

Two Manners of Composition for Mongolian Contextual Converbs

Recent research on adverbial sub-clauses has attempted to correlate their internal and external structure with variable interpretations. This line of research is typified by e.g. Endo and Haegeman (2019) and Haegeman (2010). The present study applies these intuitions to an analysis of Mongolian Converbs. Specifically, we examine the so-called *contextual* converbs (Ujiyediin, 1998; LeGrand, 1997), arguing that *-ju/-cu* & *-γad/-ged* combine *within* the matrix verbal predicate, and optionally form verb clusters with their matrix hosts.

First, evidence from case places contextual converbs within the vP, unlike the larger group of specialised converbs. Embedded subjects of some subordinate clauses in Mongolian may appear with accusative case (Guntsetseg, 2016). In (1), the specialised converb *-maγca* is compatible with an accusative subject; contextual converbs are not:

- (1) *Tuyaγa [Sudu-yi oro $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} -ma\gamma ca \\ *ju \\ *-\gamma ad \end{array} \right\}] congxo negege-gsen$*
 Tuyaa [Sudu-ACC enter-CVB] window open-VRN.PST

‘As (soon as) Sudu entered, Tuyaa opened a window.’

Dependant case is a good candidate to explain the Mongolian accusative; its distribution nearly matches that of Sakha, studied by Baker and Vinokurova (2010) to formulate the theory. This configurational view of case divides the clause into two phases around the upper edge of the vP. Only those nominals which appear above this boundary along with a matrix subject may be accusative-marked. The fact that the subjects of contextual converbial clauses may not appear in the accusative suggests that the entire converbial clause must be within the lower domain.

Having situated contextual converbs, we note that in many instances, *-ju* and *-γad* can be used interchangeably, resulting in either serial or simultaneous readings. However, certain constructions constrain this variability, importantly: shared-object constructions. Here, the predicates show a number of compactness properties: no material may intervene between the verbs, and temporal adverbs must locate a single macro-event including both the converbial and matrix verb:

- (2) *Tere tavan cag-tu ene ügülebüri-yi sonos-cu bici-be*
 He five clock-DAT this sentence-ACC listen-CVB write-PST

‘He wrote this sentence by hearing at 5 o'clock.’

(* ‘He listened to this sentence at 5, and then wrote it [later].’)

Compactness properties of this sort are commonly seen in verb clusters, e.g. German long-passives (Keine & Bhatt, 2016). Additionally, in these constructions further restrictions on aktionsart of both predicates is observed, indicating a single-event interpretation. This analysis implicates extensions for event semantics of converbs generally, especially concerning the ability to form Macro-events (Bohnemeyer et al., 2007).

References

- Baker, M., & Vinokurova, N. (2010). Two modalities of case assignment: Case in Sakha. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory*, 28, 593–642.
- Bohnemeyer, J., Enfield, N. J., Essegbey, J., Ibarretxe-Antuñano, I., Kita, S., & Lüpke, F. (2007). Principles of event segmentation in language: The case of motion events. *Language*, 83(3), 496–532.
- Endo, Y., & Haegeman, L. (2019). Adverbial clauses and adverbial concord. *Glossa*, 4(1), 1–32. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.5334/gjgl.589>
- Guntsetseg, D. (2016). *Differential case marking in Mongolian*. Harrassowitz Verlag.
- Haegeman, L. (2010). The internal syntax of adverbial clauses. *Lingua*, 120(3), 628–648.
- Keine, S., & Bhatt, R. (2016). Interpreting verb clusters. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory*, 34(4), 1445–1492.
- LeGrand, J. (1997). *Parlons mongol*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Ujiyediin, C. (1998). *Studies on Mongolian verb morphology* (Doctoral dissertation). University of Toronto.