment*.

Thus, might one conclude that the difference between the two suffixes *-ni/-nu* and *-m/-n*, is that (a.) the former occurs in situations that are more bound to present situation, and (b.) the latter occurs in those situations referring to a timeless fact? Actually, this seems to be the case in examples (109) and (110). However, this does not hold true in all situations. For instance, in (99), (101) and (102) (found in section 2.3), I presented examples of using *-nu* in a statement that is not bound to the present situation. In addition, in (108) one sees a situation that is bound to the present, yet *-m* is now utilized.

What I have observed is that this suffix *always* occurs in an environment when a verb with future tense suffix *-gunii*, or with imperfective aspect suffix *-nii* or *-na* is negated. I illustrate this situation in examples (111) to (113) below. Notice that in these examples the imperfective aspect suffix *-m/-n* is used with a dynamic verb.

- (111) *Bu ii you-m*
 1:SG NEG go-FUT
 I will not go.
- (112) *Bu you-m gui, moor tirie-de hamburaa-nii*
 1:SG walk-IMPERF SUBJ:NEG:COP road side-LOC rest-SUBJ:IMPERF
 I am not walking; I'm resting by the road.
- (113) *Tie you-m gua, moor tirie-de hamburaa-na*
 3:SG walk-IMPERF OBJ:NEG:COP road side-LOC rest-OBJ:IMPERF
 He is not walking; he's resting by the road.

Suffix *-n* also has a special function when repeated to express that the agent is constantly occupied with some kind of action:

- (114) *Dii ningaa muula-n muula-n, duo bu nie tidaa-sa...*
 then that:way think-IMPERF think-IMPERF now 1:SG this run:away-COND
 Then (I) was thinking, and thinking, if (I) now would run away...
- (115) *Dii sou-n sou-n sou-n sou-n-sa,*
 then sit-IMPERF sit-IMPERF sit-IMPERF sit-IMPERF-ABL
- duo dii tidaa ada-guna bei*
 now then run:away can:not-OBJ:FUT EMPH
 Then (I) was sitting, sitting, sitting, and sitting; thus (I) could not run away.

2.4.2 *-m/-n as Future Tense Marker*

As mentioned earlier, with dynamic verbs the *-m/-n* suffix marks future tense, as illustrated in the following example:

- (116) *Tingera uro-m*
 sky rain-FUT
 It will rain.

This suffix is not a general future tense suffix in the sense that, with a first person subject, it can be used only under certain conditions illustrated below. For example, the following clause would be incorrect:

- (117) **Budangula ayil-de xji-m*
 1:PL village-LOC go-FUT
 We are going to the village.

It is, however, possible to say (non-first person subject):

- (118) *Tiengula ayil-de xji-m*
 3:PL village-LOC go-FUT
 They are going to the village.

It is also possible to say the following (first person subject, irrealis):

- (119) *Budangula ayil-de lii xji-m*
 1:PL village-LOC NEG go-FUT
 We are not going to the village.

- (120) *Budangula ayil-de xji-m gui*
 1:PL village-LOC go-FUT SUBJ:NEG:COP
 We are not going to the village.

- (121) *Wargenje budangula ayil-de xji-m*
 perhaps 1:PL village-LOC go-FUT
 Perhaps we will go to the village.

When I was eliciting verbs occurring in different situations, where this future tense suffix occurred with a first person subject, I was always told that a clause, as in (117), was not possible to say. However, in a clause such as (122)—where an adverb occurs as part of the clause—I got two different answers: Sometimes I was told that it was not grammatically possible; other times it was seen as valid.

- (122) *?Bu malang xji-m*
 1:SG tomorrow go-FUT
 I'll go tomorrow.

My conclusion, then, is that with a first person subject, the future tense suffix *-m/-n* can be used with a first person subject only in irrealis situations, or when the intention of the speaker is less definite. I further propose that, because *-m/-n* is neutral to speaker involvement, it cannot be used in a clause such as (117). When the speaker states something about him/herself concerning the future; e.g., something he/she is going to do, that person is very much involved. This is singularly the most important characteristic of subjective speaker involvement, and thus, I believe that the subjective suffix *-gunii* is required in a clause, as in (117). Only when the involvement of the speaker is weakened—as contextually occurs in (121)—does *-m/-n* also become possible with first person subject.

Note too that a clause with this suffix does not necessarily refer to a future event at the moment of utterance. It can also refer to a future event with a reference point that at the time of utterance is already in the past:

- (123) *Bu tangulo-du 'kual-laa taag-aa dii'*
 1:SG 2:PL-DAT foot-REFLPOSS put:down-PERF do
gi-ji ii kilie-sa, tangulo amaga kual-laa da
 QUOTE-IMPERF NEG say-COND 2:PL how feet-REFLPOSS also
taagi-n gua-sa
 put:down-FUT OBJ:NEG:COP-COND
 Even though I didn't tell you to put your feet down, why didn't you do that?¹¹

2.5 Future Tense Suffixes *-gunii* and *-guna*

In Mongghul the most commonly used future tense suffixes are *-gunii* and *-guna*. While *-gunii* marks subjective speaker involvement, *-guna* marks objective speaker involvement.¹²

Below I present a number of examples of *-gunii/-guna* marking future tense:

- (124) *Bu tannu kudu re-sa Lama Danzu-naa*
 1:SG 2:PL:GEN home come-COND Lama Danzu-REFLPOSS
tiera-anu ndirie re-gunii
 carry-PERF here come-SUBJ:FUT
 When I come to your home, I'll come here having carried my Lama Danzhu.¹³
- (125) *Bu buzen-du sai awu-la xi-gunii*
 1:SG town-LOC vegetables buy-PURP go-SUBJ:FUT
 I will go to the town to buy vegetables.
- (126) *Tie huino shiga re-guna*
 3:SG afterward big come-OBJ:FUT
 Later, he'll be tall.
- (127) *Guguxiu xinie-sa uro-guna*
 cuckoo smile-COND rain-OBJ:FUT
 When the cuckoo smiles, it will rain.

Sometimes the forms *-gui* or *-gua* occur, instead of *-gunii/-guna*. Following discussions with a native speaker, my impression is that *-gui* and *-gua* are used, when the statement is less definite. Additional research, of course, would either confirm or deny this conclusion.

¹¹ This example originates in a folk story where a monk student, possessing miraculous powers, has commanded bronze and wooden statues to lift up their feet, so that he might quickly dust the platform under their feet. However, when his master comes home and wonders why all the statues have their feet up in the air, the monk student blames the statues for not having put their feet down. He blames them even though he hadn't actually told them to do that.

¹² Parenthetically, Qinggeertai (1991:245-248) treats *-gunii/-guna* as an 'imperfective participle *-gun* + auxiliary verb *-ii/-a*' construction, where the auxiliary marks the subjective/objective aspect.

¹³ A child's name

(128) *Bu szu-nu anjii sghaadi-gui?*
 1:SG water-ACC where pour-SUBJ:FUT
 Where do I pour the water?

(129) *Tie malang buzen xi-gua*
 3:SG tomorrow city go-OBJ:FUT
 He goes tomorrow to the city.

Similar to how the suffix *-m/-n* functions, a clause with the suffix *-gunii/-guna* does not necessarily refer to a future event at the moment of utterance. That is, one can occur as reference to a future event, where the reference point is in the past.

(130) *Busaha bu qigudur re-gunii,*
 Originally 1:SG yesterday come-SUBJ:FUT

tirga huaila-a xi-jia
 car break-PERF go-OBJ:PERF
 Originally I was going to come yesterday, but the car broke down.

(131) *Bu muula-ji tie re-guna ma re-ji gua*
 1:SG think-IMPERF 3:SG come-OBJ:FUT PRT come-IMPERF OBJ:NEG:COP
 I thought he would come, but he didn't.

Note that in Mongghul there is no lexical verb to express 'want to do something'. However, it may be expressed by using the suffixes *-gunii* and *-guna* as in the following examples:

(132) *Bu nie-nge lom-nu moxi-gunii*
 1:SG this-SG:INDEF book-ACC read-SUBJ:FUT
 I want to read this book.

(133) *Bu suri-la xi-gunii*
 1:SG study-PURP go-SUBJ:FUT
 I want to go to study.

(134) *Awu-nu hudu suri-ji sei na, ngan niga sgil*
 big:brother-POSS very study-IMPERF good OBJ:COP 3:SG one heart

shiga xuetang moxi-guna
 big school study-OBJ:FUT
 (Her) big brother studied very hard, (because) with all his heart he wanted to study at a university.

Faehndrich (2007:161-162) states that in the Karlong (Fulaan Nura) variety of Mongghul, *-gunii* and *-guna* expresses past tense in stories and songs. I have encountered two examples of *-guna* in my database that function similarly, one of which I present below:

- (135) *Gen kilie-guna: "Tani nie bulii-ni ma*
3:SG say-OBJ:FUT 2:PL:GEN this son-ACC PRT

duo bu jiu huni-maa ii diraa-lgha-n
now 1:SG then sheep-REFLPOSS NEG pasture-CAUS-FUT
He said: "This son of yours, now, I will not make him pasture my sheep."

Elsewhere, I came across something very similar to Faehndrich's observation, which I believe sheds additional light on this phenomenon. It occurred when Mr. Diao Zhong, my language resource person, retold something another person had said, and at the same time changed it to what he thought to be a "more proper" storytelling form. That is, clause (136)—the original utterance—was changed into what occurs in (137), and clause (138)—another fragment of the original utterance—was changed into what occurs in (139). Notice that *-guna* is added after the aspect marker (perfective aspect or imperfective aspect) in both repetitions.

- (136) *Aadie sgil-du-naa ningoji muula-jia ha, ...*
grandfather heart-DAT-REFLPOSS this:way think-OBJ:PERF PRT
The grandfather was thinking this way in his heart...

- (137) *Aadie sgil-du-naa ningoji muula-jii-guna, ...*
grandfather heart-DAT-REFLPOSS this:way think-SUBJ:PERF-OBJ:FUT
The grandfather was thinking this way in his heart...

- (138) *Nie pagxi jiu aasi tou-la xi-na ha...*
this monk:student then cow drive-PURP go-OBJ:IMPERF PRT
This monk student goes off then driving cows...¹⁴

- (139) *Nie pagxi jiu aasi tou-la xi-nii-guna...*
this monk:student then cow drive-PURP go-SUBJ:IMPERF-OBJ:FUT
This monk student goes off then driving cows...

To summarize: the objective form *-jia* is replaced with the subjective form *-jii*, after *-guna* is added. The same thing happens with the objective form *-na*. That is, it is replaced with *-nii*. And the reason for this most likely is the same as what we have in the examples (140) and (141) below. This feature of adding the future tense suffix after an aspect suffix is not limited exclusively to storytelling, but also occurs in daily use, as in (140) and (141) below. Here it has a clear function of expressing the speaker's assumption of what will happen in the future. And his/her assumption explains the marking for subjective speaker involvement (see section 3.2.2):

- (140) *Malang nie sghou-du qi you-nii-guna*
Tomorrow this time-DAT 2:SG walk-SUBJ:IMPERF-OBJ:FUT
Tomorrow at this time you'll be walking (I think).

¹⁴ Contextually, note that in this example (138), the storyteller is not talking about a situation happening in the present, even though the imperfective aspect suffix *-na* is utilized. Rather, he is telling us about something that had happened in the past.

- (141) *Malang nie sghou-du qi tirga-de-ra sou-jii-guna*
 Tomorrow this time-DAT 2:SG bus-DAT-LOC sit-SUBJ:STATE-OBJ:FUT
 Tomorrow at this time you'll be sitting on the bus (I think).

Worthy of note is that this may explain the use of this particular suffix in storytelling; viz., using it for literary effect. For instance, clause (137) could then be translated as something similar to: “The grandfather would then have been thinking this way in his heart...” If this explanation holds true, one might conclude that *-guna* in (135) is simply a morphophonemic contraction of *-nii-guna*.

2.6 Perfective Participle *-san* in Finite Use

The perfective participle *-san* can also be used finitely, as Qinggeertai (1991:243-244) has earlier observed. It is used together with imperfective aspect suffixes *-nii* and *-na*, and refers to a past event, as in the following examples:

- (142) *Nie mori-ni bu awu-san-nii*
 this horse-ACC 1:SG buy-PERF-SUBJ:IMPERF
 I bought this horse.
- (143) *Bu nie mori-ni awu-san-nii*
 1:SG this horse-ACC buy-PERF-SUBJ:IMPERF
 I bought this horse.
- (144) *Nie mori-ni tie awu-san-na*
 this horse-ACC 3:SG buy-PERF-OBJ:IMPERF
 He bought this horse.

3. Subjective/Objective Speaker Involvement Distinction

Mongghul finite verbs are marked for *subjective/objective* distinction, or they are neutral to distinction. These terms are adopted from the work of Qinggeertai, Chen, and Slater, who apply each to their analyses of Mongghul (Qinggeertai 1991:252-268; Chinggeltai¹⁵ 1989), of Baonan (Chen 1987, 1989:29), and of Mangghuer (Slater 2003:340-384). Chen comments (1987:195) that among the modern Mongolic languages, only Mongghul, Baonan and Mangghuer have subjective/objective distinctions. The subjective/objective system is closely related to the “conjunct/disjunct” system commonly found in Bodic languages (Slater 2003:194).

Initially, one might conclude that the subjective/objective distinction found in Mongghul finite verbs is a function of person agreement. That is, in indicative sentences the subjective form occurs with a first person subject, and the objective forms with a second or third person subject. However, upon more thorough observation, one finds that the system is actually much more complex.

¹⁵ Note that *Chinggeltai* is an alternate English spelling of the same linguist elsewhere written as *Qinggeertai*.

Since the proposition of what person agreement marks was first postulated, there have been a number of theories advanced to define it; for example: that it contrasts (1) definite vs. indefinite mood, (2) affirmation vs. non-affirmation, (3) directness vs. indirectness, (4) seen vs. unseen, (5) direct narration vs. indirect narration, (6) anticipation vs. non-anticipation, and (7) imagination vs. reality.

In his book *A Grammar of Mangghuer* Slater (2003) was the first linguist to introduce the term *speaker involvement*. I believe that *speaker involvement* is indeed key to describing the Mongghul subjective/objective system, and thus, I too use this term. Actually, it appears that the grammatical systems of Mongghul and Mangghuer are quite similar, and that is why I will cite Slater regularly in this section.

In subsections 3.1 to 3.4 below I first present the general rules of speaker involvement, followed by how these basic rules are manipulated under certain conditions, then how the same subjective/objective distinctions are expressed through a converb+auxiliary construction, and lastly, I draw several significant conclusions.

3.1 General Rules in Marking Speaker Involvement

In this section I discuss, as well as illustrate, the general rules of marking speaker involvement in declarative and interrogative clauses, which behave differently from one other. In addition, I discuss and then illustrate how speaker involvement is marked in copula clauses.

3.1.1 Marking Speaker Involvement in Declarative Clauses

In declarative clauses a distinction is made between one occurring with first person subject, and one occurring with second or third person subject. That is, a clause with a first person subject is marked for subjective speaker involvement, and a clause with a second or third person subject is marked for objective involvement. This holds true regardless of the tense or aspect of the verb. In addition, there are tense and aspect suffixes that are neutral to subjective/objective marking.

(145) *Bu re-wa*
1:SG come-SUBJ:PERF
I came.

(146) *Qi re-jia*
2:SG come-OBJ:PERF
You came.

(147) *Tie re-jia*
3:SG come-OBJ:PERF
He came.

(148) *Bu you-nii*
1:SG walk-SUBJ:IMPERF
I am walking.

(149) *Qi you-na*
 2:SG walk-OBJ:IMPERF
 You are walking.

(150) *Tie you-na*
 3:SG walk-OBJ:IMPERF
 He is walking.

(151) *Bu re-gunii*
 1:SG come-SUBJ:FUT
 I will come.

(152) *Qi re-guna*
 2:SG come-OBJ:FUT
 You will come.

(153) *Tie re-guna*
 3:SG come-OBJ:FUT
 He will come.

3.1.2 Marking Speaker Involvement in Interrogative Clauses

In interrogative clauses, the general rule is that subjective speaker involvement marking is used in second person questions, and objective marking in first and third person questions:

(154) *Qi xuetang-du xi-wuu?*
 2:SG school-LOC go-SUBJ:PERF:QUEST
 Did you go to school?

(155) *Bu xuetang-du xi-jia-nu?*
 1:SG school-LOC go-OBJ:PERF-QUEST
 Did I go to school?

(156) *Bulai-ngula xuetang-du xi-jia-nu?*
 Child-PL school-LOC go-OBJ:PERF-QUEST
 Did the children go to school?

Nevertheless, it is not uncommon to have subjective marking in third person questions, as in (157). It is also possible to have objective marking in second person questions, as in (158), but this is rare. Note, in the next section (3.1.3) I illustrate that in interrogative copula clauses first person questions may also occur with subjective markings.

(157) *Bulai-ngula xuetang-du xi-wuu?*
 Child-PL school-LOC go-SUBJ:PERF:QUEST
 Did the children go to school?

- (158) *Qi re-jia-nu?*
 2:SG come-OBJ:PERF-QUEST
 You came?

3.1.3 Marking Speaker Involvement in Copula Clauses

Copula clauses are also marked for subjective/objective distinction, and this marking follows the same basic rules as in other clauses. That is, a declarative copula clause with a first person subject is marked for subjective speaker involvement. And with a second or third person subject, it is marked for objective speaker involvement, as illustrated below:

- (159) *Bu Fenlan kun ii*
 1:SG Finland person SUBJ:COP
 I am Finnish.
- (160) *Qi Zhonggui kun na*
 2:SG China person OBJ:COP
 You are Chinese.
- (161) *Ngan Helan kun na*
 3:SG Holland person OBJ:COP
 She is Dutch.
- (162) *Bianhua shiga wa*
 change big OBJ:COP
 The change is big.

Now, with the negative copula I illustrate subjective/objective distinctions:

- (163) *Bu Zhonggui kun puxii*
 1:SG China person SUBJ:NEG:COP
 I'm not a Chinese person.
- (164) *Qi Zhonggui kun puxia*
 2:SG China person OBJ:NEG:COP
 You're not a Chinese person.
- (165) *Tie Zhonggui kun puxia*
 3:SG China person OBJ:NEG:COP
 He's not a Chinese person.
- (166) *Ndaa youbii gui*
 1:SG:DAT pen SUBJ:NEG:COP
 I don't have a pen.

- (167) *Qimu youbii gua*
 2:SG:DAT pen OBJ:NEG:COP
 You don't have a pen.
- (168) *Tiendu youbii gua*
 3:SG:DAT pen OBJ:NEG:COP
 He doesn't have a pen.
- (169) *Daaran gua*
 cold OBJ:NEG:COP
 It is not cold.

However, with the negative attributive copulas, there is no definitive rule for subjective marking. Thus, in (166) we could also have *gua*.

The general rule for interrogative clauses is that subjective marking is used in second person questions, and objective marking is used in first and third person questions. Note, in the previous section (3.1.2) I illustrated that these interrogative clauses follow this general rule less strictly than the declarative clauses do. This deviation from the norm occurs with greater frequency with interrogative copula clauses. In the following examples I illustrate a first person question occurring with subjective marking in (170), and a third person question receiving subjective marking in (175) and (176).

- (170) *Bu laosi weiu?*
 1:SG teacher SUBJ:COP:QUEST
 Am I a teacher?
- (171) *Qi laosi weiu?*
 2:SG teacher SUBJ:COP:QUEST
 Are you a teacher?
- (172) *Tie laosi wanu?*
 3:SG teacher OBJ:COP-QUEST
 Is he/she a teacher?
- (173) *Qi anjii-gu kun ii?*
 2:SG where-NOMLZR person SUBJ:COP
 Where are you from?
- (174) *Nie yaan na?*
 this what OBJ:COP
 What is this?
- (175) *Qinu gar shiga weiu?*
 2:SG:GEN house big SUBJ:COP:QUEST
 Is your house big?

- (176) *Qinu gar amahgii shiga wei?*
 2:SG:GEN house how big SUBJ:COP
 How big is your house?

In the following section I illustrate situations where subjective/objective markings deviate from the general rule. Note that none of these situations explain the exceptions in the behaviour of interrogative clauses; one would need additional data to draw upon to form those conclusions.

3.2 Manipulation of the Basic System

Thus far I have presented the basic principles of how the subjective/objective system works. These are, once again:

1. Declarative clauses receive a subjective marking with a first person subject; they receive an objective marking with a second or third person subject.
2. Interrogative clauses receive a subjective marking with a second person subject; they receive an objective marking with a first or third person subject.

Now I present different situations where these basic principles do not apply; first in section 3.2.1, where a declarative clause with a first person subject receives either an objective or neutral marking; and secondly in section 3.2.2, where a declarative clause with a second or third person subject receives a subjective marking.

3.2.1 Clauses with First Person Subjects Receiving Objective or Neutral Marking

Regarding Mongghul clauses with first person subjects receiving objective markings, Slater (2003:349) describes a feature quite similar in a related-language, Mangghuer. Slater states: “When objective marking is used with a first person subject in a declarative clause, the speaker distances him- or herself from the action. This is interpreted to mean that the speaker was not in control of the act being reported, or that she does not wish to assume responsibility for the event.” And what Slater describes, can also be seen in the following Mongghul examples:

Note that in this first clause the speaker sees him/herself not being in control. The speaker is told to come and simply must comply.

- (177) *Bu re-guna*
 1:SG come-OBJ:FUT
 I’ll come (because I am told to).

In (178) subjective marking never occurs. Contextually, the speaker expresses here that he and those with him cannot help missing another person, and thus thinking about him/her. That is, the speaker is not in control of the emotion of longing.

- (178) *Budangula batsar xi-sa durang muula-guna*
 1:PL city go-COND still think-OBJ:FUT
 When we go to the city, we'll still miss (you).

In (179) the speaker estimates the time at which he/she might arrive, but is not completely in control of the precise hour.

- (179) *Bu muula-sa kidi qiag huino kuri-guna*
 1:SG think-COND a:few hour after arrive-OBJ:PERF
 I think I'll arrive in a few hours.

In (180) the reason to use an objective marking is likely due to the fact that graduating was something that the speaker could not directly control him/herself.

- (180) *...dii bu nie xuetang-sa biiniila-jia*
 then 1:SG this school-ABL graduate-OBJ:PERF
 ...then I graduated from this school.

Again, in (181), the speaker appears to be getting used to something, which is not directly under his/her control.

- (181) *Bu sou-waa sur-aa xi-jia*
 1:SG sit-PERF learn-PERF go-OBJ:PERF
 I am used to it.

In the example below (182), it appears that an objective marking is also possible, when the speaker does not particularly distance him/herself from the event—in the sense of not having control or not assuming responsibility—but rather when he/she looks at the event from a distance. The speaker looks at something he/she has done in the past, and in expressing that situation utilizes the imperfective aspect, not the perfective aspect. It is as if he/she looks back in time, when the action was still happening:

- (182) *Bu tiengula-de diuli-jin qigharaa-jin surghua-na*
 1:SG 3:PL-DAT dance-HAB sing-HAB teach-OBJ:IMPERF
 I taught them to dance and sing.

In the following example (183) a certain distance from the action is also expressed; that is, the speaker suddenly remembers that he/she has read the book:

- (183) *Bu nie pujig nou-jia*
 1:SG this book look/read-OBJ:PERF
 Oh yes, I have read this book.

3.2.1.1 Non-control Verbs

When a first person subject occurs with a verb expressing emotion or perception, usually neutral or objective marking is utilized. We can explain this by the fact that the subject doesn't have control over these actions. However, subjective marking is also possible. Thus, one concludes that non-control verbs resist subjective marking, but at times do allow it. It would appear that in the imperfective aspect either a neutral or subjective marking is consistently used.

In examples (184) to (186) I illustrate the verb *durla* 'to be like' in a number of situations with objective, neutral, or subjective marking:

(184) *Dii sou-waanu bu nigedu mounghila-anu*
Then sit-PERF 1:SG a:bit be:home:sick-PERF

*bu jiu tidaa-gu durla-**ja** nigadu*
1:SG just run:away-NOMLZR like-OBJ:PERF a:bit
Staying (there) then, I was home-sick and just wanted to run away.

(185) *Bu tie-nu durla-**nu***
1:SG 3:SG-ACC like-IMPERF
I like her.

(186) *Bu sayuo die-gu durla-**ni***
1:SG potatoes eat-NOMLZR like-SUBJ:IMPERF
I like to eat potatoes.

In examples (187) to (190) I illustrate the verb *mudie* 'know', which occurs with a neutral or subjective marking. In the clause 'I know' (189) subjective marking is possible, but is not common.

(187) *Bu mudie-**nu***
1:SG know-IMPERF
I know.

(188) *Bu mudie-**m***
1:SG know-IMPERF
I know.

(189) *Bu mudie-**ni***
1:SG know-IMPERF
I know.

(190) *Huino bu mudie-**wa** bu xinji tian watsar huraal wei-na*
Later 1:SG know-SUBJ:PERF 1:SG Sunday city meeting have-OBJ:IMPERF
Later I discovered that I have a meeting in the city.

In examples (191) to (193) I illustrate the verb *sge* ‘see’, which occurs with both objective and subjective marking:

- (191) *Bu qimu luan sge-**ji***
 1:SG 2:SG:DAT a:lot see-OBJ:PERF
 I have seen you a lot.
- (192) *Muxi bu qimu sge-**wa***
 before 1:SG 2:SG:DAT see-SUBJ:PERF
 Last time I saw you.
- (193) *Bu fu-nge sge-**wa***
 1:SG book-SG:INDEF see-SUBJ:PERF
 I see/saw a book.

The verb *biesi* ‘be happy’, which expresses an emotion, with very few exceptions, occurs in a neutral verb form. Note that the possibility of subjective marking materialized only after elicitation. Thus, example (195)—the elicited form—is somewhat suspect.

- (194) *Bu biesi-**nu***
 1:SG be:happy-IMPERF
 I am happy.
- (195) ? *Bu biesi-**ni***
 1:SG be:happy-SUBJ:IMPERF
 I am happy.

3.2.1.2 Negative Clauses

In a negative clause the finite verb is never marked for subjective speaker involvement. The negative copula verb, however, appears both in an objective form as well as a subjective.

The subjective future tense suffix *-gunii* never occurs in a negative clause. That is, a clause such as in (196) is grammatically incorrect. In this environment, the neutral future tense suffix *-m/-n* must be used as it does in (197).

- (196) * *Budangula ayil-de lii xji-**gunii***
 1:PL village-LOC NEG go-SUBJ:FUT
 We are not going to the village.
- (197) *Budangula ayil-de lii xji-**m***
 1:PL village-LOC NEG go-FUT
 We are not going to the village.

When negation is expressed with a negative copula verb, as in (198), the finite verb is still neutral to speaker involvement, but the copula is marked for subjective.

- (198) *Budangula ayil-de xji-m gui*
 1:PL village-LOC go-FUT SUBJ:NEG:COP
 We are not going to the village.

The imperfective aspect suffixes *-nii* and *-na* never occur in negative clauses. A negative clause that refers to a present situation is formed with the imperfective aspect suffix *-m/-n*, which is neutral to subjective/objective distinction.

- (199) *Bu lii you-m, moor tirie-de hamburaa-nii*
 1:SG NEG walk-IMPERF road side-LOC rest-SUBJ:IMPERF
 I am not walking; I'm resting by the road.

When a clause is formed using a copula, speaker involvement is marked in the copula verb:

- (200) *Bu you-m gui, moor tirie-de hamburaa-nii*
 1:SG walk-IMPERF SUBJ:NEG:COP road side-LOC rest-SUBJ:IMPERF
 I am not walking; I'm resting by the road.

A negative clause referring to an event in the past is formed with a negative copula. The main verb is in a nonfinite form:

- (201) *Bu tie-nu tie sge-ji gui*
 1:SG 3:SG-ACC there see-IMPERF SUBJ:NEG:COP
 I didn't see him there.

3.2.2 Clauses with Second and Third Person Subjects Receiving Subjective Marking

Another clear exception to the basic principles of the subjective/objective marking system is that declarative clauses with second and third person subjects may also occur with subjective markings. Below I present a number of examples:

- (202) *Qi malang lisgi wari-nii*
 2:SG tomorrow labor take/do-SUBJ:IMPERF
 Tomorrow you'll be working (I think).
- (203) *Nie shafa juolan ii*
 this sofa soft SUBJ:COP
 This sofa is soft (I think).
- (204) *Tie tara ghadi-la xi-gunii*
 3:SG crops harvest-PURP go-SUBJ:FUT
 He will go to harvest the crops (I decided).

- (205) *Tiengula gar-du ntiraa-jii*
 3:PL room-DAT sleep-SUBJ:PERF
 They are sleeping in the room (I assume).
- (206) *Tie haraa re-jii*
 3:SG return come-SUBJ:PERF
 He has come back (I assume).
- (207) *Tie biesi-nii*
 3:SG be:happy-SUBJ:IMPERF
 He must be happy.

The most likely explanation of using subjective marking in these sentences is the speaker's personal involvement. Actually, this is the common factor in each of the sentences. For example, in (202) and (203) the speaker expresses what he *thinks* to be true. In (204) the speaker has *decided* that another person under observation must go to harvest crops. In examples (205) and (206) the speaker simply *assumes* what is happening or has happened. In (207) the speaker *concludes* that another person must be happy. Thus, each of these statements is not simply a neutral comment about another person, but rather a statement where the speaker sees him/herself involved.

Worthy of note at this point is that my analysis in the previous paragraph does not deviate from what earlier linguists have written about subjective marking with second and third person subjects in declarative clauses. For example, Slater (2003:209) writes (italics mine): “...the basic function of subjective marking is not to signal epistemological stance, but rather, *the degree to which the speaker wants to be seen as personally involved in the assertion.*” And, in the same year (2003), Georg states that he found that subjective marking is common in sentences containing a reproach. Furthermore, he suggested that the subjective form may also indicate that the speaker regarded him/herself as being in control of someone else’s actions. Lastly, Qinggeertai (1989:70) mentions speaker's subjective imagination, determination, or opinion as the cause to use subjective marking.

3.2.2.1 Finite Verbs in Subordinate Clauses

In Mongghul it is possible to have a verb with finite morphology in subordinate clauses. These clauses are always marked for subjective speaker involvement, regardless of the subject, as illustrated in the examples below:

- (208) *Bu moor-deru you-nii-sa,*
 1:SG road-LOC walk-SUBJ:IMPERF-COND
- qijie-ngi ndaa nienjilie dagla-wa*
 car-SG:INDEF 1:SG:DAT hit drop-SUBJ:PERF
 When I was walking on the road, a car almost hit me.

- (209) *Bulaingula you-wa-sa huosi-na*
 children go-SUBJ:PERF-COND be:dry-OBJ:IMPERF
 When the children have gone, it is dull.
- (210) *Tie yaan njila-nii-ha, ii mudie-nu*
 3:SG what do-SUBJ:IMPERF-CMPLZR NEG know-IMPERF
 I don't know what he is doing.
- (211) *Tie yaan njila-nii-ha, tie ii mudie-na*
 3:SG what do-SUBJ:IMPERF-CMPLZR 3:SG NEG know-OBJ:IMPERF
 He doesn't know what he is doing.
- (212) *Saagi-ji aril-gha-nii-sa*
 wipe-IMPERF clean-CAUS-SUBJ:IMPERF-COND
- dii tie purghaan da luan na bei nigadu*
 then those god also a:lot OBJ:COP EMPH a:bit
 In wiping (the area) clean, (he noticed that) there were a lot of those gods.
- (213) *Ghulo ningiji sou-ji-ha, badie uruo-ji*
 The two this:way sit-SUBJ:STATE-CMPLZR older:monk enter-IMPERF
- r-ienu ningiji nqiargang-du niga nou-sa,*
 come-PERF this:way god:room-LOC one look-COND
- "Ai nie duilan gua bei na."*
 hey this right OBJ:NEG:COP EMPH PRT
 When the two were sitting there, the older monk went to the god-room and looked
 around, (saying:) "Hey, this is not right!"
- (214) *Tie kun tigii mou-nii-sa,*
 that person that:way bad-SUBJ:IMPERF-COND,
- da qi durang ngan-la ghadiu thani-niu?*
 also 2:SG still 3:SG-COM friend know-SUBJ:IMPERF:QUEST
 Even though that person is so bad, you still know him as a friend?

All these subordinate clauses are marked for subjective speaker involvement, regardless of the subject. The same phenomenon applies to copula verbs in subordinate clauses:

- (215) *Sai gui-sa ngan die-n gua*
 vegetable SUBJ:NEG:COP-COND 3:SG eat-FUT OBJ:NEG:COP
 It (the dog) doesn't eat, if there are no vegetables.

(216) *Bu lii mudie-m*
 1:SG NEG know-IMPERF

tiengula weiu *gui-ha*
 3:PL SUBJ:COP:QUEST SUBJ:NEG:COP-CMPLZR
 I don't know whether they are at home, or not.

One will note that subjective marking systematically occurs in each of the subordinate clauses above. In (208) first person subject occurs, which explains the subjective marking. Elsewhere, in (215)—clearly a conditional clause—one could explain subjective marking by the speculation the speaker makes. That is, the person observing the dog is involved in a certain way, not merely stating a fact. And in (210) one might attempt to explain the occurrence of subjective marking by observing that the speaker is personally involved, by stating that he/she definitely knows what the other person is doing. However, this does not hold true, because subjective marking is also used, when the speaker reports a degree of uncertainty of another person, as in example (211). In each of the other clauses, however, the speaker is simply making a statement, without any speculation, inference or other kind of personal involvement. One might ask why then are the clauses marked for subjective speaker involvement.

One explanation could be that subjective marking is not triggered because the clause is subordinate, but rather due to the position of the suffix in the word. In these clauses the aspect/tense suffix is not the final constituent of the word. In section 2.5 one can see that the future tense suffix *-guna* can occur after an aspect suffix. And when *-guna* is added after an aspect suffix, an objective aspect suffix is replaced with a subjective one. But in these clauses one is faced with the same question as discussed here; viz., is subjective marking caused by the location of the aspect suffix in the word, or by the semantic contents of these clauses?

Actually, one might think of a number of explanations. For example, the fact that some of the clauses above are complement clauses, which may behave differently from independent clauses. Also, some of the clauses are copula clauses, which may have a characteristic behavior uniquely limited to those clause types.

I think it good to mention here the fact that it is possible to have a subordinate clause in which the verb occurs without any finite markings. In my data base all occurrences of this kind of subordinate clauses appear with the conditional suffix *-sa*. One would need additional data to see if unmarked subordinate clauses also appear with other suffixes. Below I present a number of examples where the conditional suffix *-sa* occurs:

(217) *Guguxiu xinie-sa uro-guna*
 cuckoo smile-COND rain-OBJ:FUT
 When the cuckoo sings, it'll rain.

(218) *Bu muula-sa tie malang re-guna*
 1:SG think-COND 3:SG tomorrow come-OBJ:FUT
 I think he'll come tomorrow.

- (219) *Dii bieri-nu awu-gu tolghui-de kuri-sa,*
then wife-ACC take-NOMLZR head-LOC reach-COND

ooo, njie-naanu kudu ama da gua
ooo self-REFLPOS home what also OBJ:NEG:COP
Then when the time to marry arrived, oh, in my own home there was nothing.

- (220) *Ujie-sa niudur kuidien na,*
see-COND today cold OBJ:COP

bu mosi-san-nu luan ii, daaran gua
1:SG wear-PERF-ACC a:lot SUBJ:COP cold OBJ:NEG:COP
Seeing it is cold today, what I am wearing is a lot; I'm not cold.

3.2.2.2 A Different Kind of Speaker Involvement

I have concluded above that in main clauses, subjective marking (with a second or third person subject) is triggered by the speaker's personal involvement; i.e., his/her inference, hypothesis, reproach, etc. In this section I introduce another kind of speaker involvement. The following are a number of illustrative sentences, where third person subjects receive a subjective marking:

- (221) *Muni aama malang butsen-du xi-gunii*
1:SG:GEN mother tomorrow town-DAT go-SUBJ:FUT
Tomorrow my mother goes to town.

- (222) *Muni bulii-ngula xiruo-du xuetang-du moxi-nii*
1:SG:GEN child-PL afternoon-DAT school-DAT read-SUBJ:IMPERF
My children go to school in the afternoon.

- (223) *Muni bulii ndaa-nu giebiizi-nu*
1:SG:GEN child/son 1:SG:DAT-GEN neighbor-GEN

huni-niinu dilaa-jin ii
sheep-POSS herd-HAB SUBJ:COP
My son herds the neighbor's sheep.

- (224) *Muni bulii Zhonggui kun ii*
1:SG:GEN child/son China person SUBJ:COP
My son is Chinese.

In each of the clauses above there does not seem to be anything that should cause subjective marking for a third person subject. The clauses are simple declarative statements, and thus one would expect objective marking. However, what is common in each of these sentences is the kinship relationship of the subject of the clause to the speaker.

Again, Slater (2003:207) reports something quite similar in Mangghuer in that in his database most of the situations, where a second or third person subject receives subjective marking in declarative sentences, each involves a kinship term. Slater states: “Perhaps a speaker’s unusually high degree of certainty regarding claims made about family members makes such statements particularly susceptible to the appearance of optional subjective marking.”

What is common in each of the examples above is: not only are kinship terms involved, but in each the speaker is also the possessor of the subject. And indeed, elsewhere in clauses where we do not have kinship terms, but where the speaker is the possessor of the subject, subjective marking also occurs:

- (225) *Muni pengyou Zhonggui kun ii*
 1:SG:GEN friend China person SUBJ:COP
 My friend is Chinese.
- (226) *Muni giebiizi huni dilaa-jin ii*
 1:SG:GEN neighbor sheep herd-HAB SUBJ:COP
 My neighbor herds the sheep.
- (227) *Muni nar han-aa du-wa*
 1:SG:GEN illness heal-PERF become-SUBJ:PERF
 I got well (lit: my illness healed).
- (228) *Munu aadal sein ii*
 1:SG:GEN life good SUBJ:COP
 My life is good.

In each of the examples above the speaker is the possessor of the subject. Thus, one might conclude that subjective marking is invariably caused by the fact that the speaker is ‘connected’ to the subject. However, this is not the case, because in example (229) below, the clause indicates that the speaker is the possessor of the object, *not* the possessor of the subject:

- (229) *Tie muni bulii surghua-nii*
 3:SG 1:SG:GEN child teach-SUBJ:IMPERF
 He is teaching my child.

Furthermore, from the following examples one will observe that subjective marking is also possible when the speaker is not the subject, neither a possessor, but simply is a referent in the clause:

- (230) *Ndaa saa ghari-wa*
 1:SG:DAT fever go.out-SUBJ:PERF
 I had a fever.

- (231) *Tie ndaa xulaa-jin ii*
 3:SG 1:SG:DAT take:care-HAB SUBJ:COP
 He is my caregiver.

In addition, subjective marking in all these situations is *optional*. That is, in each of the clauses above objective marking is also possible. Unfortunately the amount of data currently available to me is not sufficient to definitively conclude which one; i.e., objective or subjective markings are more common in these kinds of clauses.

What I have clearly demonstrated earlier in the text (3.2.2) is that, when the speaker is personally involved in a clause with a second or third person subject, the clause is marked for subjective. Now I conclude that, when the speaker is just a referent in the clause, subjective marking is possible, as well as objective marking

3.3 Subjective/Objective Marking in a Converb + Auxiliary Construction ('*du-wa*' and '*x-jia*')

Up to this point in my paper I have presented the basic principles of the subjective/objective system, and the various situations where these principles are manipulated. However, before I draw an overall conclusion from the previous sections, I shall first present an additional construction through which the subjective/objective marking is also expressed; viz., the converb¹⁶ + auxiliary '*du-wa/x-jia*' construction.

In Mongghul most of the auxiliary verbs can also be used as main verbs, and usually the use of these auxiliaries is limited to certain kinds of main verbs. For instance, using the verb *re* 'come' as an auxiliary is limited to main verbs indicating movement in a certain direction (*pusi* 'get up', *naa* 'fall down', *bou* 'go down', *awu* 'take away', *ghari* 'go out', ...) An example follows:

- (232) *Tie pus-aa re-jia*
 3:SG get:up-PERF come-OBJ:PERF
 He is standing up.

In addition, there are two unique auxiliaries; viz, *xi* and *du/de*, which are also used as main verbs (viz., 'go' and 'become', respectively), but whose use as auxiliaries is not limited to certain main verbs. These two auxiliaries occur with great frequency, especially the auxiliary *xi*. And both often seem to emphasize the completeness of an action, as in examples (233) and (234) below:

- (233) *Ngan diel nghua-a bur-aa xi-jia*
 3:SG clothes wash-PERF finish-PERF go-OBJ:PERF
 She is finished with washing clothes.

- (234) *Bu songhuo-nu xirie-re gie-waa du-wa*
 1:SG pen-ACC table-LOC lay-PERF become-SUBJ:PERF
 I put the pen on the table.

¹⁶ A converb is a non-finite verb that can be used either for coordination or subordination.

It also appears that one can freely use this construction instead of a simple perfective aspect suffix, as in (235):

- (235) *Bu qi-nu nira-nu marshdaa-waa xi-jia*
 1:SG 2:SG-GEN name-ACC forget-PERF go-OBJ:PERF
 I have forgotten your name.

Notice too that this auxiliary can follow another auxiliary, and that the preceding auxiliary then receives a nonfinite suffix:

- (236) *Bulii-ngula sari-jia, pus-aa r-ie xi-jia*
 child-PL wake:up-OBJ:PERF get:up-PERF come-PERF go-OBJ:PERF
 The children awoke and got up.

The converb suffix, which precedes auxiliaries is: *-a/-aa/-waa/-ie/-uo*. In my database, the auxiliary *xi* is sometimes preceded by the nonfinite suffix *-la*. But this suffix can be interpreted as marking a purpose clause that is embedded as a complement of the verb. Thus, this is not a ‘verb + auxiliary’ construction here. Mangghuer also utilizes the same suffix *-la*, about which Slater (2003:241) observes: “Although these constructions do bear some resemblance to verb + auxiliary constructions, and are clearly in the process of grammaticalizing in that direction, the facts that the two verbs involved do not share all of their arguments, and usually express clearly different events, lead us to conclude that purpose clause constructions are not (yet) examples of main verb + auxiliary. Rather, they represent the embedding of a purpose clause as a complement of a verb of motion.”

Note too that *xi-jia* is usually pronounced *x-jia* or *x-ia*, the latter of which is more common. I assume that the auxiliary *xi* is the verb *xji/xi* ‘go’. The meaning of the auxiliary *du/de* is less clear. Below I illustrate a number of clauses, where *du/de* is in present tense.

- (237) *Moghui jiu-sa kun hugu-aa de-na*
 snake bite-COND person die-PERF become-OBJ:IMPERF
 If a snake bites him, a man will die

- (238) *Huino sghal shdur d-aa de-na*
 afterward beard long become-PERF become-OBJ:IMPERF
 Afterward the beard will grow long.

One might say that *de/du* has the same function as the auxiliary ‘will/shall’ in English. Or one might translate this morpheme simply as ‘become’. Here I gloss *de/du* as ‘become’, and propose that in *d-aa*, which occurs in (238), we have the same verb.

When the auxiliaries *xi* and *du/de* occur in this construction in the perfective aspect (which is usually the case), *xi* always occurs with the suffix *-jia*, and *du/de* always with the suffix *-wa*.

Now I come to a point that relates to the subjective/objective system: It is interesting to note that the use of *du-wa* or *xi-jia* follows the same pattern as what one observes happening in speaker involvement markings on main verbs. That is, where one observes subjective markings on the main verb, he/she will observe in this construction *du-wa*. Where one observes objective markings on the main verb, he/she will observe *xi-jia* in this construction. Below I first illustrate examples of clauses with a first person subject being marked for subjective (239) to (241); and secondly, clauses with a non-first subject marked for objective (242) to (245):

- (239) *Bu ghar-aa r-ie du-wa*
 1:SG climb:up-PERF come-PERF become-SUBJ:PERF
 I have come (climbing up).
- (240) *Bu diesi-nu tiila-a aw-aa de-wa*
 1:SG rope-ACC coil-PERF take-PERF become-SUBJ:PERF
 I coiled the rope.
- (241) *Bu ntira-a du-wa*
 1:SG sleep-PERF become-SUBJ:PERF
 I slept.
- (242) *Ngan ndaa-sa muxi kur-aa xi-jia*
 3:SG 1:SG:DAT-ABL before arrive-PERF go-OBJ:PERF
 He arrived before I (did).
- (243) *Tie nigieda sou-waanu yang you-waa xi-jia*
 3:SG a:bit sit-PERF again go-PERF go-OBJ:PERF
 Sitting a while, he went off again.
- (244) *Tirga huaila-a xi-jia*
 car break-PERF go-OBJ:PERF
 The car broke down.
- (245) *Tie hugu-aa xi-jia*
 3:SG die-PERF go-OBJ:PERF
 He died.

Note that in second person questions—following the pattern of second person questions receiving a subjective marking—the auxiliary *de/du* occurs:

- (246) *Qi wusi shdie-waa bur-aa de-wuu?*
 2:SG grass weed-PERF finish-PERF become-SUBJ:PERF:QUEST
 Have you finished weeding the grass?

I now present situations where the basic principles of subjective/objective system are manipulated. Earlier in section 3.2.1.1, I demonstrated that a non-control verb ‘resists’ being marked for subjective, even though it does allow it. That is, more often one finds the non-control

verb either marked for objective, or it is neutral to subjective/objective distinctions. In my database there are three clauses with a non-control verb in a ‘converb + auxiliary’ construction. And in all three of these cases the clause is marked for objective speaker involvement. Here are those three examples:

- (247) *Bu marshdaa-waa xi-jia*
 1:SG forget-PERF go-OBJ:PERF
 I forgot.
- (248) *Bu nou-waa cuol-uo xi-jia*
 1:SG look-PERF make:mistake-PERF go-OBJ:PERF
 I looked in the wrong place. (lit: I looked wrong.)
- (249) *Bu iidaa-waa xi-jia*
 1:SG be:tired-PERF go-OBJ:PERF
 I am tired.

In the following examples I illustrate a first person subject receiving an objective marking. The cause for this manipulation is the same as that which I discussed earlier in section 3.2.1.

- (250) *Bu udaa-waa xi-jia*
 1:SG be:late-PERF go-OBJ:PERF
 I am late.
- (251) *Bu xji-lgha-a xi-jia*
 1:SG go-CAUS-PERF go-OBJ:PERF
 I lost (the game/the challenge).
- (252) *Bu norgh-uo xi-jia*
 1:SG be:wet-PERF go-OBJ:PERF
 I got wet.
- (253) *Bu sou-waa sur-aa xi-jia*
 1:SG sit-PERF study-PERF go-OBJ:PERF
 I am used to (it).
- (254) *dii suri-lde-aa xi-jia*
 again study-RECIPR-PERF go-OBJ:PERF
 ...(we) got acquainted.

In examples (250) to (252) above one can explain the objective marking, in that the speaker does not take responsibility for what has happened. For example, in (250) the person was late, but not intentionally; in (251) other people caused the person to lose; and in (252) the person did not get wet on purpose.

In (253) I offer an example where the speaker is used to some action, inaction or state. This person has become used to it—not by an active role on his part—but rather by what he has experienced in life. Lastly, in (254) the speaker states that he has come to know other people. That is, even though the speaker has had an active role in coming to know another person, one can assume that getting acquainted with anyone depends as much on the other person as it does on the actor. Thus, the speaker doesn't associate himself as the one directly responsible in the relationship.

In section 3.2.2.2 I demonstrated that subjective markings with a non-first person subject can be utilized, whenever the speaker functions simply as referent in the clause. This explains the use of the auxiliary *du* in (255) below:

- (255) *Munu nar han-aa du-wa*
 1:SG:GEN illness heal-PERF become-SUBJ:PERF
 I was healed of my illness. (lit: My illness was healed.)

I have in my database three sentences where a 'converb + auxiliary' construction with a first person subject receives the objective marking (*xi-jia*), even though these clauses are straightforward declarative clauses. And in each situation there seems not to be anything grammatically or situationally unique that would explain an objective marking:

- (256) *Bu simsuul-lu bagha-a l-aa xi-jia*
 1:SG fly-ACC hit-PERF reach-PERF go-OBJ:PERF
 I killed (hit) a fly.

- (257) *Bu aw-aa xi-jia*
 1:SG take-PERF go-OBJ:PERF
 I took (it).

- (258) *Bu pus-aa xi-jia*
 1:SG get:up-PERF go-OBJ:PERF
 I got up.

A possible explanation for the objective markings in examples (256) and (257) above could be that one of the tenants of Buddhism is that one must not kill anything, or take anything. Thus, the speaker disclaims responsibility for the action by expressing his/her action in a more neutral way.

Note too that in (258) *pus-aa du-wa* could also be possible, as well as a form that includes the directional auxiliary *re* 'come' as in: *pus-aa re-wa*.

Thus, I conclude that, as a general rule, 'converb + *xi-jia*' is used when objective marking is expected, and 'converb + *du-wa*' is used when subjective marking is expected. However, additional research is needed to explain the apparent exceptions to this rule, as in examples 256 to 258.

The constructions ‘converb + *xi-jia*’, as well as ‘converb + *du-wa*’, occur quite frequently, especially the former construction. Actually, clauses with the construction ‘converb + *xi-jia*’ appear to be as common as clauses with a perfective aspect suffix *-jia* on the main verb.

3.4 Conclusion

I began section 3 by presenting two basic principles that govern the Mongghul subjective/objective system, which are:

1. Declarative clauses receive a subjective marking with a first person subject, and an objective marking with a second or third person subject.
2. Interrogative clauses receive a subjective marking with a second person subject and an objective marking with a first or third person subject.

Following this, I presented different situations that deviate from these basic rules. And key to explaining this deviation invariably was speaker involvement. That is, a speaker’s personal involvement in the form of inference, hypothesis, reproach, degree of control of the other person, etc., explained subjective marking in second and third person subject declarative clauses. And speaker’s involvement at another level; viz., the speaker being simply a referent in a second and third person declarative clause, could also trigger subjective marking.

On the other hand, objective marking in first person subject clauses is usually caused by (1) the speaker placing some distance between him/herself with the action addressed (i.e., to indicate that he/she is not personally in control in a given situation, or that he/she does not want to assume any responsibility in it), or (2) objective marking is due to the semantic character of the verb (e.g., non-control verbs).

I also presented the fact that main verbs are never marked for subjective in negative clauses. A neutral verb form is used instead. The copula verb, however, appears in the subjective form in a negative clause.

Furthermore, I presented the fact that a finite verb in subordinate clauses is always marked for subjective speaker involvement. I could not point out, however, a definitive reason for this phenomenon, and more research would be needed to explain it.

Looking at these principals schematically, I now summarize how Mongghul speaker involvement markings function:¹⁷

Subjective marking, when one of these conditions is operating:

¹⁷ Parenthetically, I remind the reader that there are also suffixes that are neutral to subjective/objective distinction; and they are excluded in this schema. Neutral suffixes are the future tense/imperfective aspect suffix *-m/-n*, and the imperfective aspect suffix *-nu/-ni*.

Note too that subjective marking is also possible in third person questions, and at times objective marking occurs in second person questions. In addition, neutral marking occurs regularly with a non-control verb, as well as subjective marking is also possible.

4. Summary

In this section I summarize for the reader each of my findings that are either new or differ from what has been previously published regarding the finite verb inflection in Mongghul.

First, interrogatives in Mongghul are formed in two ways, depending on how the clause is marked for speaker involvement. In clauses that are marked for subjective speaker involvement, and in clauses that are neutral to subjective/objective distinction, the interrogative is formed by replacing the final vowel of the tense/aspect suffix with *u* or *uu*. In clauses that are marked for objective speaker involvement, the interrogative particle *nu* is attached at the end of the verb.

Early in my studies I began from the hypothesis initially proposed by Qinggeertai in 1991 that *-wa* is a past tense suffix and is neutral to the subjective/objective distinction; and that *-jii* and *-jia* are the two counterparts in marking speaker involvement in clauses marked for perfective aspect. However, my investigation leads me to believe that *-wa* and *-jia* are, in fact, the two counterparts. That is, *-wa* marks the clause for subjective speaker involvement, and *-jia* for objective. Both also mark perfective aspect. In addition, *-jia* functions as a stative aspect marker with verbs that describe an ongoing situation that is achieved by completing another action (in clauses marked for objective). The suffix *-jii* marks the clause for subjective, and its main function is to mark a state. In addition, it is also used as the subjective counterpart of the objective perfective aspect suffix *-jia*. This occurs in declarative clauses with second and third person subjects, where subjective speaker involvement is expressed by replacing *-jia* with *-jii*.

Clauses with the imperfective aspect suffixes *-nii* and *-na* most often refer to a present situation or to a habitual event, but at times they may also refer to a past event. These suffixes never occur in a negative clause.

In addition to the imperfective aspect suffixes *-nii*, *-na* and *-m/-n*, there exists in Mongghul yet another imperfective aspect suffix; viz., *-nu/-ni*, which is neutral to speaker involvement. This suffix occurs with non-control verbs; i.e., in contexts where, with a control verb, the subjective imperfective aspect suffix *-nii* occurs. I propose the reason for this additional suffix is that non-control verbs resist subjective marking, and that an objective marking communicates the speaker taking distance or denying responsibility for his/her personal action.

The most commonly used future tense suffixes are *-gunii* and *-guna*, which mark subjective and objective speaker involvement respectively. These suffixes can also be added after an aspect suffix. Another future tense suffix *-m/-n*—which is neutral to speaker involvement—has a certain restriction: With a first person subject it can be used only in irrealis situations, or in those situations not necessarily classified as irrealis, but nevertheless where the intention of the speaker is less definite.

I also conclude that the term *speaker involvement*, introduced by Slater, describes well the essence of Mongghul subjective/objective distinction. However, I submit a new dimension to that involvement; viz., the speaker being involved as a referent in the clause. That is, when the speaker is not *the subject*, but rather *a referent* in the clause, both objective and subjective markings are possible.

In addition, my data leads me to conclude that finite verbs in subordinate clauses are always marked for subjective speaker involvement, regardless of the subject. And that the subjective marking never occurs in a negative clause, except with copula verbs; a neutral verb form is used instead.

Lastly, my data demonstrates that instead of a 'simple' perfective aspect, it is quite common to use either a 'converb + *du/de-wa*' or a 'converb + *xi-jia*' construction, where *du/de* and *xi* are auxiliary verbs. As a rule 'converb + *xi-jia*' is used when objective marking is expected, and 'converb + *du-wa*' is used when subjective marking is expected. This phenomenon also applies to those situations where the basic rules of subjective/objective system are manipulated. And the construction 'converb + *xi-jia*' is particularly heard with frequency in daily Mongghul conversations.

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