Aspect, evidentiality and tense in Mongolian

From Middle Mongol to Khalkha and Khorchin

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Баячуудийнхаа эрх мэдлээс гарсан
Бух ястныхаа соёлийг нэгтгээн
Усыг нь ууж ёсыг нь дагагуй
Ундсэн улсэн орхиж, ухаанаа олсон
Эрийн дээрэнгүй чанараа хаясан
Эрх тэгш амьдралтай, зээл хайрлахээр
монгол нийгмийн төлөө
Abstract

The present thesis consists of an introduction and the following papers:

- The aspect-evidentiality system of Middle Mongol. *Ural-Altaic Studies, 13.* (forthcoming)
- The tense-aspect system of Khorchin Mongolian. In: Pirkko Suihkonen & Lindsay Whaley (eds.), *Typology of Languages of Europe and Northern and Central Asia.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins. (forthcoming)
- Aspect and epistemic notions in the present tense system of Khalkha Mongolian. *Acta Linguistica Petropolitana.* (forthcoming)
- Factual vs. evidential? - The past tense forms of spoken Khalkha Mongolian. In: Ad Foolen, Helen de Hoop, & Gijs Mulder (eds.), *Empirical Approaches to Evidentiality.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins. (under review)

Its purpose is to give an account of tense, aspect and evidentiality in three Mongolian varieties: Middle Mongol (MM) as spoken in the Mongol Empire, Khalkha Mongolian as spoken in the Mongolian state, and Khorchin Mongolian as spoken in eastern Inner Mongolia, China. MM started out with a tripartite tense distinction and a medium-sized aspectual system. Its past evidential system was tripartite with suffixes for firsthand, non-firsthand and evidentially neutral information. In Khorchin, which developed under the influence of Mandarin and Manchu, evidentiality was lost, and tense was simplified into a past / non-past distinction, alongside with a discontinuous proximal future / past marker. The aspect system underwent some changes, but retained its complexity. Khalkha, which developed under the influence of Turkic and Tibetan, underwent some shared innovations with Khorchin, but retained participles as a multifunctional unit within finite predicates, so that its aspectual system grew more complex. The past evidentiality distinctions of MM were basically retained, but the introduction of present tense evidentiality brought a number of changes: the evidentially neutral value shifted to signaling assimilated knowledge, and discontinuous future uses were introduced for all past markers.
Contents

Abstract .........................................................................................................................v

Acknowledgements ..................................................................................................... xi

Introduction ..............................................................................................................1

1. Classification of Mongolic ......................................................................................2

2. Terminology .............................................................................................................4
   2.1 Tense ....................................................................................................................4
   2.2 Aspectuality .........................................................................................................5
   2.3 Evidentiality .........................................................................................................8
   2.4 Structural grammatical terms ..............................................................................9

3. Previous research and methodology .....................................................................9

4. The case studies of TAE in Mongolian .................................................................12
   4.1 The aspect-evidentiality system of Middle Mongol .............................................13
   4.2 The tense-aspect system of Khorchin Mongolian .................................................14
   4.3 Aspect and epistemic notions in the present tense system of Khalkha Mongolian .................................................................15
   4.4 Factual vs. evidential? - The past tense forms of spoken Khalkha Mongolian .................................................................16

5. From Middle Mongol to Central Mongolic ...........................................................17
   5.1 Finitely usable past forms ..................................................................................17
   5.2 Finitely usable present forms ..........................................................................20
   5.3 Aspectual constructions in finite predicates .....................................................23
   5.4 Possible combinations ......................................................................................24
   5.5 Evidential particles ............................................................................................26

6. No proof required: Khorchin in Western Manchuria .............................................26

7. Mixed evidentiality: Khalkha between Central Asia and Amdo .............................33

8. Closing words .........................................................................................................40
   8.1 Evidentiality in Khalkha: a synthesis .................................................................40
   8.2 Perspectives for areal studies on TAE in Greater Mongolia .........................43
   8.3 A short note on the classification of Central Mongolic ......................................44

Bibliography ...................................................................................................................45

Aspect, tense and evidentiality in Middle Mongol ....................................................52

1. Inventory .................................................................................................................54
2. Corpus .................................................................................................................. 58
3. Imperfective domain .............................................................................................. 58
  3.1 The generic -yU and the progressive-habitual -mU ........................................ 59
  3.2 The present progressive -n bu-yu ................................................................. 68
  3.3 Past imperfective -n a-juyu / bümüge ......................................................... 69
  3.4 Future -QU and the form -n a-qu .............................................................. 71
  3.5 Future in the past -QU bümüge / a-juyu, and -QU bol - ............................. 75
  3.6 -d ................................................................................................................. 79
4. Perfective domain .................................................................................................. 81
  4.1 Perfective past -bA, -lUGA and -JUGU ...................................................... 81
  4.2 Resultative-Progressive -jU a-juyu / bümüge / a-mu ............................... 89
  4.3 Perfect -GsAn (a-juyu / bümüge) ............................................................... 91
  4.4 -GA, -GA bümüge ..................................................................................... 97
5. Conclusion ............................................................................................................. 99
Bibliography ............................................................................................................ 102

The tense-aspect system of Khorchin Mongolian .................................................. 105
1. Introduction ........................................................................................................... 105
2. Preliminaries ....................................................................................................... 106
3. Data collection and research methodology ...................................................... 107
4. Structure of the Khorchin TA system ............................................................... 109
5. Markers of the Khorchin TA system ................................................................. 112
  5.1 Central system .............................................................................................. 113
  5.2 Minor simple forms and their combinability ............................................. 140
  5.3 Non-verbal predications ............................................................................ 148
  5.4 Non-temporal and non-aspectual notions .................................................. 150
6. Areal and diachronic factors: a preliminary evaluation ..................................... 163
Glossings ............................................................................................................... 168
Bibliography ............................................................................................................ 168

Aspect and epistemic notions in the present tense system of Khalkha Mongolian .................................................. 171
1. Corpus, informants and evaluation ................................................................. 172
2. Inventory ............................................................................................................ 173
  2.1 Inventory of forms .................................................................................... 173
  2.2 Forms and their meanings ........................................................................ 175
3. The evidential forms -n and -aa .................................................................... 175
  3.1 Simple -n ..................................................................................................... 176
  3.2 Simple -aa .................................................................................................. 185
  3.3 -n and -aa at the end of complex forms .................................................. 188
4. The Habitual ...................................................................................................... 206
  4.1 Habitual use of simple -dag ..................................................................... 206
  4.2 Mono-occasional use of simple -dag ....................................................... 209
  4.3 -dag at the end of complex forms ........................................................... 212
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1 虽然因研读所累，鲜有机会在京城长住，但与苗苗的交往，过去与现在，都对我弥足珍贵。和刘烨与Gerlee也是这样。在我论文答辩期间我和他们没有什么机会接触。

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2006
Introduction

The present thesis consists of this introduction - which among other things contains information on terminology, methodology, summaries and a historical and areal overview - and the following papers:

- The aspect-evidentiality system of Middle Mongol. *Ural-Altaic Studies, 13.* (forthcoming)
- The tense-aspect system of Khorchin Mongolian. In: Pirkko Suihkonen & Lindsay Whaley (eds.), *Typology of Languages of Europe and Northern and Central Asia.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins. (forthcoming)
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The purpose of the thesis is to give an account of Tense, Aspect and Evidentiality (TAE) in three Mongolian varieties: Middle Mongol (MM) as it was spoken in the Mongol Empire in the 13th and 14th century; Khalkha Mongolian as spoken in the Mongolian state (i.e., what is commonly called “Mongolian”), which was influenced by Central Asian Turkic and Tibetan; and Khorchin Mongolian as spoken in eastern Inner Mongolia, China, which was influenced by Manchu and Mandarin.

In a nutshell, MM started out with a simple tripartite tense distinction and a medium-sized aspectual system that showed traces of substantial recent changes. Its past evidential system was tripartite as well: it had suffixes for firsthand, non-firsthand and evidentially neutral information. In Khorchin, evidentiality was lost, and tense was simplified into a past / non-past distinction, alongside with a discontinuous proximal future/past marker. The aspect system underwent some structural changes, but retained a complexity comparable to MM. Khalkha, on the other hand, underwent some shared innovations with Khorchin, but retained participles as a multifunctional unit within finite predicates, thereby obtaining a rather complex aspectual system. The past evidentiality distinctions of MM were retained with slight modifications, but the introduction of present tense evidentiality brought a number of changes: the evidentially neutral value shifted to signaling assimilated knowledge, and discontinuous future uses were introduced for all past markers.
All papers were structured uniformly with respect to font, page size, text styles etc., although slight exceptions (such as the formatting of example sentences in the paper on Khorchin) have been retained. The texts themselves have been left untouched, which means that differences in bibliographical conventions and to some degree transcription systems exist.

The remaining part of the introduction is structured as follows: section 1 gives a brief overview of the classification of Mongolic. Section 2 gives a short, fairly non-technical introduction to the terminology used throughout this thesis, addressing both TAE and a number of structural terms that apply to Mongolian. In section 3, previous research on TAE in Mongolian is discussed from a methodological vantage point. Before this background, the methodological approach adapted in this thesis is then introduced and motivated. Section 4 provides short summaries of the four studies that constitute this thesis. Section 5 gives an overview of how several elements of the Mongolic TAE systems developed from MM to Khorchin, Khalkha and, as far as can be told from the literature, to the western Central Mongolic dialect Oirat. The sections 6 and 7 take a look at the areal context within which these changes occurred in Khorchin and Khalkha, respectively. Section 8 concludes the introduction with some conclusions about the TAE system of Khalkha as a whole, the areal context of TAE in Central Asia and the classification of Central Mongolic.

1. Classification of Mongolic

In this study, I focus on Middle Mongol, Khalkha and Khorchin, so it is necessary to relate these varieties genetically. The most ancient attested Mongolic languages are Tabghach as spoken in the 4th to 6th century CE and preserved in 14 words found in Chinese texts (Vovin 2007); Khitan as written from the early 10th century and preserved in texts from the 11th to 14th century (Janhunen 2012); and Middle Mongol as preserved in texts from the 13th and 14th century. While the taxonomic status of Tabghach within Mongolic has not been dealt with, Khitan is a sister to MM with no surviving modern varieties. Due to problems in deciphering the two Khitan script systems, only part of its morphology has been identified, and while we can identify the three past suffixes -ar, -lūn and -būn (with variants, Kane 2009: 144-7), little can be said about their precise semantic properties. For this reason, the term Proto-Mongolic (PM) will be used for the language that can be reconstructed from all modern Mongolic languages (Janhunen 2003) and MM, not for the mother of Pre-MM, Khitan and - in theory - Tabghach. While there is no variety actually called “Old Mongolian” (see de Rachewiltz 1999), MM itself can roughly be divided into Early MM, Late Western MM and Late Eastern MM. From the 15th up to the end of the 16th century, sources are
almost absent. Sources from the late 16th to the 19th century in Mongolian script are here referred to under the cover term Classical Mongolian.

The modern Mongolic languages all descend from MM or varieties closely related to it (see, e.g., Poppe 1955, Svantesson et al. 2005, Nugteren 2011). They can be divided into 1. Southern Mongolic (SMc) in Amdo; 2. Central Mongolic (CMc) in Greater Mongolia & Kalmykia; 3. Dagur in Manchuria and Tarbagatai and 4. the possibly extinct Moghol in Afghanistan. SMc consists of Eastern Yellow Uyghur (while Western Yellow Uyghur is a Turkic language in close contact to its eastern neighbor) and the Shirongolic languages. According to Nugteren (2011), the latter can be divided into a branch consisting of Bonan (=Baoan), Santa (=Dongxiang) and Kangjia and the Monguor branch, which consists of Mangghuer and Mongghul, the latter subdivided into several dialects. As for CMc, Janhunen (2006) suggests it can be divided into the major varieties Khalkha-Chakhar (Central Mongolian), Khorchin-Kharchin (Eastern Mongolian), Oirat (including Kalmyk) and Buryat, as well as the smaller varieties Ordos and Khamnigan. While Ordos is known for its conservative phonotactics, it has also been classified as part of Khalkha-Chakhar (Luvsanvandan 1959). According to my own (limited) familiarity with this dialect, I’d expect it to exhibit the features of the Khalkha-Chakhar group with some influence from Oirat and Western Tümet (Khorchin-Kharchin) but not an aspectual system as distinct as the major varieties. No assessment of the Khamnigan verbal system is possible on the basis of currently available materials (see references in Janhunen 2005 and Yu 2011). CMc constitutes a dialect continuum. Speakers of the most progressive subvarieties of Khorchin and Khalkha who have not had any previous exposure to the other variety nor to the more similar standard languages should have a fair chance of communicating by and large successfully on issues not related to modern culture or infrastructure when using careful, slow articulation. Speakers of Kalmyk (Oirat) from the westernmost end and Mongoljin (Khorchin-Kharchin) from the very eastern

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3 Using a single cover term for what is probably a wide array of varieties might not be appropriate, but a sustained linguistic attempt to classify the linguistic differences of various Classical Mongolian sources along temporal and spatial lines has never been undertaken. In this paper, this term only works because I refrain from making any taxonomical statement about it.

4 Amdo, Greater Mongolia and Manchuria are all ethno-culturally definable macroareas without exact political counterparts. Amdo includes all of Höhnuur (“Qinghai”) and parts of Sichuan and Gansu, China. Greater Mongolia includes all of the Mongolian state, Inner Mongolia (China), Buryatia (Russia), substantial parts of Xinjiang (China) and even smaller areas in Höhnuur, the Chinese provinces bordering Inner Mongolia, Tuva (Russia) and Kyrgyzstan. Manchuria consists of the provinces Heilongjiang, Jilin and Liaoning, the subdivisions Hulunbuir, Hinggan, Tongliao, and Chifeng of Inner Mongolia, all in China, and Primorski Kraj, southern Khabarovskij Kraj, the Jewish Autonomous Oblast’, Amur Oblast’ and Sakhalin in Russia. Tarbagatai ‘having marmots’ (rendered as tâchéng ‘ta-city’ in Mandarin) is an administrative unit within Ili, Xinjiang, China.
end of the dialect continuum cannot successfully communicate on all but the simplest issues without some weeks of exposure. The overall differences between these extremes might be comparable to the difference between High German and Danish.

2. Terminology

In this section, I will give short definitions of some of the terms that I use in my thesis. As these definitions are mainly intended to help readers who are not familiar with the study of tense, aspect and evidentiality or with Mongolian studies, I will try to provide fairly simple definitions with no claim to technical precision. This section is thus not intended to replace a thorough familiarity with the specialized literature.

In the following, Khalkha and Khorchin forms are given in phonemic transcription (following Bayançoıtu 2002 and Svantesson et al. 2005, respectively, with slight modifications). Suffixes are cited in unrounded forms without advanced tongue root. For MM phonemes, a conventional transcription that reflects an older stage of reconstruction is used. Capital letters indicate vowel- or consonant-harmonic variants.

2.1 Tense

Tense (basically following Klein 1994) can be defined as the grammatical expression of the relation between the time when a particular statement was uttered and the time to which the utterance refers. Utterance time and reference time may precede, follow or partly include each other in different ways, and some of these can be grammaticalized, e.g., as past, present and future tense forms. If the time of encoding and decoding differ, e.g., when reading a text or watching a video, a speaker may have some freedom as to what time of utterance she assumes. Consequently, a concept such as “present” can be defined narrowly or widely. If (cf. Comrie 1985: 38-9) a speaker refers to a time before the utterance time, this doesn’t necessarily mean that she claims that the event itself is over.

Tense is not limited to locating two points in time relative to each other but can also express remoteness distinctions. Remoteness may either be defined through clear cut-off points such as between ‘earlier today’ vs. ‘be-

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5 However, the assumption that Khalkha vowel harmony is velar in nature is quite common in the literature (see Svantesson 2005: 222 for a partial overview).
6 I am reluctant to reconstruct MM vowels. Ko’s (2011) reconstruction might be preferable to the traditional reconstruction followed by Svantesson et al. (2005), and so far nobody seems to have seriously engaged in Ko’s line of argument. For Early MM consonants, I tend to accept the reconstruction of Svantesson et al. (2005) with oppositions of voiceless aspirated vs. voiceless unaspirated and /h/ for some instances of <ɣ>. 
fore today’ or merely draw a distinction between recent vs. non-recent (Comrie 1985: 87, relying on Dahl 1984). It has been suggested (Botne 2012) that even the distinction between a “currently relevant time unit” (e.g., earlier today, earlier this month, etc.) vs. “adjoining time units” (on an earlier day, month, etc.) can be primary. While clear cut-off points don’t exist in Khalkha (Song 1997) or CMc, there have been appeals to more vague notions of remoteness such as distal vs. proximal (Binnick 2012).

2.2 Aspectuality

Aspectuality is a cover term for notions related to the inner time structure of events such as (i) the inherent time-structural characteristics of lexical units, (ii) time-structural meanings coded or asserted through morphology, (iii) the bounding potential of definiteness and quantification in noun phrases, (iv) the bounding potential of spatial, temporal and other adverbials, (v) the way in which auxiliaries, serial verbs, etc. modify these time structures, (vi) the contribution of voice and, more in general, the expression of causation, and (vii) the way in which clause combinations affect the interpretation of clausal time structures (adapted with slight modifications from Sasse 2002: 263).

In the following, I will assume a bidimensional model of aspectuality and group (i), (iii), (vi), spatial elements of (iv) and non-flexional parts of (ii) and (v) as “aktionsart,” while flexional parts of (ii) and (v) will be characterized as “aspect.” The idea behind this division is that aktionsart provides an abstract time structure upon which aspect operators operate. Assuming there are a limited number of aktionsart classes, one doesn’t have to be able to explain how their actional structure is composed in order to describe their interaction with aspect, which is of primary interest in this thesis.

Aktionsart can be defined as “the phasal time structure of the event” denoted by a “verb plus its argument frame” (Sasse 2006: 535), i.e., as the borders, phases, and temporal stability of an event. For instance, in Yesterday, we went to the beach, the expression we GO to the beach contains a phase during which the event takes place (which could be asserted by using the aspectual form were V-ing) as well as a finite boundary (which could be asserted using the aspectual form V-ed) (Sasse 2006: 535). The function of aspect is thus to assert (“select,” “focus,” etc.) a certain lexically inherent phase of an event (cf. Breu 2005: 51). Through cognitive processes such as reinterpretation based on good continuation (→ zooming out, serialization) or scalar adjustment (→ zooming in) (see Croft 2012: 92-8), actional interpretations may change: HIT the dog may be interpreted as a single punctual event, or it may be reinterpreted as a phase of action consisting of a number of no longer relevant subevents. Aktionsart is a property of the actional phrase (the verb stem, auxiliaries, its arguments and syntactically coded
spatial limitations, while time adverbials are not assumed to play a role) (cf. Johanson 2000: chapters 5, 6).

While a systematic investigation of aktionsart in Mongolian (along the lines of, e.g., Kiryu 1999, Tatevosov 2002, 2008) would doubtlessly yield additional actional classes, a number of actional distinctions play a role in this thesis. The definitions given below are slightly less differentiated than those by Croft (2012: 53-64), though the inceptive and inchoative aktionsarten (Breu 2005) are added. My terminology differs slightly from Croft’s. The actional classes are illustrated by short constructed examples from Khalkha: **States** are events that lack perceivable inner dynamics and, with exceptions that don’t matter here, have temporal duration. Depending on whether an endpoint is indicated, we can draw a distinction between **temporary** (pajār-t‘ai pai-n happiness-com cop-dir ‘is happy,’ am‘itar-t‘i-n live-prog-dir ‘is living (somewhere)’) and **undelimited** (t‘ir mongol ‘she is Mongolian’) states. **Inceptive states** include a lexicalized inception point which can be asserted by a perfective form (xiw‘t-t‘e live-2l.pst ‘lay down, lay (then),’ cf. am‘itar-t‘e ‘lived,’ but not ‘started living (somewhere)’). **Activities** have duration as well, but they are more dynamic and thus often require a continuous effort to be sustained. They lack lexicalized borders; thus, a perfective form cannot refer to its past inception or endpoint, but only to the event in its entirety (t‘bɔŋ-t‘e ‘played’). Prototypically, they are **undirected** (t‘bɔŋ-t‘i-n ‘is playing’), but there are also **directed** activities with gradual, incremental change into one direction (xa‘ɔr-t‘i-n ‘is getting hot’). **Accomplishments** are defined as having both duration and a defined endpoint, upon reaching which, they are completed. If the process they are based on is not cumulative, they may be undirected, but directed accomplishments (xɔ:ŋ-ig it-t‘i-n food-acc eat-prog-dir ‘is eating the food’; xɔ:ŋ-ig it-t‘e ‘ate [i.e., completed eating] the food’) are more common. **Inchoative states** are a blend of an accomplishment and a lexicalized resultant phase. Progressives can refer to both of their lexicalized phases (nɔ:gt-t‘i-n ‘1. is going into hiding 2. is staying hidden,’ nɔ:gt-t‘e ‘hid’). Finally, **achievements** are punctual events without any notable duration. They can be directed in the sense that they culminate in a non-lexicalized resultant state (unā-t‘e ‘fell’), or they can be undirected = **cyclic** in the sense that they can immediately be repeated (tsɔt-t‘e ‘hit (once / several times).’

As illustrated with progressive and perfective forms in the last paragraph, **aspect** markers operate upon aktionsart and assert relevant phases. More generally speaking, aspect markers refer to the attainment or non-attainment of the actional borders or the attainment of resultant static situations. In the latter case, it is useful to assume a reference time / topic time (thus a time phase) (e.g., Klein 1994) or an orientation point (Johanson 2000) that differs from the event time and possibly also from the here and now. The aspect is **imperfective** if it refers to the internal time structure of single or a row of
repeated events without asserting their borders. It is **resultative/perfect** if it refers to a state subsequent to the event, **prospective** if a preparatory state that precedes the event is referred to (Klein 1994: 104), and **perfective** if it “refer[s] to the attainment of the relevant limit” (Johanson 2000: 135) inherent in verbal aktionsart. Moreover, the label “perfective” will also be used for forms that stand in paradigmatic opposition to imperfective and resultative/perfect forms and thus express either boundary-oriented or neutral, but not explicitly perfect or imperfective values (i.e., for -POST -INTRA in Johanson’s terminology). One may try to link (at least some of) the different morpheme types within the resultative/perfect and imperfective forms through the notion of **focality**: “psychological interest may focus more or less on the situation prevailing at O” (Johanson 2000: 38), i.e., at the reference time. For instance, high-focal forms such as resultatives focus strongly on a resultant situation. This focus is reduced with perfects and, as I would put it, is lost in perfectives.

Particular aspect types mentioned in this thesis are the following, ordered by domain. The **imperfective domain** consists of different variants of imperfective forms: **progressive** markers refer to ongoing events, and **continuative** markers refer to events in progress that might be perceived as including an inception point from which an event has continued up to the time of reference. If a marker is **habitual**, it expresses multi-occasional regular repetition, whether this be due to an acquired habit or not. An **attitudinal** marker refers to an inclination that sometimes materializes, while a **potential** marker indicates that an event is only realized if the circumstances are met (Bertinetto & Lenci 2012). **Generic** markers characterize a class of entities. It has been suggested that habitual up to generic events form a continuous semantic domain, which in Khorchin is indeed expressed by the single morpheme -\text{na}. The **perfective domain** consists of resultative, perfect and perfective markers which constitute a grammaticalization cline (Bybee et al. 1994: 105). **Resultative** markers include reference to the completion of a causing event but focus on the resulting state (i.e., when combining with time adverbials), while **perfect** markers express a resulting state but give more prominence to the attainment of the final border of the event (for a much more detailed, though not necessarily generalizable classification, see Breu 1988). With **perfective** markers, the time of reference coincides with the time of the attainment of the relevant actional boundary or, if such a boundary is absent or contextually dispreferred, with the time of the entire event that is pictured within its boundaries. Events are **iterative** if they repeat (whether regularly or not) (cf. Bertinetto & Lenci 2012: 854-60) and **durative** if they have some form of temporal duration (cf. Dowty 1979).
2.3 Evidentiality

**Evidentiality** is most commonly understood as the expression of **information source** (Aikhenvald 2004), be it obligatory or not, though some (e.g., Michael 2006) rather define it as the **mode of access** to information. Plungian (2011: 37-8) proposes that there are three main and a number of subordinate categories of evidentiality that can be grammaticalized in human language: **Direct personal access** can be **visual** or via **other senses**, but even the endophoric perspective which relates to internal states of the asserter and access to the event from the viewpoint of a participant exist. **Indirect personal access** is subdivided into **inferential** access based on observed results and **presumptive** access based on general plausible reasoning. Common knowledge can be grouped either as a form of direct or indirect personal knowledge. **Indirect non-personal** evidence is reported evidence that can either pertain to a specific or an unknown information source.

Evidentiality distinctions relevant for CMc are the opposition **firsthand** (visual + other sensory) vs. **non-firsthand** (inference, possibly presumptive and hearsay) and **direct** (synchronic visual, other sensory, inference) vs. **indirect** (presumptive, hearsay, previous perception). Additionally, the **time of acquisition** (Tournadre 2008) plays an important role. The choice of a particular evidential form from an inventory is a non-trivial process: the speaker must first classify her actual information source according to a grammatically, culturally and subjectively determined ontology. Then, she has to assess her interactional setting, taking into account cultural conventions. This then leads her to adopt an **epistemological stance**, which in turn serves as the basis for her linguistic choices (Mushin 2001, mainly p. 82). Speakers must “take a stand on how they acquired the information.” That is, while there is an inventory of evidential forms, it is still the speaker’s choice how she shapes the information she is forwarding. A speaker might for example adopt a personal stance to show that she is forwarding her own version of the events as she perceived them, or she can rather use a factual stance, implying that either “the information is assumed to be known by anyone in the speech community as general cultural knowledge” or “that the source of information is unimportant to the establishment of the validity of the information” (Mushin 2001: 52, 59, 74). In MM and Oirat, this distinction seems to be of special importance because they have a verbal paradigm with two forms that evoke a particular source of information, while a third, highly frequent form is neutral towards evidentiality and time of acquisition.

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7 De Haan (2001) defined **direct** and **indirect** differently (see the discussion of Khalkha non-past forms), but his discussion served as a starting point for the delimitation suggested here.
2.4 Structural grammatical terms

The morphemes mainly used for the expression of tense, aspect and evidentiality in CMc are verbal suffixes that can be divided into roughly three categories. **Finite verbal suffixes** can only be used in finite predicative position, but not attributively or adverbially. They can be subdivided into two subcategories, namely, **indicative suffixes** related to the expression of tense, evidentiality and (within paradigms) aspect on which the discussion will focus and **mood suffixes** with second, third and first person imperative meanings. **Participial suffixes** are defined by their ability to occur in attributive position to a noun. The discussion in this thesis is limited to uses in finite position or within complex finite predicates, together with the copula *pai*- ‘be (at/with)’ or the inceptive copula *pol*- ‘become.’ **Converbal suffixes** are defined by their ability to link clauses. Some express fairly specific meanings like ‘as soon as,’ while a few merely seem to add unspecific semantic notions such as a tendency to imply that two events occur in a sequence or with partial temporal overlap. These later converbal suffixes can lose their ability to mark independent clauses and be restricted to adverbal modification such as Khorchin -ђ or even become fossilized in certain contexts such as spoken Khalkha -ŋ. By convention, they are still called converbal suffixes. Linking converbs can be used in complex finite predicates together with the copula or auxiliaries such as *üz*- ‘see’ (experiential, conative). Mongolic converbs are never used in attributive position, and uses in finite position such as exist for Khalkha/Khorchin -at are exceptional. The class of **finitely usable** morphemes thus consists of finite verbal suffixes plus those participial and converbal suffixes that have a finite usage.

3. Previous research and methodology

While the morphological forms of CMc are almost all identified and roughly categorized, relatively little is known about specific morphosyntax such as analytic TAE constructions or the TAE systems as such. Leaving aside papers on subsystems, integral attempts to describe most or all of the TA(E) system of a CMc variety were undertaken by Blässing (1984) for Kalmyk Oirat; Byambasan et al. (1987), Svantesson (1991), Kim (1995), Song (1997) and Brosig (2009) for Khalkha, Cinggeltei (1959) and Chuluu (1998) for Inner Mongolian varieties, as well as Matsuoka (2008) for Khorchin and MM. The problems with these studies are manifold, though. Blässing didn’t include evidentiality in his analytic model. He only considered a subset of

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Another source that I dare not evaluate here is Dugarova (1991). She seems to focus on aspect in a strict sense but, in contrast to Matsuoka, contrasts simple and complex forms. She doesn’t address the evidentiality complex.
complex constructions of aspectuality in a narrow sense (e.g., excluding grammatically marked continuativity) and only worked with literary texts. He thus missed both the evidential system and the complexity of the aspectual system of Oirat. Byambasan et al., Kim, Chuluu and Song generally structured their analysis around finitely usable morphemes, thus missing or ignoring their systematic interaction with aspectual constructions. With the exception of Chuluu, they failed to address the position of -say as a past tense marker that contrasts with -эга and -тэ. Kim made extensive use of inferior evidence such as isolated, partly constructed sentences. Song went a long way with a textbook corpus, constructed sentences, some elicitation and solid general linguistic background but still introduced some artifacts such as constructed conversational sentences with past tense -w into his analysis. Svantesson, by applying Dahl’s (1985) questionnaire, arrived at correct meanings and structures but generally didn’t provide details on semantic nuances and overall structural complexity. The late Cinggeltei’s consistent application of the distributional method as early as 1959 was utterly admirable, but his implicit belief that different Mongolian dialects closely resemble each other in grammar combined with the very limited theoretical apparatus available to a linguist in China at that time rendered many of his explanations fuzzy. As an educated speaker of Khorchin with an apparently good command of the Inner Mongolian standard (which is mostly based on Chakhar), Chuluu entertained the same mistaken belief as Cinggeltei – in his case, explicitly – and even took his own intuitions as the sole object of the description. Similarly, Matsuoka’s attempt to investigate Khorchin by working with ad-hoc constructed examples and two presumably highly educated Khorchin informants often didn’t yield valid results. Both scholars accepted mixed Khorchin-Chakhar data that surpasses the language used in class by average middle school teachers of Mongolian (i.e., the Chakhar standard) from Khorchin. Matsuoka’s assumption that tense and aspect can be analyzed separately led to an analysis where simple finite “tense” forms are missing from the overall picture. My own MA thesis (Brosig 2009) clarified the existence and approximate extent of differences between different text genres but failed to solve many problems due to insufficient corpus size, time allocatable to elicitation and the sole reliance on Aikhenvald (2004) for the analysis of evidentiality.

To avoid previous methodological shortcomings, I took a number of methodological decisions for the analysis of modern Mongolian languages to try to ensure a consistent analysis:

- Spoken conversation is taken as the primary register of analysis.
- A corpus of sufficient size is used to obtain natural examples.
- Native speaker intuition guides text analysis.
- Modified corpus sentences in their original context rather than constructed sentences serve as the basis for elicitation.
A sufficient number of informants ensure that the analyst can understand idiosyncratic answers rather than depend on them and avoids turning the biases of individual informants into results of analysis. The analysis is based on recurrent morpheme combinations instead of single morphemes so as to detect non-compositional meanings.

Another modification was to add a diachronic and areal dimension in order to arrive at an analysis that is diachronically plausible. Khalkha, as the most prestigious current dialect, and Middle Mongol, as its best-researched ancestor language, were obvious choices, while Khorchin-Kharchin was chosen as the dialect group most distinct from Khalkha within Inner Mongolia. Khorchin was then chosen over Kharchin due to the much better availability of speakers. The only thing known in advance about TAE in Khorchin was Matsuoka’s analysis - which suggested a greater similarity with Khalkha than actually found - and the obvious dialectal difference in the use of -son and -ʃø between eastern and western regions of Inner Mongolia mentioned already by Cinggeltei. Language contact was not a factor for the selection of Khorchin. Given this scope, I was forced to make certain concessions:

- With time for only three synchronic analyses, I chose to leave aside Oirat, Burjat, and historical texts from the late 16th century to 1900.
- Instead of analyzing aspectuality as a whole, I focused on aspect and neglected aktionsart.
- I only analyzed finite declarative predications, even if aspect is also expressed in other syntactic positions such as the complex of attributive/nominalized/negated sentences, in adverbial sentences, in combination with postpositions, and reflected in time adverbials.
- I had originally intended to account for different written registers of Khalkha (such as scientific literature, different newspaper genres, fictive and non-fictive narratives, and legal texts) but had to content myself with a spoken corpus consisting mostly of dialogue. As for MM, I chose to work with only part of the existing corpus.

During elicitation with modified original sentences that only differ by the TAE forms of finite predicates, most feedback of informants was to some degree linguistically relevant, even if the only difference a given informant identified was the degree of politeness. Still, notions such as duration, repetition, degree of remoteness, degree of certainty and access to information were often more central to elicitation, and after an initial evaluation of the different meanings of a minimal pair by the informant, I would ask about those. Another crucial issue was felicity conditions. Informants were expected to indicate if a certain marker would not fit into the context, and answers that described or elaborated on settings in which certain forms would make sense were usually considered valuable. I tried to work with informants with good contextualizing skills that could reflect on situations on a variety of different levels, while informants with lesser imaginative abilities
or a tendency to reduce the big picture to just a few social elements were less efficient.

Overall, the methodology I used enabled me to obtain fairly detailed data on semantic nuances that, when taken together, provide rather reliable information about the actual meaning of forms. Informant intuition was only used for tasks in which it performs well, namely, for decoding the “meaning ... of a single whole expression,” while the task to abstract from this information was left to the trained linguist. A relatively great diversity of uses was ensured by the corpus. This is superior to any approach that tries to use informant intuition directly on “the meaning of a closed-class morpheme” or “all the senses of a polysemous morpheme.” It is also superior to translation tasks or grammaticality judgments as one might always run into “forms or constructions that strike one as incorrect or ungrammatical and that one is sure one would not use in speaking but that in fact regularly occur in one’s own fluent colloquial speech” (cf. Talmy n.a. for these accessibility notions). This doesn’t mean that the data collection process could not have been improved. The small size of the corpus and its limited number of genres meant that some uses were underrepresented or missing, which might have partly been compensated for by other means. For some easily identifiable situations, such as data on non-visual perception, elicitation with non-linguistic stimuli and the creation of realistic situations in which informants would have been expected to use certain forms might have improved results. For forms with insufficiently established usage patterns, one might have attempted to get informants to imagine additional contexts in which these forms could have been used, though such evidence would have needed independent collaborating evidence. A second round of elicitations after the analysis of Khalkha data was completed would have been helpful but proved impractical due to the sheer extent of the Khalkha TAE system, which required me to use all elicitation time for the first round of elicitation, which was later only complemented by small-scale email/messenger-based elicitation. The low number of tokens of complex past forms in the Khalkha corpus, which ultimately prevented the assessment of this set of forms, could presumably have been overcome only by a substantially larger corpus or by a somewhat larger corpus created such that reference to recently discovered past events as well as narrative monologues would have been highly frequent.

4. The case studies of TAE in Mongolian

In this section, I will give an overview of the four papers that make up my thesis. In 4.1, I will summarize my research on aspect and evidentiality in MM. Section 4.2 gives an overview over my research on tense and aspect in Khorchin. Sections 4.3 and 4.4 contain summaries of the papers that deal
with evidentiality, aspect and related notions in the present respective past tense system of Khalkha.

4.1 The aspect-evidentiality system of Middle Mongol

The paper on Middle Mongol is based on a corpus consisting of the "Secret History of the Mongols," which details the life of Cinggis Khan, four biographical texts, one philosophical text and occasional reliance on other sources. It divides the MM TAE system into two general domains, the imperfective domain and the perfective domain.

The imperfective domain comprises three tenses:

i. The single suffix with future meaning is -QU. -mU only refers to future events in conditionals or if followed by the particle je.

ii. Present tense is expressed by -yU for generic situations, -mU for progressive and habitual situations, and -n bu-yu as a specialized progressive.

iii. The past marker that structurally corresponds to the Present Progressive, -n bülüge/ajuyu, has a somewhat wider application to both progressive and habitual events. While there are some suggestive examples, past reference cannot be established as a function of the suffixes -yU and -mU. -QU bülüge/ajuyu expresses a future development at a reference point in the past given conditions that either obtained (yielding a past habitual reading) or did not (yielding a past counterfactual reading).

There are also some miscellaneous markers such as -i, which is only attested with very few verb roots, and -d, which expresses a plural subject, but no clear temporal or aspectual notions.

The perfective domain consists of three past perfective and several perfect and/or resultative markers:

- The past perfective markers are -bA, -iUGA, and -jUGU. As was already described in great detail by John Street (2009), -iUGA functions as a marker of firsthand information, while -jUGU is used in contexts of inference and hearsay. Still, -iUGA and -jUGU seem to be used only in such firsthand and non-firsthand contexts where the source of information makes a difference to the addressee, while the clearly more frequent suffix -bA seems to be used for unproblematic facts. In complex aspectual markers, including past imperfective ones, only the suffixes -iUGA and -jUGU occur, whereas -bA is excluded.

- The participial suffixes -GsAn and -GA are rare on their own but seem to express perfect and resultative notions. The resultative converbal suffix -jU combined with a copula in -mU expresses resultative or continuative notions depending on the aktionsart of the predicate. To express past reference points, both the participles and the converb can combine with past copula forms.
Combinations of participles with the verb bol- ‘become’ refer to entering into a state where – depending on the semantics of the participle – an event either will or has already come about.

4.2 The tense-aspect system of Khorchin Mongolian

Research on Khorchin was based on six hours of transcribed corpus materials from the Khorchin Eastern Central banner collected in 2011 and supplemented with a small number of transcriptions from other areas and a few examples taken from non-transcribed recordings. Relevant examples from the corpus were analyzed on the basis of native speaker evaluations obtained during approximately 80 hours of elicitation in 2012.

The most salient division of the Khorchin tense-aspect system runs between the non-past suffix -na and the past tense suffix -W הצדדים. They have the short variants -n and -tf, which are required with illocutionary particles and questions; thus, the finite vowel that is most often present in absolute finite declarative contexts seems to correlate with assertive force. It is basically -na and -tf that can combine with a number of aspectual constructions.

Imperfectivity is mainly expressed by three forms:

i. -na is used for generic and present habitual (though zero is used for non-delimited state predications based on nominals). It also covers future and, in rare cases, past potential meaning.

ii. -tf-na is used for present progressive meanings. It is unrestricted by aktionsart and even used for habitual situations with relevant internal structure, in which case it combines with adverbials such as in uder=t=een xxvr tat=tqE-n day-DAT=RPOSS violin draw-PROG-NPST ‘they are playing the violin every day.’

iii. -tf-tf functions as a past imperfective. In habitual contexts, it can implicate temporal remoteness vis-à-vis -tf.

An alternative to the Progressive is the Resultative -at pe-, which yields continuative or iterative interpretations when combined with non-telic predicates. With telic predicates, it yields resultative states. A contracted non-resultative form -at-ae-, though commonly mentioned in the literature, was not attested in the material and only recognized by my oldest informant. The converbal suffix -at by itself has a finite, temporally neutral usage. It expresses continuative meanings without a clear final boundary with almost all aktionsarten, while resultative meanings seem mostly restricted to a subset of achievements.

Both the Progressive and the Resultative can combine with the enclitic =l to yield an iterative or continuative meaning irrespective of aktionsart implying an unpleasantly long duration. Finally, -ntf- denotes prospective aspect.

There are a number of minor forms:
• -la ~ -le, which appears to be partly homophonous with the converb -le, refers to a proximate past or future. In all confirmed attested cases, some kind of firsthand evidence seems to exist.
• -xʊn seems to be a kind of perfect marker. Informants tend to reject it as belonging to the standard language, but its relatively high corpus frequency (1/11 as frequent as -tʃ in declaratives) seems to contradict that. At any rate, it is the only option in past tense content questions.
• -i is used in second- and third-person present habitual interrogative contexts. Synchronically, it takes the same form as the Voluntative, but diachronically it might be related to -n plus the interrogative clitic =i.
• Khorchin -n/ŋ- seems to express a dissatisfied stance.

Evidentiality is not expressed by grammatical means. In contexts of hearsay and, possibly, in order to avoid responsibility, the hearsay / quotative / complementizer verb go- can be used (though the details are anything but clear), and inferences tend to combine with the illocutionary particle ba, a loan from Mandarin that indicates a guess and asks the addressee for confirmation.

4.3 Aspect and epistemic notions in the present tense system of Khalkha Mongolian

Research on Khalkha was based on a corpus of approximately 10 hours and its subsequent semantic evaluation during 285 hours of elicitation (for all tenses combined) conducted mainly during 2013 in Ulaanbaatar.

The Khalkha present tense system is fairly complicated. First, there are five suffixes used in the absolute finite position of finite predicates:

i. -tʊg is used in habitual and generic contexts. It also has a specialized, contextually conditioned function in which it can refer to one-time events that don’t fit into the normal course of events.
ii. -n on its own expresses potential developments irrespective of tense. Its long variant -n=a apparently differs in politeness.
iii. Finite -a on its own is very rare. It seems to express resultativity with some modal shades.
iv. Finite -x on its own is rare. It is used for enumerating unrelated events without situating them in time.
v. Finite -at is not infrequent but hardly ever combines with other aspect markers. It expresses a resulting or pertaining situation requiring somebody to take action.

Second, there are a number of aspectual constructions. Two of them are based on converbs:
• -tj′/pa/- is usually contracted to -tj′ai- or -tj′i- and can combine with verbs irrespective of aktionsart. It expresses progressive meaning.
• -at pai- yields resultative meanings with telic but continuative readings with atelic predications.

There are also some constructions based on participles:

• -tāg pai- is only used to combine the core semantics of -tāg with evidential or past tense values.
• -sāŋ pai- expresses perfect meaning, while -sāŋ on its own instead expresses past semantics.
• -x pai- expresses irreal meanings in certain modal contexts.
• -x gi-/tf pai-, a combination of -x, the verb gi- ‘say’ and the Progressive -tf pai-, expresses prospective meaning.

The present system is made up of the suffixes that can be used in absolute-finite position either on their own or in combination with the aspectual constructions. On their own, -n and -tāg cover habitual and other non-actual situations. If situations are habitual, but require an internal aspectual structure, the aspectual constructions listed above can combine with -tāg. This doesn’t seem to hold for the Prospective where -tāg is only attested when referring to a non-normal course of events, while it is potentially ambiguous with the other aspectual forms.

In combination with -n or -a, the aspectual forms yield various kinds of ongoing situations, lasting results or current relevance. If the speaker has direct evidence for the event or its result, she uses -n, while Indirect -a is used if this is not the case. Thus, a Perfect such as -sāŋ pai-n may be used for an event that is inferred from firsthand evidence or to a witnessed event, while a Progressive in -tfi-n can only mark a witnessed event, contrasting with a synchronically non-witnessed event in -tfi-[a]-a. The rare -tāg pai- cannot be taken to express an ongoing situation or result as such but apparently refers to the form of evidence currently available for a habitual event.

4.4 Factual vs. evidential? - The past tense forms of spoken Khalkha Mongolian

The basic past tense suffixes in spoken Khalkha are -sāŋ, -tša, -tfe and the peripheral -w. The basic opposition is between established knowledge (-sāŋ) and non-established (mostly new) knowledge, which is then further differentiated into firsthand (-tša) and non-firsthand sources (-tfe). This adds the factor “time of acquisition” to “source of information.” However, vivid recollection and deferred realization allow for using -tša and -tfe, respectively. Additionally, -tša is used to establish a fictive scenario in discourse. In the corpus, past -tša is thrice as frequent as past -sāŋ and -tfe combined and due to its opposition to the latter seems to acquire a connotation of factual, relia-
ble information. In declaratives, -w accounts for just 0.7% of past tense uses. It is used for events that surprised the speaker in the past. In questions, -tfe is used to ask the hearer to give an answer based on inference. In self-directed discourse, -ľa is used by a speaker who tries to remember something she once knew, irrespective of whether this knowledge was acquired as firsthand knowledge or not.

All past markers have future uses. For an event for which the speaker has sensory or internal evidence (including when the speaker refers to her own intentions), -ľa is fairly common. Clues as to whether a future or past interpretation hold are mostly syntactical, but stative aktionsart or the presence of the boundary-actualizing marker -tf- restrict the interpretation to the past. -ľa can be used in questions about the future in which case the speaker seems to motivate her question on the basis of a presumption based on firsthand evidence. The morphological form of -ľa in such contexts is different from the form used in past questions. -tfe can be used when a future event is inferred, and -sây marks it as inevitable. Both are exceedingly rare in future contexts, so that they presumably only work in a salient future context. Future -w expresses preventive warnings.

5. From Middle Mongol to Central Mongolic

I will now address systematic changes in the inventories and functions of TAE markers between MM and the modern Central Mongolic varieties Khalkha, Khorchin and Oirat. The comparison is structured as follows: In sections 5.1 and 5.2, finitely usable past respective present forms will be compared. In 5.3 and 5.4, the types and complexity of aspsectual constructions in finite predicates are discussed. Due to the lack of data, the discussion in 5.4 doesn’t include Oirat. In 5.5, final particles related to evidentiality are discussed.

In the tables below, a question mark is used if the meaning or paradigmatic status of a certain marker are unclear. The S / C columns indicate that a form or one of its meanings is attested in Simple / Complex predicates.

5.1 Finitely usable past forms

Finitely usable past forms in MM (see table 1 below) constituted a system of three suffixes: -bA was evidentially neutral, -lUGA marked visual (and possibly other sensory) evidence, and -jUGU was used for inferred and hearsay information (Street 2009). The evidential markers were probably used when it was necessary to indicate the source of information, while -bA was used in contexts that allowed for a factual stance. The ratio between -bA and the combined token frequency of the evidentially marked suffixes -lUGA and -
jUGU in the largest MM source is about 3:1. However, aspectually complex forms (see 6.3) only allowed for either -lUGA or -jUGU.

As -jUGU probably goes back to a resultative in *-jU-QU and as even -lUGA might possibly be analyzed into two elements, *-lU with unclear meaning and *-GA as a form of the MM resultative participle -GA, no evidential system can be reconstructed for Pre-PM. However, if <GU> in -jUGU is correctly identified with -QU (as somewhat boldly suggested by Bese 1970: 29-30), I’d suggest that evidentiality can be reconstructed for the period of around 1050-1150. This is because the gender marking in -jUGU (female -jiGi, -jiGAi, plural -jUGUi, cf. Rybatzki 2003: 75) doesn’t agree with that of -QU (unexplained variant -QUi, plural -QUn, cf. Bayarmendü 1986). Therefore, its reanalysis analogous to the other gender/number-marking indicative suffixes would have taken place. The emergence of this system, which was in steep decline in Late MM, must have required some time. It would, in turn, constitute a subsequent development to the reanalysis of *-QU into a synchronically unanalyzable part <GU> of the suffix -jUGU, as the different forms of -QU as such were preserved. For the same period, the existence of evidential forms is mentioned by the 11th century linguist Mahmud Al-Kāšūgarī ([1072-4] 1982: 297, cited in Straughn 2011) for Old Turkic.

In Oirat, the MM system of past markers was retained best. The suffix -dz (from -jUGU, undergoing voicing, cf. Svantesson et al. 2005: 16-7, 148) marks hearsay and inferred evidence (esp. Goto 2009: 129-35, similarly Orulamjab 2013, Skribnik & Seesing 2014: 155-7), be it on its own or in complex forms such as -sâni/dâgai/x bu:-dz and -ad/dz bu:-dz (Bläsing 1984: 15, 17). The particle =dz < sandz (< *a-san a-juyu), which is common after participles in the written language (Bläsing 1984: 17), might mark pure evidentiality without tense in spoken Kalmyk discourse (Goto 2009: 135-6, but see Orulamjab 2013 for Xinjiang). Conversely, -la (< -lua < -luya) is used for firsthand evidence, though complex constructions mostly use the fossilized form of the old copula bile instead of the modern copula form bu:-la (Skrnibnik & Seesing 2014: 152-5, Goto 2009, Orulamjab 2013). No future uses of -la are mentioned in my sources. -w is reported to be most frequent and used by default. It is propulsive in narrative texts, but even the most frequent form in perfect contexts in the questionnaire of Dahl (1985) (Goto 2009). Overall, Bläsing’s (1984: 47-59, 89-102) purely aspectual analysis is

\[9\] Here and in the following, I often generalize from Kalmyk to Oirat in general. Secondary sources on other Oirat varieties such as those spoken in Xinjiang and the contact varieties of CMc in Amdo, Alshaa and western Mongolia are usually not available with the exception of Orulamjab’s (2013) master thesis on Xinjiang Torgut. Given the contact situation of the remaining varieties, it is not a priori clear whether extrapolations from Kalmyk are feasible.

thus probably not defendable.\footnote{I expect that the difference between -la and -w in literary Kalmyk can be interpreted along lines similar to those suggested by Binnick (2012) for the cognate markers in literary Khalkha. This would require a partial reversal of the analysis suggested by Bläsing (1984: 93-4). It is likely that their main difference is evidential, a category that can undergo adaptations in contexts that are by and large unsuitable for evidentiality such as novels (see also Oswalt 1986: 33-4 on Kashaya where a complex evidential system is reduced to experiential / quotative in narratives).} -w retained the distributional restriction of MM -bA not to occur in complex aspectual constructions based on participles (Bläsing 1984: 28), and it is rejected by informants in combination with imperfective markers such as the Progressive -dʒa- (Goto 2009: 127-8; Bläsing [1984: 27] contends that -dʒa- is rare in contrast to -dʒa-la). Evidentially, -w is assumed to be firsthand-like or at least expresses speaker’s confidence (Goto 2009: 129, Orulamjab 2013) and can thus be compared with the factual MM -bA. The status of -sän is less clear. It might be a perfect (cf. Bläsing 1984: 95-7), but it is infrequent at any rate. In contrast to MM, the structure -sän be:-na does exist (esp. Skribnik & Seesing 2012, also Bläsing 1984: 28, Orulamjab 2013).

In (spoken) Khalkha and presumably in Khorchin, the previously factual -bA has turned into a marker used in “modal” contexts. In Khalkha, it was replaced by -səŋ (PM *-sAn (Bese 1971) or *-GəsAn), originally apparently a present perfect that might have retained this function in Khorchin.\footnote{Hsiao (2013) claims that it was -GəsAn + copula instead of -GəsAn alone that developed into modern finite -səŋ. This is not plausible as MM did not even have the form -GəsAn bu-yu, while -GəsAn bülüge/bile rather referred to a past resultant state and could semantically not have developed directly into a simple past marker. Of course, it IS significant that a source like the 17th century Erdeni-yin tobciya HAD a form -GəsAn bu-yu, but without any statement about the respective frequency of this form vs. -GəsAn over time, little of value can be said.} The suffixes -ła (< -luqa) and -jfe (< -jiai < -jiyai, the female singular variant of -jUGU) more or less retained their former evidential values. All Khalkha past forms have acquired a future usage, albeit it is of rather low frequency for -jfe and -səŋ. Even the frequency of -jfe in declarative simple and complex forms is very low in my corpus, the ratio being 32(-səŋ):9(-ļa):2(-jfe).

There are two explanations for this which might complement each other: 1. The corpus was strongly biased towards firsthand reports. 2. The Direct Perfect has similar inferential uses as -jfe and might thus have started to partly replace it. Overall, however, a system of approximately the same structure as MM is still being retained.

In Khorchin, -bA was replaced by -jfe (< -jiai), which lost its evidential meaning altogether, while -jłe (< -la < -luqa) is only attested with imminent or recent events. Its precise corpus frequency is hard to assess due to the nearly homophonous converb, but the ratio for -jłe vs. -jfe lies between 1:20 and 1:50. -sen (< Proto-CMc *-san) is used in contexts that might suggest a perfect meaning and in content questions. In positive declaratives, the ratio -sen vs. -jfe is 1:11, but this contrasts with informant perception that it be-
longs to the standard language rather than to the regiolect. Its status in the system thus requires further research. If -łe and -sen have indeed ceased to function as regular past forms, the tripartite MM system would have been replaced by a simpler system centered on -tfe.

Table 1: Past suffixes in finite position

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MM / Oirat</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>Khalkha</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>Khorchin</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-bA</td>
<td>FACT.PST</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>-w</td>
<td>past surprise</td>
<td>preventive</td>
<td>past question</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-lUGA -la</td>
<td>1H.PST</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>-ѣa</td>
<td>1H.PST</td>
<td>1H.FUT</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>-ле</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-jUGU -dʒ</td>
<td>2H.PST</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>-tfe</td>
<td>2H.PST</td>
<td>inferential</td>
<td>FUT</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-GsAn -sən</td>
<td>?PRES.PRF</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>-səŋ</td>
<td>FACT.PST</td>
<td>FACT.FUT</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>-sən</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2 Finitely usable present forms

In contrast to the past suffixes, the life-cycle of present tense suffixes in CMe (see table 2 below) is rather short. Early MM and Late Eastern MM have -yU, -mU and -i. The distribution of -i is limited to a few verb stems, and with the possible exception of its combination with the copula, its meaning is probably beyond reconstruction. On its own, -yU expresses generic meaning, while the younger -mU(i) (from -n bu-i or -n bu-yu) has taken over progressive and habitual meanings. In complex aspectual constructions, both suffixes simply express present tense meaning. Neither is retained in CMe.

Modern present tense suffixes in Khalkha do all go back to identifiable morphemes of MM and Late Western MM. Progressivity is still expressed morphologically, but it requires two suffixes: -tfe-[ə]-a / -tfe-n (< -tf pai-n

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13 This idea is not new (Mijiddorj 1976: 120, Toytambayar 2012: 171-85), though I am not sure where it originated. The claim that -mU(i) is somehow a variant of or derived from a rare nominal suffix -m, which is based on evidence from the MM source Hua-yi yi-yu (e.g., Moostaert 1977: 74, Rybatzki 2003), fails to account for -U. Reconstructing *-m bU-i/-yu might be an option, but an attested combination such as -n bu-yu (Secret history) or -n bu-i (inscription) of prince Aruγ, 1340, line 7, Tömörtogoo 2006: 23) is more plausible.

14 Hsiao (2013: 1091) seems to imply in her table that the overall text frequency of -yU declined from 27.2% of all imperfective/non-past markers in MM to 4.7% in 17th to 19th century “Late Mongolian.” However, the materials she compares are not equivalent. Her MM corpus contains a very long religious text with lots of eternal truths all requiring a generic marker, but none of the plentifully available religious sources of “Late Mongolian” was included into her corpus. If one compares texts of similar genres such as the MM Secret History of the Mongols and the “Late Mongolian” Erdeni-yin tobiya, Hsiao’s percentages are 8.4% (32/383) vs. 10.5% (40/384); thus, there is no statistically significant difference.
In such complex forms, both -n and -a signal an ongoing situation. Habitual to generic situations are marked by -tāq, which is cognate with MM -dAg, a very rare suffix with unclear, but possibly habitual, meaning used on verbs in attributive position. It has been identified with Old Turkic -dAg (Shiotani 2005: 123), which didn’t have a (positive) finite use either, but rather, expressed perfective semantics (Erdal 2004: 293-6). The present domain is thus split in a way different from MM. It is even more complicated, as simple -n (<Proto-CMc *-na < LWM -nam) can mark a situation at any time level including the present, if there is a certain potential for it to occur, and the non-future, if it actually has occurred. This meaning, while not properly habitual, often implicates habituality. In addition to its more complicated aspectual system, Khalkha has introduced present tense evidentiality, which involves distinct meanings for finitely usable suffixes in complex aspectual forms. Thus, -n comes to mark current direct perception and -a (from the MM Resultative Participle -GA) marks information that is not directly perceived at the time of utterance.

Semantically, both event and reference time of Post-MM bayi-nam and Proto-CMc *pai-na ‘is there’ coincide with the time of utterance, which makes direct observation likely. The status of *pai-[a]-a is much more complicated. The resultative *-a can tentatively be reconstructed for Proto-CMc as it survived in Khalkha, Oirat and Buryat, but it must have been lost in Proto-Kharchin-Kharchin at the very latest in the early 17th century before the diversification into subdialects in the Manchu state took place. Conversely, bayi- had lost its meaning ‘stand’ in the 17th century, in contrast to its uses for ‘exist, be at’ (n=31-34), ‘stop (doing)’ (n=15) and its auxiliary uses (n=131) – might arguably be assumed in only three cases (Secen 1987: 108-18, see Johanson 1999 for ‘stand’ as a resultative, possibly stative meaning). The grammaticalization of present evidentiality, on the other hand, must have taken place later than the 17th century if it was contact-induced from Amdo Tibetan (see section 7). If so, it would be more likely that a non-resultative, possibly stative meaning was the input for the grammaticalization process. As it is resultatives (Bybee et al. 1994: 105) or perfects (Tatevosov 2001) that are assumed to serve as input for the grammaticalization of inferential perfectivity, this would seem less likely. It is hoped that a precise study of existing sources could clarify this confusing state of affairs.

Shiotani (2005: 124-8) is not justified when he reconstructs PM *-dAg as a participle. 1. MM -dAg is not attested with direct objects. Thus, there is only evidence for a derivational, adjective-forming suffix. The absence of any reflexes of *-dAg in the Moghol branch (Weiers 1972) and the Shoronic subbranch of SMc as well as the mere existence of adjectives in -dagar (*-dAg plus instrumental case) in Dagur (Shiotani 2005) don’t strengthen his point. A participle -dag only occurs in Eastern Yellow Uyghur and CMC (Shiotani 2005), including Manchurian Khamnigan (Janzunen 2005: 43). However, Eastern Yellow Uyghur differs from the other SMc languages precisely due to its contact with CMC (cf. Nugteren 2003: 265). Therefore, -dag must have developed into a participle either in Proto-CMC or in one of the CMc languages that also form a sprachbund, but no later than 1630 when the Kalmyk Khanate was founded.
of speech if attached to the CMc copula pai- ‘be.’ These evidential categories CAN be applied to -tāg, but this is rare, and they cannot be applied to potential -n.

The characteristics of Oirat lie in-between MM and Khalkha. The status of -na and -dāg seems to be by and large identical to Khalkha (cf. Bläsing 1984: 73, 77-80, Ebert 1999: 324-7), although the suffix -x (< -QU) has retained its future uses (cf. Orulamjab 2013, see also Bläsing 1984: 15), so that a detailed differentiation of the usage domains of -na vs. -x is necessary. Even mono-event past uses of -dāg might be attested (see Bläsing 1984: 69-70 who is not right in understanding this example as imperfective). Progressive notions can be expressed both by the analytic -dʒ be:-najov-na (be:- cop < 'stand', jov- 'go') and the more frequent synthetic -dʒa-. The synthetic form seems to allow for wider imperfective uses than the more strictly progressive analytical form (Ebert 1999: 328-31). If true, this would resemble the difference between MM -mU and -n bu-yu. There are two additional forms: the rare -a refers to a concrete event that started before topic time but covers it, expressing a continuative meaning (Bläsing 1984: 76, see also Ebert 1999: 331-2): Hotn-a uls unt-a ‘Die Bevölkerung der Stadt schlief noch’ (Bläsing 1984: 70-1), i.e., ‘The inhabitants of the city were still sleeping.’ In contrast, -ad be:-na is presumed to disambiguate aktionsart (of “initio-transformatives,” i.e., inceptive and inchoative states) and indicate iterativity or extended duration in a pre-aspectual sense (Ebert 1999: 333-5). The most important difference to Khalkha is the lack of a present-tense evidentiality distinction, as -a has a different status, and complex predicate forms like *-dʒ be:-[h]-a are absent (Bläsing 1984 for Kalmyk, Orulamjab 2013 for Xinjiang, Yu. Tsendee, p.c., 2014-04-24, for Oirat in western Mongolia and historical Oirat sources in Clear script).

The Khorchin system, in turn, has become simpler. The LWMM Progressive -nam has developed into a habitual-generic-future marker -na, while present progressive meanings are expressed by -lfe-na which is cognate with the Khalkha form. No productive reflexes of -GA exist in Khorchin-Kharchin (see Bayançooytu 2002 for Khorchin proper, Sodubayat 2007 for Kharchin, Mönggüngerel 1998 for Naiman), thus there is no evidential contrast. A participle -tag is reported to have existed in 1950s Khorchin (Bayançooytu 2002: 307-8) for occasional but certain [=regular] events, but it is no longer used.

A finite, non-tensed suffix shared by Khalkha and Khorchin is -at. It is restricted to simple constructions and thus is not fully integrated into the TAE.
system. In CMc, it moreover links clauses and marks the non-final element in complex predicates. The cognate MM -GAd is restricted to clause linking.

Table 2: Present suffixes in finite position

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MM</th>
<th>S C</th>
<th>Khalkha</th>
<th>S C</th>
<th>Khorchin</th>
<th>S C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-yU</td>
<td>GEN</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PRES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-mU</td>
<td>PROG/HAB</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PRES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-i</td>
<td>PRES&amp;?</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-nAm</td>
<td>PROG/PRES</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-n POT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DIR,PRES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-GA</td>
<td>RES,PRES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>[a]-a RES,PRES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>^DI R,PRES</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-dAg</td>
<td>V&gt;ADJ</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>-tāg HAB./GEN, unexpected</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.3 Aspectual constructions in finite predicates

All CMc varieties make use of analytical constructions to express aspect. This means that a participle or converb is connected with an auxiliary to yield a mostly aspectual meaning. In MM, such constructions were possible on three levels: converb plus copula, participle plus copula, and participle plus the dynamic copula bol- ‘become.’ As table 3 (Bläsing 1984: 28, Benzing 1985: 25 for Oirat) shows, the same number of converbal constructions is present in MM and all three CMc varieties. However, Khorchin only retains the older analytic version -if (p)fe- of the CMc suffix -if- if the (former) focus clitic -l is attached to -if. MM has two participle-based devices to express irreal past possibility, past habituality and past perfect notions, while Khalkha and Oirat express more or less the same notions with three suffixes. Oirat, in addition, has a rare participle-based continuative form. Khorchin, in contrast, has lost this predication type entirely.

MM, Khalkha and Oirat can also express the notion of entering into a state where an event would be likely to come about (cf. Song 1997: 299-300) or where the participant already experiences the resultant state and expresses a certain stance towards it (Kullmann & Tserenpil 1996: 204). Some related constructions have been analyzed as expressing evidentiality in Oirat (Skribnik & Seesing 2014). Entering into a state in which a certain habit obtains can be expressed in Khalkha (Song 1997: 302-3) and presumably in Oirat. It is not attested among the few surviving instances of MM -QU bol-.

Prospectives going back to *ge- ‘say’ preceded by a future suffix have been innovated in all of CMc. In Khalkha, this suffix is -x, while it is -n in Khorchin. In Oirat, both varieties may exist: Orulamjab (2013, section on
(-ŋgə:-) presents an example sentence with a prospective form in -ŋ for Xinjiang, while Skribnik & Seesing (2014: 151) give -x for prospective meaning and -ŋ (they assume it to be the “modal converb,” but finite -ŋ could look the same) for an event that nearly took place.

Table 3: Functionally similar aspect constructions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MM</th>
<th>Khalkha</th>
<th>Oirat</th>
<th>Khochin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-ŋ bu-</td>
<td>progressive</td>
<td>-tʃi-</td>
<td>-dʒa-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-tʃ paɪ-</td>
<td>-dʒ buː/jow-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-jU a-</td>
<td>?progressive</td>
<td>-at paɪ-</td>
<td>-ad buː-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>resultative</td>
<td></td>
<td>-at paɪ-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-QU bu-</td>
<td>potential fut. at past RT</td>
<td>-x paɪ-</td>
<td>-x buː-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-GsAn a-</td>
<td>tensed perfect</td>
<td>-sɑŋ paɪ-</td>
<td>-sɑŋ buː-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-lɑŋ paɪ-</td>
<td>-dɑŋ buː-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-QU bol-</td>
<td>inceptive prospective</td>
<td>-x pɔɬ-</td>
<td>-x bol-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-GsAn bol-</td>
<td>?inceptive perfect</td>
<td>-sɑŋ pɔɬ-</td>
<td>-sɑŋ bol-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-lɑŋ pɔɬ-</td>
<td>-dɑŋ bol-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-x gi-tʃi-</td>
<td>-x'-n gi-dʒa-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-n-tʃe-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.4 Possible combinations

The constructions discussed in sections 5.1 to 5.3 are building blocks that can combine with each other with certain restrictions. To avoid extensive detail, I will look at the length of maximal predicates only. Constructions that are based on PTCP pɔɬ-, -x gi-tʃi- or express modal meanings (other than evidential modality, at any rate) are excluded from the discussion. The tables below are compiled from corpus data (MM, Khochin) and Google searches (Khalkha):

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18 Of the two copula verbs of MM, I am listing only the more common for each construction, even though the other copula is attested in some cases. For the purpose of this table, Oirat bile is counted as an instance of buː-. RT is short for “reference time.”
In MM and Khorchin, the number of attested complex aspectual constructions is rather small, but so is the corpus. The two MM constructions that contain two copulas consist of an initial converb followed by a participle and a finite verb in the past. The only complex Khorchin form with two copulas attested ends in a past form, too. As participle-based constructions are absent from Khorchin, it contains two converbs. The status of this construction as consisting of three words can be disputed, as the Khorchin Progressive is obligatorily contracted in the absence of the clitic =l.

Complex predicates in Khalkha with three copulas are quite rare. Except for combinations with initial -at, token frequencies never surpassed n=4. Table 5 contains a few plausible overgeneralizations on the attested data, while a few structurally strange items with n=1 were disregarded. One can point out a number of general principles: converbs in -at are the most common initial element, and they never occupy any other position. The verbal suffix -l rarely ever tolerates an element other than -at preceding it, though a very few instances of -l preceding -l are attested. The order of the participial suffixes -l and -l isn’t crucial, and both may occur within one predication twice. The most common final elements are the present evidential suffixes -l and -l, while unclear restrictions obtain for the past suffixes -l/-l and -l. Thus, the integration of the elements -l with its ability to integrate perfect, continuous and progressive aspect forms into the scope

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19 The following data (with a complete, contextualized example each) was retrieved at 2014-04-21. No examples besides those listed below were found: -aad bai-j bai-san bai-nal-aal-dag, -aad-j bai-dag bai-san bai-nal-aa, -aad bai-dag bai-san bai-jee, -aad-j bai-san bai-dag bai-nal-aa, -aad bai-san bai-dag bai-na, -aad bai-dag bai-san bai-na, -aad bai-j bai-dag bai-jee/laa/lal/aa, -aad bai-j bai-dag bai-jee/lau/aa, -aad bai-j bai-dag bai-lal-aa.

20 -l is a fully acceptable non-finite predicate, though, and it is also the only complex aspectual form in which -at is used finitely.
of habituality, its ability to express non-habitual notions in some contexts, and the advent of the evidentiality opposition has greatly increased the maximal complexity of Khalkha predicates.

5.5 Evidential particles

MM is not known to have had evidential particles, and no particular hearsay uses are reported for the quotative verb ke(m)e- ‘say’ (Street 2013). In Khalkha, *ge-* (< *ge- < Late MM [kʰə:] < Early MM [kʰomə-]) is used as a quotative device but also features in a large number of constructions, some of which are related to stance. It is uncertain whether a hearsay meaning can be established. The Khorchin cognate go- can be used in hearsay contexts, notably in the form gon(o), but its use is clearly not obligatory. In Oirat, the combination -dʒ gi-ne 2h.pst say-pot is used for hearsay (Skríbník & Seesing 2014: 162). Khalkha has a particle pilge (< MM bů-lüge COP(<*stop+stand’)-1H.PST) to express recollection (Brosig 2012), and written Khalkha at(efe) < MM a-juyu COP(<’live’)2H.PST expresses hearsay and possibly inference. The formal surāg-tai information/news-COM is used to express hearsay (Mönzh-Amgalan 1998). In Oirat, sandʒ > =dʒ might just mark evidentiality, while bile retains its status as a tensed copula (see 6.1). In Kalmyk newspaper texts, -sn bile is used for reliable secondhand (not thirdhand) knowledge; for uncertain inference, a participle followed by the noun bč:dl ‘situation’ either in the comitative case -te21 or with the existential negation marker uga is used (Skríbník & Seesing 2014: 158, 162).

6. No proof required: Khorchin in Western Manchuria

In this section, I will try to provide a concise areal explanation for the changes that Khorchin underwent in its development from MM. I will start by sketching the migration of the Khorchin population and their current areal and sociolinguistic situation, then briefly address some general changes in Khorchin grammar and finally turn to structural parallels in the TAE systems of Khorchin and Mandarin.

The Khorchin tribe, originally the bearers (-cin being a suffix for professions) of a certain kind of quiver called qor, originated at the banks of the Onon river but moved to Hulunbuir in the first half of the 15th century (Se-cenbýatur et al. 2005: 316).22 In the 1530s, a group of Khorchin moved to

21 Mönzh-Amgalan (1998: 155) also lists this form, but final predicates with -PTCP patālγ-tai are extremely rare on the internet. patālγ-tai is more commonly preceded by adjectives and used attributively.

22 In contrast, Janhunen (1996: 58, 123) claims that the expansion of the Khorchin into Hulunbuir is a secondary phenomenon at the end of the 19th century. Neither source is partic-
the lower Nonni basin, into the current Fuyu county just northeast of Qi-
haer (Tulyayuri and Sodu 2008: 20, Janhunen 1996: 45), which brought
them into contact with Solon (Tungusic) and Dagur speakers and enabled
them to trade with the Han of the Ming state. After becoming Manchu sub-
jects in 1635, the Nonni Khorchin were moved southwest to their current
location (Tulyayuri and Sodu 2008: 22-3) in the Jirim league (since 1999
called Tongliao city) and the Hinggan league of Inner Mongolia. There
are Buryat, Ewenki and Dagur in the north, Khalkha and Baarin in the west,
Khorchin in the south and Manchu (who might still have transmitted their
In the Manchu Empire, the Khorchin became subject to strict divide and con-
quer politics that forbid Mongolians to cross the boundaries of banners (the
administrative unit below leagues), leading to separate linguistic develop-
ments within these banners (Tulyayuri and Sodu 2008: 34). The only notable
contact group was Han farmers. While the Manchu court from 1668 onwards
wanted to keep Mongolians apart from Han (presumably to retain them as a
reserve army) and took various measures to that effect (such as establishing
Mongolian as the only regional language of administration, forbidding Mon-
golians to learn Mandarin and prohibiting intermarriage), the high popula-
tion density in the Han mainland that developed during the stable Manchu
rule, intermingled with occasional famines due to natural disaster, gave Han
farmers a strong incentive to resettle in the sparsely populated north. The
local Mongolian nobility and administration could collect more taxes (and
bribes) from Han farmers than from Mongolian herders, so they resented
the segregationist politics of the central government. As a result, so much land
was rented or sold to Han settlers that Mongolians in some parts didn’t have
sufficient pastures left and were forced to become [semi]-agrarian them-
selves. After Russia claimed northern Manchuria, the Manchu government
tried to prevent its further expansion to the south by unrestrained colonializa-
tion of the borderlands from 1878 onwards (Tsai 1983: 13-73). At the eve of
the Japanese conquest in 1929, two thirds of the historical Eastern Central
banner in Jirim (which then included substantial parts of the modern Eastern
Back banner) were farming land (Tulyayuri and Sodu 2008: 101). With the

clearly clear about the evidence used for these claims. In any case, in order to move to the
lower Nonni basin, the Khorchin would have had to move through Hulunbuir.

While the Chinese government has reclassified most immediate administrative subdivisions
of Inner Mongolia as “cities” to change their legal status, their infrastructure is rural.

In detail, Khorchin is spoken in the following areas: Khorchin Eastern Central banner (~
darqan qosiyu), Khorchin Eastern Back banner (~ biwe wang qosiyu), Khorchin Western
Central banner (~ Tüsheed), Khorchin Western Front banner (~ Jasaytu), Jarud banner (ori-
ginally not Jirim), Jalaid banner, Dörbed Mongol Autonomous County in Heilongjiang, Qian
Gorlos Mongol Autonomous County in Jilin (Bayancogtu 2002: 2) and parts of Hulunbuir

This is not to say that most of the farmers were Han. To take the current Eastern Central
banner as an example, there are 6 townships with substantial Han populations and 6 Han
surge of Han nationalism during the Cultural Revolution, the replacement of husbandry with agriculture as main form of subsistence was furthered even more (cf. Sneath 2000: 102-125).

Ethnically, Mongolians in Jirim and Hinggan in 2000 remained 45% respective 41% of the overall population. These figures don’t directly translate into speakers of Khorchin, though. Many urban ethnic Mongolians speak only Mandarin and children of mixed parents (or brought up by mixed grandparents) are counted as Mongolians in spite of their invariably weak command of Mongolian. Many Han have changed their ethnicity to “Mongolian” (which they are entitled to do if they have one distant Mongolian ancestor) to gain minority privileges such as not being subject to the one-child policy. Conversely, some of the Han who ended up as farmers in Mongolian villages have a firm command of Khorchin. I would estimate that at least 25% of the overall population of the Khorchin area are proficient in Khorchin. In the western part of the Eastern Central Banner (as well as in Hinggan, cf. Jiāng 2012: 64-6), a second important group of immigrants are Khorchin (Tümët and Mongoljin) speakers, creating isoglosses such as western /ɔː/ vs. eastern /ə/ in words like ɔːχ vs. əχ ‘fat’ (Tuluyuri and Sodu 2008: 104, 114, 156). As the Khorchins were the first Mongolians to come under strong Han influence, they might have indirectly increased the influence of Mandarin on Khorchin. With very few exceptions among the oldest generation, all contemporary Khorchin speakers in the Eastern Central banner appear to have some command of Mandarin, but proficiency varies. Among the informants and recorded speakers from 2012, 17 farmers, elementary school teachers, shopkeepers, etc. reported a poor command of Mandarin, 19 an acceptable command and 4 a good command. Middle school teachers reported at least an acceptable command of Mandarin, and all officials and university graduates reported having a good command.

Mandarin contact seems to have influenced discernible subparts of Khorchin, while others seem unaffected. The percentage of Mandarin loans in Khorchin is substantial, but not overwhelming: Sodu (2013: 83), when

27 For instance, To’ytambayar (2007) reported the results of a questionnaire sent out to 180 ethnic Mongolians in government agencies working in the actual city Tongliao in 2005. Out of 148 respondents, 141 claimed to have an active command of Mongolian; 135 provided information about their children: 78 (54 of whom attended Mongolian schools) were reported to have an active command, while 63 (57 of whom attended Mandarin schools) were reported to have a passive or no command.
28 I obtained brief self-evaluations of their command of Mandarin from about 3/5s of my informants in their own words, which I boldly classified here.
evaluating a word list of Cayanqada (1996: 135-291), found that 13% of approximate 5000 Khorchin words were Mandarin loans. Of one-thousand words taken from five randomly selected passages from my corpus, 9% were Mandarin. Vowel harmony for non-phonemic vowels and palatalized consonant phonemes were lost (along the lines suggested by Svantesson et al. 2005 for Baarin, cf. data in Bayanchootu 2002). Here, Mandarin contact might, but need not be a factor. A certain influence of Mandarin intonation is claimed (Sodu 2013: 82), whereas retroflexes such as in Kharchin (Sodubayatur 2007: 125) have not been adopted. With up to 11 cases (depending on the analysis), the case system of Khorchin (Bayanchootu 2002: 147-9) is as large as those of Chakhar (Secenbayatur 2003: 33, 43) and Khalkha, with 8 cognate forms. Taking a superficial look, most other kinds of nominal morphology seem to be retained as well, though the loss of the focus marking clitic =l in most contexts (cf. Street 1985 for MM ele) is notable. The most substantial changes occurred in the areas with the most immediate interactive relevance. Mongolian terms of address and interlocutionary final particles were replaced by Mandarin loans, and clause-final adjectival CMc constructions for epistemic and deontic modality were replaced by Mandarin modal adverbs. Conventions of politeness and human interaction changed noticeably, e.g., through the loss of everyday greetings. Counting is mostly done in Mandarin. Overall, the culture seems to be switching from a mixed Mongolian-Han pastoralist-farmer culture (as documented in Kürelbayatur & Urancimeg 2012, which is based on fieldwork with very old people in the 1980s, Urancimeg, p.c., 2013-01-08) to a pure farmer culture.

In the following, I will draw some comparisons between Khorchin and Mandarin TAE. Mandarin Chinese has a middle-sized aspect system, while tense and evidentiality are not grammaticalized. This contrasts with MM, which, in addition to a middle-sized aspect system, had three clearly distinguishable tenses and a three-level past evidentiality system. Data relevant to the development of non-past imperfectivity in Khorchin is shown in table 6 (Mandarin data from Xiao and McEnery 2004):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MM</th>
<th>Mandarin</th>
<th>Khorchin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>future</td>
<td>-QU</td>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>-na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>generic</td>
<td>-yU</td>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>-na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>habitual</td>
<td>-mU</td>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>-na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>progressive</td>
<td>-mU,-n bu-yu zài</td>
<td>-te-na</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“progressive-stative”</td>
<td>-jU a-mu</td>
<td>-zhe</td>
<td>-at be:-na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>continuative</td>
<td>-jU a-mu</td>
<td>-xiàqù</td>
<td>(-at be:-na)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inceptive</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-qīlài</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
While MM carefully differentiates between different low-focal notions such as future, generic and habitual notions, and even Manchu (Gorelova 2002: 293) at least commonly uses a particular future form -ra, Mandarin and Khorchin code these notions in the same way. Notably, the loss of the dedicated CMc habitual suffix -tag, to whatever extent it might have been used in earlier stages of Khorchin, is recent. Both Khorchin and Mandarin have progressives that can be compared, although Mandarin has actional restrictions absent in the presumably older Mongolian form. What is termed “progressive-stative” here exhibits only limited similarities. Mandarin -zhe is as compatible with states as with activities (Xiao and McEnery 2004, in the following abbreviated as X&M, 189, 208-9) and is overall less suitable to express the situational change than zài (cf. X&M 215). With inceptive and inchoative aktionsart, it is more prone to refer to the phase after the initial punctual change, while zài must refer to the initial phase (X&M 191). On the other hand, the “progressive-stative” MM and Khorchin forms yield a continuous action with activities and a resultant state with accomplishments and achievements. Mandarin -xiàqu, then, appears to be a dedicated means to express resumption. As Mandarin uses two highly frequent and two less frequent forms to express high-focal notions, it is not surprising that Khorchin could retain two such forms.

Structurally, MM and Mandarin perfective forms are very different. X&M state that the most common way to express perfectivity is via directional, completive and result-state auxiliary verbs (160-1), but Khorchin hasn’t developed auxiliaries corresponding in usage or frequency to Mandarin wán ‘finish,’ dào ‘manage’ or kāi ‘open.’ Another very frequent means for referring to short non-durative events in Mandarin is verb reduplication (X&M 150-9). Grammars written in Inner Mongolia generally record a number of aspect-related means for verb reduplication (see, e.g., Secenbayatur 2003: 149-50), but, depending on the converbal suffixes used, they instead express notions such as iterativity, distributivity or temporal relationships between clauses. As indicated by this last point, verb reduplication is usually reported for non-finite predicates. Even entirely unmarked predicates are possible in some contexts (X&M 239). Correspondences to the three MM pasts and one perfect form are given in table 7:

Table 7: Perfectivity in MM, Mandarin, Khorchin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MM</th>
<th>Mandarin</th>
<th>Khorchin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>simple past</td>
<td>-bə</td>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>-tag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>firsthand past</td>
<td>-lUGA</td>
<td>complete: -le</td>
<td>immediate: -le</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>secondhand past</td>
<td>-jUGU</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perfect</td>
<td>-GsAn</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-san</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

29 In their corpus (X&M 159), such constructions had a token frequency of 1741, contrasting with 1165 for -le.
In contrast to Mandarin, Khorchin retains a “neutral” past into which it has generalized the MM secondhand past. For comparison with the MM / Khorchin Perfects, the best candidate might be the Mandarin Experiential, but none of the few attested instances of MM -GsAn and Khorchin -son look like translation equivalents of guò.  

One form that is as semantically dissimilar as guò and -son, but might possibly help to account for the semantic change of MM -lUGA into Khorchin -le, is Mandarin (-)le. None of the past suffixes of MM had a future use, but Khorchin -le is known to have developed one. Even in Khalkha, the future use of -ga is much more common than the future uses of the other past suffixes. Mandarin (-)le, as such, is of course not a marker of tense but of aspect, and it is even two homophonic morphemes, one used post-verbally and one in sentence-final position. Post-verbal -le expresses “complete” situations without introducing a final (spatial or temporal) endpoint and may, if no other delimitation is present in the overall context, be obligatory, e.g., X sì hou ‘after X died,’ but *X sì. Sentence-final le refers to a currently relevant state that has newly come into being at a time of reference (X&M 105-7; 132-8 synthesizing Li et al. 1982: 22 and Henne et al. 1977: 112):

(1) tā chū-le fāguó (X&M 134 citing Li 1999)
   he go-ACL France 31
   “He went to France”

(2) yǐ-gē lǎotàipō chū-lái, jiàn shì jǐ-gē
   one-CLF old.woman come-out, see are a.few-CLF
   jǐngchá, dùnshì huāng-le shén
   policeman, immediately panic-ACL expression
   “An old woman came out. She was scared out of her wits when she found that the visitors were some policemen” (X&M 108)

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30 Manchu doesn’t seem to have played any role. It has a simple past -ha that is commonly translated as -bA and -lUGA and a perfect -habi, which is commonly used as translation equivalent for -jUGU, e.g., in the Iledkil šastir, an official history of the relations of the Manchu with minority peoples of their empire. Miijdorj (1976: 117-9) probably errs, though, when he suggests that both -habi and -jUGU are secondhand past forms. The meaning of -habi is not entirely clear, being described as “past indefinite” by Gorelova (2002: 290-1, cf. Möllendorf 1892: 9) and as postterminal non-past (i.e., present perfect) by Rentzsch (2012: 852). In Manju-yin ünen magad qaali, first volume (unpublished facsimile, library of the Abteilung für Mongolistik und Tibetstudien, Bonn), which is a relatively freely translated parallel text presenting a mystical origin of the Manchu rulers, translations such as -GsAn bu-yu suggest present perfect meaning, and even alternative translations such as wa-habi (line 59) ‘he has killed [XY, now we must take revenge]’ as ala-laγa (line 58) ‘he killed [XZ {I have good [here certainly not firsthand] evidence}, so let’s take revenge’ or te-hebi ‘has settled’ vs. saγu-mu ‘is living’ (both line 22) point towards a perfect. In contrast to Khorchin, Manchu even had a participle-based pluperfect (Möllendorf 1892: 9) translated into Mongol by the evidentially unmarked form -GsAn bülüge.

31 The only particular glossings are ACTL ‘actual aspect marker’ and COS ‘change-of-state.’
Perfective uses similar to (1) and (2) and resultant states from completed events such as (3) seem to refer to the past, and in this sense they can also be expressed (or implicated) by Mongolian -le, be it for recent or (at least in the case of Khalkha) recalled distant events. There are uses such as (4) which are non-past and don’t refer to resultant states. There is still a certain similarity to an imminent future as denoted by the Mongolian equivalent, as it doesn’t matter so much whether or not it is already raining or is only about to if you have to choose your clothing. Overall, several uses of (-)le are reminiscent of a past perfective marker.

In addition to the past, both forms of Mandarin (-)le can even refer to the future. For -le, this use is pretty restricted as it requires a reference time even after the event in question as in (5) (X&M 116, 121-3), while sentence-final le has fairly broad future applications, either neutral such as (6) or linked to volition such as (7), and at least the latter is easily translated by Khalkha -ţa and possibly its Khorchin equivalent. Even the explicit use of future adverbiais exemplified by these two sentences is typical for future uses of -ţa.

(3) tā chū fàguó le (X&M 134 citing Li 1999)
he go France COS
“He has gone to France”

(4) xiàyuǔ le (X&M 132 citing Zhào 1968)
rain COS
“It’s raining now”

(5) mìngtiān bā-diǎn sì-míng gānjǐng kēndìng
tomorrow 8-o’clock, four-clf policeman surely
yǐjǐng likái-le shàoyáng
already leave-actl Shaoyang
“The four policemen will definitely have left Shaoyang by 8 o’clock tomorrow” (X&M 123)

(6) liàn-le zhēngzhèng yī-nián yáng bìngmíng
practise-actl whole one-year, Yang Bingming
kuài chūshī le
soon finish-apprenticeship COS
“Having been trained for a solid year, Yang would soon complete his apprenticeship” (X&M 133)

(7) zhè yào duóshāo qián yī-lí wǒ quán māi-xià le
this pill how-much money one-tablet, I all buy-up COS
“How much does each of these pills cost? I’ll buy them up” (X&M 133)

Overall, it is conceivable that the past uses of -le and the present uses of le were perceived as analogous to Mongolian -le, thus providing an incentive to create future uses of -le analogous to future le.
Epistemic auxiliaries in Mandarin might help to complete the picture of epistemological stance in Khorchin. For instance, Mandarin modal auxiliaries like kěndìng ‘confirm’ > ‘surely’ and kěnéng ‘may’ > ‘maybe’ are both attested in my Khorchin corpus in an adverbial use, and the Mandarin illocutionary / modal particle ba ‘probably’ is commonly used in inferential contexts. The extent to which such devices might express or implicate reference to evidential notions is not clear. The auxiliary ge- ‘say’ basically seems to be restricted to quotative uses in Khalkha (not treated in my thesis) but appears to include hearsay in Khorchin. In Mandarin, devices such as tīngshuǒ ‘I heard it said’ (with shuǒ ‘say’ used as a complementizer of tīng ‘hear’) or shuǒ ‘it is said’ are commonly used sentence-initially to express hearsay, often with an overtone of skepticism, as in (8) (Wáng et al. 2003: 464-72, Yang & Yap 2012):

(8) **SK-II, shuǒ méitiān zhī shuǐ yī-gè xiāoshì. ní xiāngxin ma?**

SK-II say everyday only sleep one-CLF hour you believe Q

[A: ‘Recently, I have often been burning the midnight oil. Acne has appeared on my face. What should I do?’ B: ‘SK-II!’ A:] ‘SK-II. It is said that you only need to sleep for one hour with SK-II; do you believe it?’ (Wáng et al. 2003: 470)

Standard Mandarin doesn’t have a hearsay particle, and if shuǒ is used sentence-finally in Taiwanese Mandarin, it expresses notions such as counterexpectation or emphasis of one’s own opinion (cf. Wáng et al. 2003: 272-7), possibly going back to postponed wǒ shuǒ ‘I say’ (Sū 2004: 28-9). The restricted but conventionalized extent to which sentence-initial shuǒ is used for hearsay marking approximately resembles what is known about its function in Khorchin. For both languages, more extensive data would be welcome, though. Extensions of Manchu se- ‘say’ don’t seem to have been the subject of any research so far.

7. Mixed evidentiality: Khalkha between Central Asia and Amdo

In its current location, Khalkha Mongolian is only surrounded by other CMc and Turkic varieties (Buryat in the north and northeast, Khorchin in the northeast, east and southeast, Shilingol and Chakhar in the south, Oirat in the southwest and west, and Tuvan in the northwest; tiny Turkic varieties such as Dukhan can be found in the north as well). Remnants of Ewenki speakers are still found in the autonomous Ewenki and Oroqen banners in Hulunbuir

32 Taiwanese Mandarin has de shuǒ (Yap Foongha, p.c., 2014-04-08), and more southern varieties such as Cantonese have, with wá, a full-fledged hearsay particle (Yap & Ahn).
in northeastern Inner Mongolia, as are Khmnigans, a group bilingual in Mongolian and Ewenki. Bilingualism was lost among the Khmnigans of Khentii province, Mongolia. The Khalkha don’t seem to have had any direct contact with the Manchu speakers of central Manchuria and Tungusic speakers of eastern Manchuria. Contact with languages such as Kazakh in western Mongolia and Uyghur and Kyrgyz in Xinjiang is mediated by Oirat. Chakhar, which belongs to the same subgroup of CMc as Khalkha, is adjacent to the Amdo area in the south where local Tibetan, Mandarin (e.g., Wutun), Southern Mongolic and some Turkic varieties form a speechbund (Slater 2003: 6-9, Janhunen et al. 2008: 21-2). The geographically closest Southern Mongolic variety is Eastern Yellow Uyghur, the only variety of Southern Mongolic that is similar enough to CMc to allow a limited degree of intercommunication. Khalkha and Amdo Tibetan33 were even in direct contact, as the latter is the language of Mongolian Buddhism. This is significant as monks are reported to have constituted about one-third of the male Khalkha population at the eve of communist modernization34 and one-fourth around 1925 (Barkmann 1999: 253).

I am not aware of studies that explicitly try to measure the precise influence that Turkic languages exerted on CMc after MM times. Earlier contacts led to strong lexical and structural resemblances that were numerous enough to lead to the Altaic hypothesis (see, e.g., Schönig 2003). As far as I know, non-lexical influence of Tibetan on CMc has only been studied for translations (Higuchi, e.g., 1994). I am not aware of any study that has tried to determine the extent of Tibetan loans in CMc, but it would be much easier to conduct, as Tibetan loans only started to enter Mongolian during the Late MM period and had distinctly different sound correspondences then than they had at later times (Atwood 2013). Among personal names, the most common foreign names are from Tibetan, and compound names of Khalkha and Tibetan freely occur (cf. Serjee 2010). Unfortunately, I don’t have any data on bilingualism among 19th century monks nor on the switch from Mongolian to Tibetan as the language of religious services.

The tripartite past tense system of Khalkha (as well as Oirat and presumably Buryat) was directly inherited from MM and thus isn’t in need of immediate explanation. The extended future uses are, but as I lack both evidence for similar areal developments (excluding Mandarin) and cannot address grammaticalization paths due to the exclusion of Classical Mongolian materials from this study, I won’t be able to say anything more on them here.

33 The language used in contemporary monasteries in Mongolia and Inner Mongolia is Amdo Tibetan (Gow-a, a doctoral student in musical sciences from the Central University of Nationalities who works on recitation in Mongolian monasteries, p.c., summer 2013), as is the language from which Tibetan loan words were taken into Mongolian (Atwood 2013).
The tripartite past system, however, fits neatly into its areal context. Peripheral Turkic languages such as Yakut and Turkish retain a bipartite system based on a firsthand/confirmative/neutral past -DI and a secondhand / non-confirmative past in -MIŞ that structurally resembles Old Turkic. But Central Asiatic Turkic languages such as Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Uyghur and Uzbek have developed a tripartite system based on -DI (as in Old Turkic), -GAN (from a perfect) and -IP (from a perfective converb) (Johanson 2003, Straughn 2011: 164-9). Like in Khalkha, these systems don’t seem to be associated with three different values for source of information. Straughn (2011: 61-82) proposes to analyze the Kazakh forms in terms of confirmativity and definiteness: -DI is used for events that the speaker can vouch for, often but not necessarily on the basis of firsthand knowledge, and which took place at a definite (identifiable and clear-cut) time in the past. Confirmativity outranks definiteness:

(9) Nazarbayev Qarağandi metallurgyia zawit-ı-nda ʒumis ıste-di. Nazarbayev worked in a Karagandy metallurgy factory. (Straughn 2011: 64)

(10) Azi Nomhon dalai-n orn-ii ediin zasg-iiin hamt-iiin. ‘A summit of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation or APEC ended yesterday in the Peruvian capital Lima.’ (Brosig 2009: 133-4)

(11) Keše sağaıt 3- te düken-ge bar-dï-m. ‘Yesterday at 3:00 I went to the store.’ (Straughn 2011: 69)

(12) Älginde šana bul kitap-tï oqi-p gal-dï-m. ‘I’ve just now finished reading this book.’ (Straughn 2011: 69)

The writer doesn’t have firsthand knowledge of the event in (9), which involves Kazakhstan’s ruler Nazarbayev, but she is very sure of it. While no such uses of -şa were attested in my spoken corpus, the language of Khalkha newspapers is perceived by informants in a similar confirmative way displayed in examples like (10) in which the probability that a Mongolian reporter actually attended the event personally is low. (11) illustrates the use of -DI with definite, very specific temporal reference. This is very similar to Binnick’s (2012: 102-7, 162-4) tempting analysis of Khalkha -şa as a deictic past, even though he thinks that deictic past forms are necessary to anchor an event in time in the absence of specific time adverbials whose presence would allow for an anaphoric (~indefinite) past tense. In (12), reference is
made “to the definite time denoted by the very recent past that requires the use of the simple past” (Straughn 2011: 69). I analyzed this use of Khalkha -

-ŋa in such a context as recent firsthand perception. If some of the uses in Kazakh are register-specific, the values at play here might be rather similar to Khalkha.

The meaning of -ŋIP “is characterized by strong non-confirmative meaning ...

... manifested as doubt, hearsay, inference, or admirativity” (Straughn 2011: 78) depending on context. It is usable in common inferential contexts, e.g., to the illness of an unhealthy-looking friend on the basis of her outer appearance, with quotative and hearsay information, unobservable first person events such as falling asleep, forgetting, even visual information from dreams or if one wants to avoid taking responsibility. Given particular social conventions, the core meaning of the form itself might be non-firsthand.

-ŋGAN is described as neutral as far as the commitment of the speaker is concerned. It is also aspectually different in being temporally indefinite, a usage, e.g., present in experiential uses. Without any statistical data or more concrete information on how speakers choose a marker given a certain epistemological situation, the status of Kazakh -ŋGAN vs. -DI is hard to assess. It is reminiscent of Khalkha -ŋsay, but maybe more of Oirat -w and its MM cognate.

The overall similarity of the Khalkha and Kazakh past tense system points to a contact-induced phenomenon, even if the particular rationalization of certain uses by new generations of learners might have drifted apart a little during more recent times of presumably less intensive contact.

Incidentally, even Amdo Tibetan has a tripartite division of forms that are perfective [at least when used on their own, and thus also non-present]. It distinguishes (i) =n3/0 for volitional participation of the speaker (or, in questions, the addressee); (ii) =t′xe for firsthand evidence of events which the speaker didn’t purposefully perform herself (including uncontrolled events such as loving, smelling, non-deliberate sneezing or actions in dreams); and (iii) =zog for inference or hearsay regarding events that the speaker didn’t witness at all (Sun 1993: 956-73 for the Mdzo-dge dialect, see Haller 2004: 136-49 for a similar division in the Themchen dialect). This system doesn’t resemble Khalkha. Some SMc languages exhibit a bipartite division even more dissimilar to Khalkha. They roughly draw a line between events into which the assertor (i.e., the speaker in declaratives and the addressee in questions) was involved herself (cf. Creissels 2008: 12 for this wording) and everything else (Slater 2003: 194-220, Faehndrich 2007, Åkerman 2012, on varieties of Monguor; Fried 2010: 186-93 on Bonan, cf. the distinction between /le/βa vs. /βai in Eastern Yellow Uyghur, Chuluu 1994).

The fact that Khalkha has innovated non-past evidentiality is somewhat surprising. After all, in its current location it is only surrounded by Turkic varieties that don’t have it grammaticalized and other CMc varieties from which this change can hardly have originated. Taking a look at CMc first, it
can be seen that Khorchin and Oirat don’t systematically mark present evidentiality, while it seems to be present in Chakhar and Buryat. Next to -ža bajg-aa as in (13), even forms like -dag bajg-aa (which presumably fit better into encyclopedic style than most other registers) can be found on Buryat Wikipedia (as a corpus), and corresponding forms in -na exist as well.

(13) ᴽ'yvlš-yn žel-iüd-te mü-ren-ej uhan ʔaža̱_[jüj]ledberi-ej
    last-GEN year-PL-DAT river-GEN water production-GEN
    boxirdol, xüöö aža axu-j-n xafqdal gexe mete xiün-ej
    pollution rural economy-GEN waste etc. human-GEN
    iųl[le] ažalalgaa-ha bol-oood jexe boxir-dø ʔažg-aa.₃₅
    activity-ABL become-CVB very become.polluted-CVB COP-(DIR)
    ‘During the last years, its water became much polluted due to industrial pollution, agricultural waste and similar human activities.’

Much further towards the northeast, in the Khabarovsk region, an opposition between finite and participial verb forms can be found in Nanai and Ulcha (Malchukov 2000: 449-52) that could be interpreted as expressing evidential distinctions in the present. In nearby Udihe, an evidential contrast arises between Progressives such as (14), which must be firsthand, and the neutral present tense, as in (15), which has neutral imperfective and evidential semantics (cf. Nikolaeva and Tolskaya 2001: 251, 262).₃₆

(14) bi xunazi: tege-we wo:-ni bi:-ni
    me sister.1SG gown-ACC make-INF be-3SG
    ‘My sister is making a gown.’ {in a situation in which the speaker has returned home and witnessed the situation he describes} (262)

(15) bi xunazi: wo:-ni
    me sister.1SG make-3SG
    ‘My sister is sewing.’ (constructed, Irina Nikolaeva, p.c., 2014-03-10)

Thus, a marker similar to the Khalkha Direct Evidential exists, whereas the Udihe equivalent of the Khalkha Indirect is both evidentially and aspectually unspecific. A firsthand vs. secondhand contrast might be most salient for ongoing one-time situations, while Khalkha also can include habitual but not


₃₆There is also a Habitual (Nikolaeva and Tolskaya 2001: 258-62), which can certainly be used in secondhand contexts, but seems to be acceptable in firsthand contexts as well. While a “normally” (260) reduplicated use of the Habitual Participle can refer to an intensive action in progress with atelic verbs, it is not so clear to me whether the nonreduplicated use in bi xunazi: wo:-i bi:-ni me sister.1SG make-PRES.PTCP be-3SG ‘My sister is sewing’ {said when outside his home} (262) is accurately translated as a progressive. If not, this example would just illustrate non-progressive, but not non-firsthand meaning.
potential situations. Contemporary speakers of these Tungusic languages are approximately in the same location as in the 15th century (Janhunen 1996: 30, 92), far beyond the grazing grounds of the easternmost Mongols after the collapse of the Yuan Khanate in 1388. As -a appears to be absent in all of Khorchin-Kharchin, the development of present evidentiality in Khalkha cannot have predated the time when the Khorchin left the Onon River in the 15th century.\(^{37}\)

Therefore, any direct contact between Mongols and Tunguses from the far eastern regions can be ruled out. There were contacts between the Tungusic Evenki that formed a new bilingual ethnicity, the Khamnigans, in eastern Mongolia and western Manchuria, but Evenki is not reported to have present evidentiality.

In the Turkic languages, with the possible exception of Western Yellow Uyghur (mentioned en passant by Johanson 2003: 285) and Salar, present evidentiality was never grammaticalized but is confined to non-obligatory tense-neutral evidential particles:


‘He worked the night shift yesterday; he must be resting now.’\(^{38}\)

(17) Yag odoog-oor Terelji-d amar-ch baig-aa aj.

‘[The actress Zhao Wei (...) has come to Mongolia. She (...) says that she wants to travel to historical sites of our country.] Right now she is resting at [the tourist resort] Terelj.’

(18) Qazaq eken-der

‘They are (apparently) Kazakhs.’ (Straughn 2011: 99)

In (16) from Kazakh, the particle eken (< är-GAN COP-PST) marks inference or hearsay but doesn’t contribute to time reference. This is reminiscent of the literary hearsay particle aj (< a-juyu), as exemplified in (17). However, the dividing lines within the evidentiality system of Kazakh and spoken Khalkha are different: an example that signals inference on the basis of synchronic firsthand evidence such as (18) (and similar sentences in Yakut such as given in Buder 1989: 92) would be translated into Khalkha with the direct evidence form of the copula pai-n rather than pai-[g]-a.

\(^{37}\) Incidentally, the innovation of present tense evidentiality is more likely to have taken place after the westward migration of the Oirat in the early 17th century, as this event discontinued the areal continuity of speakers of different CMC dialects.

\(^{38}\) Straughn 2011: 114. CPST ‘converbal past’ (i.e., PST < CVB), EVID ‘evidential.’

Among the present evidentiality systems that I had a look at, the one that comes closest to Khalkha is found in Amdo Tibetan (all information taken from Sun 1993). In the Progressive =%k乫a jod ==%kod, Amdo Tibetan differentiates between (i) evidence about events in which the asserter was involved marked with zero, (ii) “perceptible evidence directly present in the immediate speech-act situation” (Sun 1993: 977) marked with =%k乫a, and (iii) previous direct evidence for synchronically still ongoing events marked with the Perfective Firsthand =t'є in the same manner as used for past progressive events:

(19) te= ȵa  tce  ng=]%k乫a jod
         now l(ERG) tea  drink=PROG AUX
  ‘I am drinking tea now.’ (Sun 1993: 975)

(20) te k'u  tce  nth=]%k乫a jod=]%k
  ‘He is drinking tea now (I just found out).’ (Sun 1993: 976)

(21) tsa=]%k  te  mumu  li=]%kod=t'є
        name=ERG now  momo  make=PROX.AUX=DIR
  {The speaker, who is not in the kitchen now, saw Bkras-shis making Tibetan momos (...) in the kitchen a short while ago and is reporting what he assumes Bkra-shis must still be doing now} ‘Bkra-shis is now making momos (I saw him do it just now).’ (Sun 1993: 978)

As Khalkha doesn’t differentiate between volitional acts of the asserter and events that the asserter merely observed firsthand, both (19) and (20) can be translated into Khalkha with the Direct Progressive -fai-n. In contrast, =t'є in (21) corresponds to the Indirect form -fai[-]a, which is also used with hearsay information for which Amdo Tibetan would use the defective quotative verb se together with the indication of the source of information originally used by the cited speaker.

As the following examples suggest, an evidentiality distinction similar to the Amdo Tibetan Progressive might also be possible with its firsthand perfect forms in jod=t'є:

(22) k'u  mumu  z=]g  li  jod=t'є
      he(ERG)  momo  some  make AUX=DIR.EV
  ‘He has made some momos (I saw it).’ (Sun 1993: 981)

(23) 4'obzang  tew=]du  mɔ  gæ  jod=t'є
       NAME  small=when  her(DAT)  love  AUX-DIR.EV
  ‘Blo-bzang loved her when he was small.’ (Sun 1993: 969)

For (22), Sun (1993: 969) suggests that the speaker witnessed the event in its entirety (though I am wondering whether it might even be possible that the speaker saw only the results). In (23), the perfect firsthand form is required to talk about emotions of another person, i.e., to refer to some kind of signs of these inner states that can be sensorily perceived, while the speaker could
use simple =tʰe if talking about her own emotions. Khalkha Mongolian is less restrictive with inner states; they can receive firsthand marking if the link between the outer appearance, etc. of the referent and her inner state is considered to be straightforward by the speaker, while secondhand marking would be used if the visible signs are more ambivalent. But like in Amdo Tibetan, the Direct Perfect -san pai-n can both be used for events perceived in their entirety and events deduced from their results.

The most obvious difference between the Khalkha dichotomy -n/-a and the Amdo Tibetan system is the greater complexity of the latter and the different categorial borders reflected in the apparent lack of schematic translation equivalents. The interesting similarity, on the other hand, lies in the ability of both Amdo Tibetan and Khalkha to express current direct perception and contrast it to other notions. Amdo Tibetan is thus more similar to Khalkha than are the SMc languages, most of which express a two-fold distinction where volitionality seems to interact with evidentiality.

8. Closing words

In this section, I will address some issues that might be of interest for further research. As the papers of this thesis contain rather detailed assessments of knowledge gaps that remain in the research on TAE in MM, Khorchin and Khalkha, I will restrict myself to a partial synthesis of the two independent papers on Khalkha, some additional comments on areal developments in Greater Mongolia, and a short note on the classification of CMc.

8.1 Evidentiality in Khalkha: a synthesis

Evidentiality in Khalkha turns out to be of some interest from a theoretical viewpoint. The language has two distinct systems, one for the present and one for the past. Both systems contain prominent neutral elements, so that neither can be accounted for by an explanation that restricts the overarching epistemological notion, be it called “evidentiality” or differently, to “source of information.”

For past evidentiality in Khalkha, the first notion is the time of acquisition of information, and while this notion can be connected to surprise, attempts to draw too close of a link between it and to grammaticalized mirativity are suspect (see Hill 2012). Similarly, non-assimilated non-sensory evidentiality in Khalkha doesn’t exhibit any clear resemblance to “mediativity” (Lazard 1999) or “indirectivity” (Johanson 2006) if the latter is understood as a grammaticalized reference to cognitive or perceptive processes as the basis for asserting a particular state of affairs - which would thus relativize an assertion by mentioning that the information was acquired in some way. In contrast to the above, the difference between newly acquired vs. assimilated
information might at any rate merit closer attention, if not as an integral part of evidentiality, then at least as part of the heuristic notions considered during language description. Next to Khalkha and Tibetan (cf. Tournadre 2008), it also plays an important role in Kashaya, a Pomo language spoken in North America. Here, the distinction between different forms of direct and indirect sensory evidence available to the speaker is only drawn for non-assimilated information (see Oswalt 1986, esp. 30, 33).

Subordinate to the time of acquisition are the canonical evidential notions “source of information” (speaker vs. known or unknown other person) and “mode of access” (sensory vs. inferential, plus subcategories): the speaker’s direct sensory perception of the event contrasts with inference and, arguably, information from other people. At least for the sample of spoken materials investigated, extended modal notions such as “confirmativity” (Friedman 1981) don’t seem to obtain in “spoken” Khalkha: the only use of a narrowly evidential marker in the corpus that diverges from a firm evidential notion is the use of -laa for recollection of events that need not be based on earlier direct sensory perception. It wouldn’t be surprising, though, if written language usages, both in novels and newspapers, diverged towards an affirmative respective distancing stance for -l=uu resp. -jee.

Languages like Khalkha and Udihe also point to an interdependence of imperfective aspect and the expression of evidentiality. Knowledge about events that are unambiguously ongoing is likely to be firsthand, so Udihe uses a dedicated Firsthand Progressive, while reference to non-firsthand events that are ongoing can only be made by an aspectually unspecific form. On the other hand, direct synchronic access to an event that is ongoing is much more straightforward than assessing such evidence for habitual or generic events. This justifies evidentiality as an obligatory category for ongoing events and persisting resultant states. While the synchronic access to evidence seems to indicate that the event has not yet been assimilated by the speaker, the synchronic absence of evidence is not as clearly determined in this respect. While the prototypical progressive event has not yet been assimilated, progressive first person forms verbs of cognition do refer to information about which the assertor has already made up her mind. Conversely, evidential marking is non-obligatory and, indeed, strongly dispreferred (in a ratio of 1:60 in my corpus) with habitual events, because they already tend to be established as valid and, thus, favor a factual, source-neutral stance. However, if such marking does occur, it seems that direct and indirect synchronic evidence is used to draw conclusions about a habitual event. In contrast to progressive, continuative, perfect and prospective predications, the phase from which this evidence is taken would then be detached from any actual phase of the event, which should not facilitate processing.

It is of interest that both the past and present system make a very similar primary distinction. On the one hand, they code synchronically available information (-n, -ьа, -тье) or, in the case of the past events, information that
is still vividly accessible and cognitively activated in the mind. On the other hand, they code information already known to the speaker (-sāŋ, unmarked) which might already be reified in her mind as a fact. Only for indirect evidence (-a), both assimilated and non-assimilated information is common, and finer distinctions are made through conventionalization of particular forms. One might speculate that this overall distinction was first developed on the present tense level. The past tense system might well have started out as a simple opposition between events taken to be factual and unproblematic and events about which the addressee should be enabled to judge herself on the basis of the speaker’s source of information / mood of access. A reinterpretation into the present contrast might then have taken place subsequently. However, as I undertook my investigation into MM before I investigated Khalkha and even in that investigation mostly relied on Street (2008, 2009), I cannot tell whether a nuance such as recent acquisition of information might be traced back to quotes of direct speech in MM.

While they are not part of the evidentiality system, the non-interrogative uses of -w (see 4.4), the non-habitual use of -tāg (see 4.3), and the idiosyncratic suffix plus particle combination -n ḣe (briefly treated in Brosig 2012) are devices usable in contexts in which a narrator presents surprising, interesting events. Past -w seems to focus on the surprise that the speaker felt herself at the time of the event, and preventive -w focuses on an undesirable event that the addressee isn’t expecting. Non-habitual -tāg might mainly focus on a conflict between the speaker’s expectations given a normal course of events and the actual course of events. -n ḣe might mostly be about catching the addressee’s attention by suggesting that some event is unusual. Inasmuch as Eerdunmengke (2009: 3.6.1.1) describes this form as expressing recollection in the closely related Ordos dialect, one may speculate that the recollection of an interesting detail has been conventionalized here. None of these markers mark “information which is new or unexpected to the speaker” (DeLancey 2001: 370): -w either concerns information that WAS unexpected or information that is unexpected (and, in the speaker’s opinion, undesirable) for the ADDRESSEE. The information marked by -tāg is usually not new, and while unexpectedness applies, it can be restricted to the past in narrative contexts. With -n ḣe, again, it is mainly the addressee who is at issue. If one is willing to define mirativity as “a linguistic category that characterizes a proposition as newsworthy, unexpected, or surprising” either to the speaker or addressee (Hengeveldt & Olbertz 2012: 488), then ALL of these uses are mirative. I think it is crucial to consider, though, that all three devices are peripheral usages of rather old morphemes, and, in the case of -w, even the last surviving ones. In all three cases, the usages are so specialized that their text frequency is low. In the case of -w, one might speak of degrammaticalization (see Norde 2010) in the senses of resemantization of the bleached perfective past -bA and deparadigmaticalization. Semantically, if -sāŋ can indeed be presumed to express an evidentially neutral, but an already assimi-
lated claim to the validity of a statement, one might conceive that a MM suffix -bA that was presumably neutral towards time of acquisition of information retained as its last domain the expression of evidentially unproblematic, but still not fully assimilated information.

8.2 Perspectives for areal studies on TAE in Greater Mongolia

In sections 6 and 7, I have tried to put the development of evidentiality in CMe from section 5 into an areal context. For Khorchin, it was found that the decline of evidential and aspectual constructions can be understood in the context of contact with Manchu and Mandarin, languages which lack grammaticalized evidentiality. For Khalkha, the situation turned out to be more complicated: The past tense system, as inherited from MM, resembles the Turkic languages of Central Asia in that evidentiality is expressed by three markers that only seem to express two evidentiality values (in the canonical sense of the word). Detailed research into the function of such systems (such as Street 2009, Straughn 2011) is rather rare, while they seem to absent from the larger discussion of evidentiality. On the other hand, the marking of present tense evidentiality differs substantially from Turkic and SMe, but shows recognizable parallels to eastern Tungusic languages and Amdo Tibetan. Only the latter could directly have influenced Khalkha via religious contacts, though. If contact-induced change was due to Amdo Tibetan, the result seems rather notable, as I am not aware of languages other than Khalkha and probably Buryat that have two relatively independent, tense-dependent, fully grammaticalized evidentiality systems (e.g., in comparison to non-tensed or tense-independent systems such as in Quechua [Faller 2002] or the Greater Tibetan area [e.g., Sun 1993, Tournadre and Dorje 2003, Åkerman 2012]).

Another issue is the overall complexity of tense-aspect systems. In descriptions of neighboring languages, I didn’t find anything comparable to Khalkha when it comes to the complexity of TA markers. This might be due to underdescription or, more likely, the restricted number of sources I was able to use. Conversely, the TA systems of neighboring varieties might actually be smaller. Then, Khalkha is quite reminiscent of Nakh-Dagestanian

40 Funnily, when Aikhenvald (2014: 9, 42, passim) discusses some characteristics of the evidential system of Kalmyk, she takes it to be a system with two basic markers because she exclusively relies on Skribnik & Seesing (2014). The latter don’t mention -w but probably felt they didn’t have to because they didn’t intend to describe evidentiality in Kalmyk within its aspecto-temporal context and conceived of -w as evidentially neutral.

41 In particular, the collection of papers edited by Yakup et al. (2013) contains a number of important descriptions, many of which indicate additional problems and require the reader to follow up on cited references that are not easily accessible. As there is always the additional language barrier, I had to concede that I had obtained this book too late to make responsible use of it for this dissertation.
languages such as Chechen (as described by Molochieva 2010) that apparently show a similar ability to build up aspectually complex forms. For instance, it is possible in Chechen to mark an event as in progress at habitually reoccurring occasions merely through morphology and the use of one copula, as it is in Khalkha. If these similarities are due to one sprachbund, the Turkic languages in the west of Mongolia are the most likely link, though languages in the northwest such as Tuvan and Ket should probably not be excluded a priori from investigation either.

As far as mature linguistic phenomena such as irregular verb stems are concerned, their lack in Mongolic, Turkic, Mandarin and by and large Manchu forms a consistent area, while languages in geographically less accessible areas such as Tibetan, the other Tungusic languages or Nakh-Dagestani languages employ irregular stems in verb inflection.

Another topic which merits areal investigation is the existence of temporally discontinuous markers such as -ከ userRepository that, depending on the overall context, can refer to both past and future, but not to the present (also cf. Nelson et al. 1998). While I argued in section 6 that the influence of Mandarin le might be at work here, this would mean that a phenomenon spread from Khorchin to Khalkha and, in the latter, even extended to the other past markers. This is not entirely impossible, but similar markers in other languages bordering Khalkha might provide a more convincing areal context. It is possible that a detailed analysis of Classical Mongolian sources could reveal the precise grammaticalization paths.

8.3 A short note on the classification of Central Mongolic

The classification still used in the “Ethnologue” (Lewis et al. 2014) is that of Oirat-Khalkha containing Khalkha-Buryat, which in turn consists of Khalkha Mongolian and Peripheral Mongolian. The latter is more or less defined as Mongolian spoken in China. The logic behind this classification is the existence of Kalmykia, Buryatia, and Manchu-ruled Mongolia as political entities of the 19th century and the more recent independence of Outer Mongolia as the Mongolian state in the early 20th century. There is also a strong tendency to (more often implicitly than explicitly) take the language produced in writing by speakers of different dialects as a coherent entity, as is done systematically by non-dialectologists in Inner Mongolia and the Mongolian state. Chuluu (1998) from Eastern Inner Mongolia, for instance, considered his own idiolect as representative of Mongolian as spoken in Inner Mongolia, which is hardly appropriate even if we take the common Inner Mongolian standard (e.g., Qaserdeni et al. 2006), which is based on the Chakhar dialect (Secenbayatur 2003). Batzayaa (2008), in turn, compared the standards of the four largest political entities, also taking “Inner Mongolian” (öörlögech ayalguu) as an entity of description instead of calling it “Chakhar.” Howev-
er, given that the title of her book is “A phonological comparison of the major Mongolian dialects,” her point seems to lie in the justification of existing territorial divisions on a linguistic basis rather than finding out anything about actual Mongolian dialect groups. The problem is not a lack of database classifications (e.g., Cinggeltei 1957-58, Luvsanvandan 1959, Janhunen 2006) but that these are conveniently ignored. One of the points that I hopefully was able to show in this dissertation is that Khalkha-Chakhar, Oirat and Khorchin-Kharchin of CMc are all linguistically distinct enough to merit separate investigation. While I didn’t discuss the evidence, both the (rather brief) analysis of Secenbayatur (2003) and my own impression from interacting with Chakhar speakers indicate a TAE system that very closely resembles Khalkha and, in particular, its southern dialects. My point is that in not considering closely related varieties spoken in other countries, scientists miss applicable research results, and in taking countrielects as objects of description, grammarians must either become selective without a proper scientific basis or describe very fuzzy entities. You can either be politically overcorrect, or a scientist.

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