

**Preprint for**

Zhang, Dongbing. 2020. Axial argumentation below the clause: The verbal group in Khorchin Mongolian. In In J.R. Martin, Y.J. Doran & Giacomo Figueredo (eds.), *Systemic functional language description: Making meaning matter*, 35-72. New York/London: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351184533>

## Chapter 2

### Axial argumentation below the clause: The verbal group in Khorchin Mongolian

Dongbing Zhang

Orcid.org/0000-0003-4295-2555

#### Abstract

This chapter provides a systemic functional account of the verbal group in Khorchin Mongolian, a dialect of Mongolian spoken in eastern Inner Mongolia. Two basic verbal group systems, VG DEIXIS and VG TYPE, are established based on the role the verbal group plays in a clause. The VG DEIXIS system includes the features [elaborated] and [restricted]. Elaborated verbal groups function in indicative clauses; restricted verbal groups function in imperative clauses. The VG TYPE system includes the features [eventive] and [non-eventive]. Eventive verbal groups function in non-relational clauses; non-eventive verbal groups function in relational clauses. The systems VG DEIXIS and VG TYPE are simultaneous co-selecting systems. An eventive elaborated verbal group selects from the systems VG POLARITY, VG TENSE, ASPECT, VG MODALITY, and RELATIVE TENSE; a non-eventive elaborated verbal group selects from the systems VG POLARITY, VG TENSE, and ASPECT. Both eventive and non-eventive restricted verbal groups select from the systems VG PERSON and ASPECT. The interactions between these systems show how axial argumentation can inform systemic functional language description at ranks below the clause. This chapter also shows the way the system-structure relations can be used to make explicit the *valeur* of a specific grammatical category.

#### 1. Introduction

This chapter shows how axial argumentation (as outlined in Martin 2013) can inform systemic functional language description at ranks below the clause. For a synopsis of this type of argumentation, see Martin, Doran, & Figueredo (this volume).

At the same time, the chapter provides a systemic functional account of the verbal group in Khorchin Mongolian<sup>1</sup>. The description takes as its starting point the role of the verbal group in relation to how a clause in which it functions enacts interpersonal meaning and construes experiential meaning in discourse. In terms of the SFL descriptive principle of the ‘trinocular perspective’ (Halliday 2009) this paper begins by establishing the basic paradigmatic organisation of the Khorchin Mongolian verbal group ‘from above’.

The role of the verbal group in the interpersonal organisation of a clause is examined first, followed by the role of the verbal group in the experiential organisation of a clause. The interpersonal organisation of a Khorchin Mongolian clause is shaped by the negotiation of information and goods & services. A verbal group system, VG DEIXIS<sup>2</sup>, is established in relation to the basic clause distinctions

---

<sup>1</sup> Khorchin Mongolian is a variety of Mongolian spoken in the eastern part of Inner Mongolia, China. The variety under investigation is the language of the Mongols living in Jalaid Banner, Hinggan League.

<sup>2</sup> VG=verbal group. This abbreviation is used in the front of some system names to distinguish them from (1) systems in a preselecting relationship from clause or word rank (e.g. POLARITY, TENSE); (2) systems available to other group rank classes (e.g. DEIXIS and PERSON for nominal groups).

in MOOD. The features in the system of VG DEIXIS are [elaborated] and [restricted] (see Section 2). The experiential organisation of a Khorchin Mongolian clause is shaped by the construal of different types of experience. A verbal group system, VG TYPE, is established in relation to the basic clause distinctions in TRANSITIVITY. The features in the system of VG TYPE are [eventive] and [non-eventive] (see Section 3). The two systems, VG DEIXIS and VG TYPE, are co-selecting simultaneous systems. The co-selections from the two systems result in the choices [elaborated eventive], [elaborated non-eventive], [restricted eventive], and [restricted non-eventive].

Section 4 establishes the further paradigmatic organisation of the Khorchin Mongolian verbal group ‘from round about’ in terms of the interdependencies between systems and ‘from below’ in terms of the structural patterns motivating the systems. The systems dependent on the choices from VG DEIXIS and VG TYPE are discussed in relation to the structural configurations which realise them. In Section 4.1 the major resources involved in the elaborated verbal groups, i.e. VG POLARITY, VG TENSE, ASPECT, VG MODALITY, and RELATIVE TENSE are discussed. An elaborated eventive verbal group selects from all the five systems; an elaborated non-eventive verbal group cannot select from VG MODALITY and RELATIVE TENSE. In Section 4.2, attention shifts to the resources involved in the [restricted] verbal groups, i.e. VG PERSON and ASPECT. Both eventive and non-eventive restricted verbal groups select from these two systems. In Section 5, conclusions are drawn based on the axial argumentation throughout Section 2 to Section 4. The meaning making resources of the Khorchin Mongolian verbal group are summarised with a system network in this section.

The description in this paper shows how axial argumentation with a discourse semantic orientation (Martin & Quiroz this volume) provides a useful way of making explicit the *valeur* of a particular grammatical category. This is a special focus in the discussions of ASPECT and RELATIVE TENSE in Section 4.1.3, Section 4.1.5, and Section 4.2.2.

## **2. The verbal group in service of the interpersonal organisation of a clause**

If we understand communication as exchanges, we can exchange either knowledge or action. In Khorchin Mongolian, an exchange of knowledge and an exchange of action are typically realised by different grammatical categories (see also Wang this volume for Classical Tibetan). An exchange of knowledge is typically realised by indicative clauses; an exchange of action is typically realised by imperative ones.

There are a number of motivations for the distinction between [indicative] and [imperative] in the Khorchin Mongolian interpersonal clause system of MOOD. The most important motivation is the meaning making potential of the verbal group<sup>3</sup> in the two clause types. The verbal group which functions in an indicative clause is more elaborate in its potential than the one that functions in an imperative clause. The verbal group in an indicative clause can choose from the systems VG POLARITY, VG TENSE, ASPECT, VG MODALITY, and RELATIVE TENSE; the verbal group in an imperative clause on the other hand can only choose from the systems VG PERSON and ASPECT. The first set of systems is introduced in Section 4.1; the second set is introduced in Section 4.2. I will use the terms [elaborated] and [restricted] to refer to the classes of the verbal group which function in an indicative and an imperative clause respectively. The name of this system is referred to as VG DEIXIS, following Quiroz (2013)<sup>4</sup>.

---

<sup>3</sup> The group rank is assumed in Section 2 and Section 3. Its motivation is explained in more detail in Section 4.1 when more specific systems are discussed.

<sup>4</sup> In Quiroz (2013), the Spanish verbal group system DEIXIS has two terms: [restricted] and [unrestricted]. The former functions in imperative clauses while the latter in indicative ones.

If we use the function label *Predicator* to capture the function of the verbal group in the interpersonal organisation of a clause, *Predicators* preselect different classes of the verbal group from the system of VG DEIXIS. The *Predicator* in an indicative clause is realised by an elaborated verbal group; the *Predicator* in an imperative clause is realised by a restricted verbal group.

The exchange of knowledge in (1)<sup>5</sup> exemplifies indicative clauses. *Predicator* in each clause is realised by an elaborated verbal group. In the exchange, a government official (O) demands a piece of information from a peasant (P); the peasant then gives that piece of information. In terms of SFL work on exchange structure (Berry 1981; Martin 1992, 2018; Martin & Rose 2007) we have a *knowledge exchange* where a K2 move demands information and a K1 move gives information.

- (1) O: K2 *tʰɛn* *ɛs*<sup>6</sup> *ɛsu-sɔn* *mɛ*  
 2PL ABL | ask-PST | QP  
 | *Predicator* |  
 | elaborated verbal group |  
 ‘Did (they) ask you?’
- P: K1 *ɛsu-sɔn* *kuɛ*  
 ask-PST NEG  
*Predicator*  
 elaborated verbal group  
 ‘(They) didn’t ask (us).’

The verbal groups in (1) selects from both VG TENSE and VG POLARITY. The verbal group in K2 selects [past/positive]; the verbal group in K1 selects [past/negative], indicated by the negation adverb *kuɛ*. The choices in the system of VG TENSE and VG POLARITY are introduced in Section 4.1.

The exchange of action in (2) on the other hand exemplifies imperative clauses. *Predicator* in the imperative clauses in (2.1) and (2.3) is realised by restricted verbal group. In the exchange, a grandmother (G) asks her granddaughter, Hairhan (H), to eat some more oranges. The request is first rejected by Hairhan and then accepted when her grandmother insists. In terms of exchange structure, we have an *action exchange* where an A2 move demands an action and a compliant A1 move (realised non-verbally) performs the action; but these two moves are first interrupted by a challenging move (ch) and a response to the challenge move (rch). Here we will focus only on the imperative clauses – (2.1) and (2.3):

- (2) G: 1. A2 *xɛ:rxɔn* *itə*  
 Hayirhan | eat.IMP.2  
 | *Predicator*

The type of verbal group in Khorchin Mongolian that functions in an indicative clause is called ‘elaborated’ rather than ‘unrestricted’ because its potential is not unrestricted, i.e. it cannot choose from VG PERSON (cf. Spanish unrestricted verbal group selects from PERSON).

<sup>5</sup> The examples in this chapter consist of at least three lines: (1) phonemic transcription, (2) morpheme-by-morpheme glossing, and (3) idiomatic translation. The abbreviations used in the glossing are: 1=first person; 2=second person; 3=third person; ABL=ablative; COND=conditional; COP=copula; CVB=converbal; DIST=distal; FUT=future; IMP=imperative; INS=instrumental; MP=modal particle; NEG=negation; NPST=non-past; PFV=perfective; PROX=proximal; PST=past; QP=question particle; RES=resultative.

<sup>6</sup> ‘Case marking’ has been described as nominal suffixes in the literature (e.g. Bayancogtu 2002). They are treated as lexis from the perspective of systemic functional theory. For a discussion of this see Zhang (2020).

| restricted verbal group  
‘Hayirhan, eat.’

H: 2. ch *ɔ: ukʉ nei it-x uɛ lɛ*  
oh NEG grandma eat-NPST NEG RES  
‘Oh, no, grandma, I won’t eat.’

G: 3. rch *tʃʰɛmɛ t ʃɔʃɔ nɛ uk-jə*  
2SG DAT small GEN | give-IMP.1  
| Predicate  
| restricted verbal group  
‘Let (me) give you the smaller ones.’

H: 4. A1 [Accepts and eats the orange.]

The types of clause the verbal groups function in condition the resources available to them. The verbal groups in (2.1) and (2.3) show distinct choices from those in (1). Whereas those functioning in the indicative clauses in (1) select from VG TENSE and VG POLARITY, those functioning in imperative clauses in (2) select from VG PERSON. In this case, the verbal group in (2.1) selects [second person] and the verbal group in (2.3) selects [first person]. The choices in the system of VG PERSON are explored in detail in Section 4.2.

The relationship between clause types and verbal group types can be represented as a relationship of preselection between system networks. Here, choices in the clause system of MOOD preselect choices in the verbal group system of VG DEIXIS as shown in Figure 2.1<sup>7</sup>.

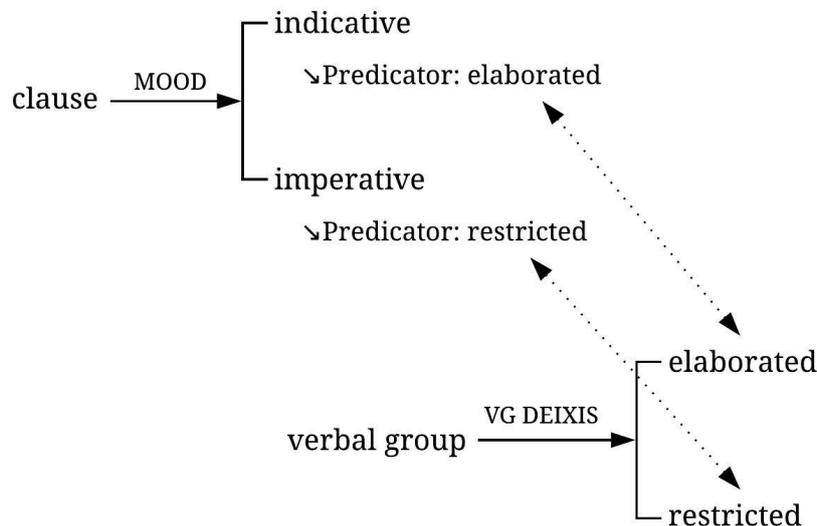


Figure 2.1 MOOD preselecting VG DEIXIS in Khorchin Mongolian

<sup>7</sup> Although at this primary delicacy the two systems are in a one-to-one relationship, they have different *valeur*, as they enable selections from different systems. For example, at the clause rank the further choices in [indicative] are [informative] and [interrogative], whereas at the group rank the further choices in [elaborated] are from the systems VG TENSE and VG POLARITY; and there is by no means a one-to-one relationship between these more delicate choices across ranks. For a detailed account of the MOOD system in Khorchin Mongolian, see Zhang (2020).



(4) *pø kojir pɛ:-ø mɛ*  
 still flour COP-NPST QP  
 Process  
 non-eventive verbal group  
 ‘(Is there) still some flour left?’

The verbal group in (4) selects [non-past/positive] from VG TENSE and VG POLARITY. However, it cannot select from VG MODALITY or RELATIVE TENSE.

The exchanges in (1) and (2) above on the other hand exemplify non-relational clauses. Move (2.2) is adjusted as (5) below. The Process in the non-relational clause in (5) is realised by an eventive verbal group.

(5) *ɔ: ukue nei it-x ue*  
 oh NEG grandma eat-NPST NEG  
 Process  
 eventive verbal group  
 ‘Oh, no, grandma, I won’t eat.’

The verbal group in (5) selects [non-past/negative] from VG TENSE and VG POLARITY. However, in contrast to the non-eventive verbal group in (4) it also has the potential to select from VG MODALITY and RELATIVE TENSE (see Section 4.1.4 and 4.1.5).

Like for the interpersonal perspective given above, this establishes a relationship of preselection between the clause system of TRANSITIVITY and the verbal group system of VG TYPE, as shown in Figure 2.2. In this figure, the interpersonal system of VG DEIXIS is also included in the system network.

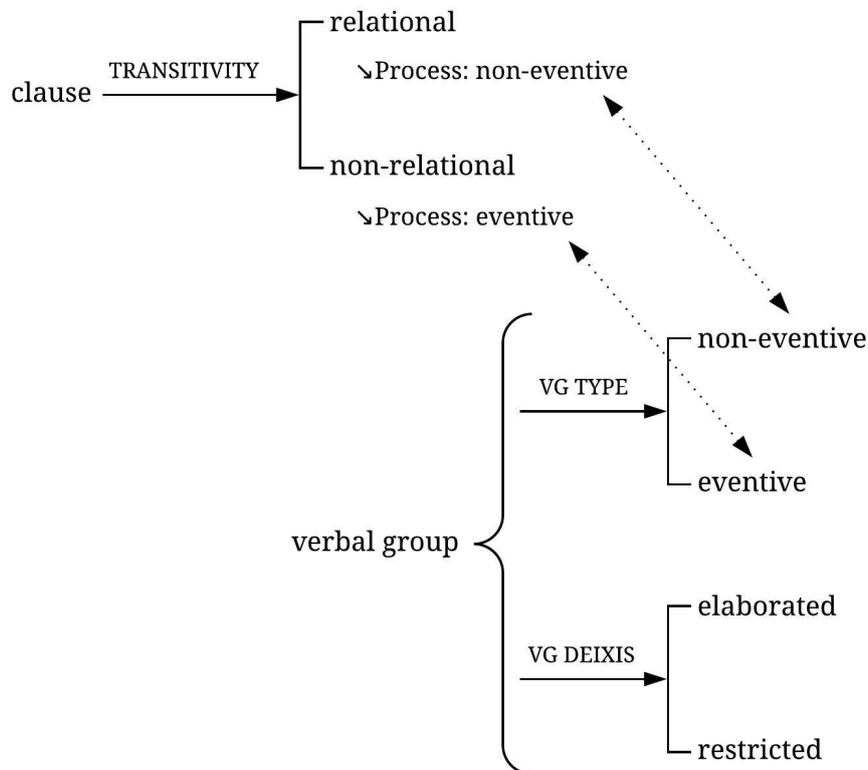


Figure 2.2 TRANSITIVITY preselecting VG TYPE in Khorchin Mongolian

So far, two verbal group systems, VG DEIXIS and VG TYPE, have been established in relation to the role the verbal group plays in a clause in Khorchin Mongolian. The VG DEIXIS system is related to the interpersonal organisation of a clause; the VG TYPE system is related to the experiential organisation of a clause. In terms of ‘trinocular perspective’, this section has established the primary paradigmatic organisation of the Khorchin Mongolian verbal group ‘from above’.

#### 4. Verbal group system and structure

This section examines the Khorchin Mongolian verbal group from two further perspectives to provide a holistic description. It considers the verbal group ‘from round about’ in terms of the interdependencies between systems (i.e. paradigmatic environment) and ‘from below’ in terms of the structural patterns motivating the systemic choices (i.e. syntagmatic organisation).

The systemic choices in the verbal group are realised by configurations of verbal group functions, which in turn are realised by classes of verb. To see how these configurations work, we first need to introduce the set of verb classes, exemplified below with a lexical verb *xi*: ‘do’ and a copular verb *pɛ*: ‘be’ respectively. Their possible variations with respect to either the vowel of the verb stem or a following particle are also included.

	<b>xi: ‘do’</b>	<b>pɛ: ‘be’</b>	<b>variations</b>
1. <b>v</b>	<i>xi:</i>	<i>pɛ:</i>	-
2. <b>v-j</b>	<i>xi:-jə</i>	<i>pɛ:-jɛ</i>	<i>-jɛ, -jə, -jɔ</i>
3. <b>v-k</b>	<i>xi:-k</i>	<i>pɛ:-k</i>	<i>-k, -kɛ, -kə, -kɔ, -ɔk</i>
4. <b>v-n</b>	<i>xi:-n</i>	<i>pɛ:-n</i>	<i>-n, -nɛ, -nə, -nɔ, -ɔn</i>
5. <b>v-tʃɛ</b>	<i>xi:-tʃɛ</i>	<i>pɛ:-tʃɛ</i>	<i>-tʃ</i>
6. <b>v-x</b>	<i>xi:-x</i>	<i>pɛ:-x</i>	<i>-x, -ø</i>
7. <b>v-sɔn</b>	<i>xi:-sɔn</i>	<i>pɛ:-sɔn</i>	<i>-sɔn, -sɔ</i>
8. <b>v-ntʃ</b>	<i>xi:-ntʃ</i>	-	-
9. <b>v-tʃ</b>	<i>xi:-tʃ</i>	<i>pɛ:-tʃ</i>	-

Verb classes 1 to 3 are related to the restricted verbal group system VG PERSON. Verb classes 4 to 8 on the other hand are related to the elaborated verbal group systems of VG TENSE and RELATIVE TENSE. Verb class 9 functions either in relation to VG MODALITY, a system available for elaborated verbal groups, or ASPECT, a system available to both restricted verbal groups and elaborated verbal groups.

Section 4.1 and Section 4.2 are organised in terms of the choices from the VG DEIXIS system discussed in Section 2: [elaborated] and [restricted]. Section 4.1 describes the resources available to the elaborated verbal group. The relevant systems are VG POLARITY, VG TENSE, ASPECT, VG MODALITY, and RELATIVE TENSE. Section 4.2 describes the resources available to the restricted verbal group. The relevant systems are VG PERSON and ASPECT. The choices from the VG TYPE system discussed in Section 3, [eventive] and [non-eventive], are discussed in turn in each subsection.

##### 4.1 The elaborated verbal group

In this section, I explore the systems available for an elaborated verbal group. Elaborated verbal groups function in indicative clauses. Three systems are selected by both the eventive and the non-eventive verbal group. They are VG POLARITY, VG TENSE, and ASPECT. They are described in Section 4.1.1, 4.1.2, and 4.1.3 respectively. In each section, the eventive verbal group is discussed and exemplified

first; this is followed by discussion and exemplification of the non-eventive verbal group.

In Section 4.1.4 and 4.1.5, the focus is on the additional meaning making potential of an eventive verbal group. An eventive verbal group has the potential to choose from the systems VG MODALITY and RELATIVE TENSE, which are not available for a non-eventive verbal group.

#### 4.1.1 VG POLARITY

One of the basic functions of a language is to allow the speakers to query or confirm the polarity of a piece of information. The verbal group in Khorchin Mongolian plays a key role in this regard. In terms of the function played by a verbal group in the interpersonal organisation of a clause, when an indicative clause is positive, the Predicator is realised by a positive verbal group; when it is negative, the Predicator is realised by a negative verbal group.

The exchange in (6) (repeating (1)) exemplifies the VG POLARITY of an eventive verbal group. The verbal group in (6.1) selects [positive]; the verbal group in (6.2) selects [negative].

(6) O: 1. *tʰɛn ɛs ɛsu-sɔn mɛ*  
 2PL ABL ask-PST QP  
 Predicator  
 positive verbal group  
 ‘Did (they) ask you?’

P: 2. *ɛsu-sɔn kuɛ<sup>8</sup>*  
 ask-PST NEG  
 Predicator  
 negative verbal group  
 ‘(They) didn’t ask  
 (us).’

Note that a positive verbal group as in (6.1), when there is no selection from the other systems discussed below (i.e. ASPECT, VG MODALITY, and RELATIVE TENSE), comprises only one verb. When [negative] is selected (or choices from any other verbal group systems are made) a combination of words constitutes the verbal group (as in example (6.2)).

The [positive] and the [negative] features are thus realised by different structures. The verbal groups in (6) are analysed in (7) and (8). The function of the lexical verb in an eventive verbal group is called Event; the function of the negation adverb is called Negator. When an eventive verbal group is negative, a Negator function is inserted and is realised at the final position as in (7); when it is positive, there is no function which explicitly realises the feature as in (8).

---

<sup>8</sup> The words *kuɛ* and *uɛ* are allomorphs of *ukuɛ*. *Ukuɛ* is described as a particle in Nasunbayar et al. (1982:410-412). But the full form can function independently in a turn; so it is not considered a particle here. For example, - O: *tʰɛn ɛs ɛsu-sɔn mɛ* ‘Did (they) ask you?’ - P: *ukuɛ* ‘No.’ In contrast, *kuɛ* and *uɛ* are described as suffixes in Bayancogtu (2002:290-296). But the counter-expectant particle *pɛs* ‘even’ can be realised between the verb and the negation: *ɛsu-sɔn pɛs ukuɛ* ‘ask-PST even NEG’; so it is not considered a suffix here. It might be more accurate to consider it a clitic, a category between word and suffix. However, this category needs careful examination in relation to delicacy and rank scale. I will privilege its potential to function in a response move on its own and consider it a word.

(7) *ʋsu-səŋ kuɛ*  
 ask-PST NEG  
 Event Negator  
 ‘didn’t ask’

(8) *ʋsu-tʃɛ*  
 ask-PST  
 Event  
 ‘asked’

In contrast, the exchange in (9) exemplifies the VG POLARITY of a non-eventive verbal group. The first verbal group in (9.1) selects [positive]; the second one selects [negative]. All the other verbal groups in this exchange select [positive]. T1 asks if a student’s sentence is grammatically correct in (9.1). T2, who is senior in Mongolian language teaching, affirms that the sentence is grammatically correct in (9.2). T3 double checks this answer in (9.3) and is reaffirmed by T1 in (9.4). A question mark is used to show the rising intonation in (9.3). Note that the English translation here is misleading; the word *tʰv:r* translated as ‘correct’ in Khorchin Mongolian is in fact a verb.

(9) T1: 1. *əŋ u:lʋər tʰv:r-ø<sup>9</sup> mu tʰv:r-x uɛ mu*  
 PROX sentence | correct-NPST | QP | correct-NPST NEG | QP  
 | verbal group | verbal group  
 ‘Does this sentence correct or not correct?’  
 (=Is or isn’t this sentence correct?)’

T2: 2. *tʰv:r-nɐ*  
 correct-NPST  
 verbal group  
 ‘Correct.’

T3 3. *tʰv:r-nɐ?*  
 correct-NPST  
 verbal group  
 ‘Correct?’

T1 4. *tʰv:r-nɐ*  
 correct-NPST  
 verbal group  
 ‘Correct.’

The verbal groups in (9) are analysed in (10) and (11). The function of the lexical verb is here referred to as State. When the non-eventive verbal group is negative, a Negator is inserted and is realised at the final position as in (10); when it is positive, there is no function which explicitly realises the feature as in (11).

(10) *tʰv:r-x uɛ*  
 correct-NPST NEG  
 State Negator  
 ‘not correct’

---

<sup>9</sup> Note that this exponent of non-past is different from the ones in the next verbal group and the one in (9.2); for a discussion of these see Section 4.1.2 below.

- (11) *tʰe:r-nw*  
 correct-NPST  
 State  
 ‘correct’

To summarise, an elaborated verbal group selects either [positive] or [negative]; when it selects [positive], there is no overt realisation. When it selects [negative], a Negator function is inserted and is realised at the end of the verbal group.

#### 4.1.2 VG TENSE

VG TENSE in Khorchin Mongolian grammaticalizes the sequencing of figures in relation to the speech time. The choices in this system are [past] and [non-past]. The feature [non-past] construes a figure as either concurrent with or following the speech time (‘present’ or ‘future’); they are not structurally distinct.

The exchange in (12) exemplifies the negotiation of a proposition in terms of VG TENSE. The two teachers in (12), T1 and T2, are discussing the mother of one of their students. This student’s sister used to go to the same school. The proposition they are arguing about has to do with the modes of transport the mother uses to take her children to school: whether it is always by motorbike or also sometimes by motorised trike in the past. The translations of any modal particles (MP) are shown in square brackets ([ ]). The tense choices in the verbal group are highlighted in bold.

- (12) T1 1. *sətʰin ni:təm mətʰo kər jəp-tʃ*  $\varepsilon$ :**-n** *xwi*  
 Secin always motorbike INS | commute-PROG COP-**NPST** | MP  
 verbal group  
 ‘[I saw that] Secin is always commuting by motorbike.’
2. *tʰər ixin ən ʊrtʰe sənɔ kər jəp-tʃ*  $\varepsilon$ :**-tʃ** *fɛ*  
 DIST daughter POSS before trike INS | commute-PROG COP-**PST** | MP  
 verbal group  
 ‘[You know that] her daughter was commuting (to school) by trike before.’
- T2 3. *ukue sətʰin ni:təm mətʰo kər jəp-tʃ*  $\varepsilon$ :**-nw**  
 NEG Secin always motorbike INS | commute-PROG COP-**NPST**  
 verbal group  
 ‘No, Secin is always commuting by motorbike.’
- T1 4. *ukue sənɔ kər pəs jəp-tʃ*  $\varepsilon$ :**-tʃ** *fɔ*  
 NEG trike INS also | commute-PROG COP-**PST** | MP  
 verbal group  
 ‘No, [I know that] (she was) also commuting by trike.’
- T2 5. *ɔ:*  
 Oh  
 ‘Oh.’

The verbal groups in (12) exemplify the selections from VG TENSE in the eventive verbal group. They are contrasted in (13). The verbal groups in (12.1) and (12.3) are the same; they select [non-past]. The verbal groups in (12.2) and (12.4) are the same; they select [past]. Here we will use the lengthened form of the past tense

suffix  $-t\epsilon$ , rather than  $-tj$  given in (12) above, to avoid confusion with the progressive aspect marker  $-tj$  discussed in Section 4.1.3<sup>10</sup>.

(13) from (12.1) and (12.3)  $j\epsilon p-tj$   $\epsilon:-n$   
 commute-PROG COP-NPST  
 ‘is commuting’

from (12.2) and (12.4)  $j\epsilon p-tj$   $\epsilon:-t\epsilon$   
 commute-PROG COP-PST  
 ‘was commuting’

In contrast to the verbal groups in Section 4.1.1 where the constituents of the verbal group are a verb and an adverb, the verbal groups in (13) comprise two verbs: a lexical main verb followed by an auxiliary copular verb. This arises when there is a selection from ASPECT. When this is the case, the ASPECT choice is shown as a suffix on the lexical verb, and the VG TENSE choice is shown as a suffix on the following auxiliary copula. However, to simplify our discussion of VG TENSE here, we will focus on instances without ASPECT as illustrated in (14) for [non-past] and (15) for [past] below. We will come back to how this interplays with ASPECT in Section 4.1.3.

(14)  $j\epsilon p-\vartheta n$   
 commute-NPST  
 ‘commutes’

(15)  $j\epsilon p-t\epsilon$   
 commute-PST  
 ‘commuted’

As these instances indicate, the distinction in VG TENSE is shown by suffixes that arise from distinct verb classes. We will call the verb class that realises [non-past] in instances such as (14) ‘v-n’ and the verb class that realises [past] in instances such as (15) ‘v-t $\epsilon$ ’.

As far as the structure of the verbal group is concerned, I use the term Tense to refer to the function generated by a selection from the VG TENSE system. The importance of a distinct function of Tense arises from the fact that, as shown by the aspectual examples above, VG TENSE does not always occur on Event or State; this is only the case for certain types of verbal groups (e.g. aspectless). Tense can also occur on auxiliaries and negation adverbs (discussed below). The analyses in (16) and (17) illustrate the structures that realise the co-selection of [positive] from VG POLARITY and VG TENSE in an eventive verbal group. In this case, the Event and Tense functions are conflated.

(16)  $j\epsilon p-\vartheta n$   
 COP-NPST  
 Event/Tense  
 ‘commutes’

---

<sup>10</sup> The suffixes  $-t\epsilon$  (~  $-tj$ ) for past tense and  $-tj$  for progressive aspect are not allomorphs; they have different *valeur* (also see Section 4.1.3 and 4.2.2).

- (17) *jɛp-tʃɛ*  
 commute-PST  
 Event/Tense  
 ‘commuted’

As far as VG POLARITY is concerned, both (16) and (17) select [positive]. As we’ve seen, when an eventive verbal group selects [negative], the Negator is realised separately by a negation adverb. However, negation also changes the verb class realising VG TENSE on the lexical verb. In the following negative verbal groups, Tense in [non-past] is realised by v-x in (18); Tense in [past] is realised by v-sən in (19).

- (18) *jɛp-x*                      *uɛ*  
 commute-NPST    NEG  
 Event/Tense    Negator  
 ‘doesn’t commute’

- (19) *jɛp-sən*                    *kuɛ*  
 commute-PST    NEG  
 Event/Tense    Negator  
 ‘didn’t commute’

The distinctive realisations of VG TENSE in relation to the co-selection from VG POLARITY are summarised below<sup>11</sup>.

	<b>positive</b>	<b>negative</b>
<b>non-past</b>	v-n	v-x
<b>past</b>	v-tʃɛ	v-sən

The above examples also show that the realisations of Negator vary with the choice of VG TENSE. When [non-past], the Negator is lexicalised as *uɛ* as in (18); when [past] it is lexicalised as *kuɛ*, as in (19)<sup>12</sup>.

Non-eventive verbal groups also co-select from VG POLARITY and VG TENSE. As the following examples show, the patterns for VG TENSE choices in non-eventive verbal groups are the same with that in eventive verbal groups. In a non-eventive verbal group, the co-selection of [non-past] and [positive] conflates the State and Tense functions as in (20); the co-selection of [non-past] and [negative] conflates the State and Tense functions, which are followed by Negator as in (21).

- (20) *tʰɛ:r-ɔn*  
 correct-NPST  
 State/Tense  
 ‘correct’

<sup>11</sup> Due to the constraint of space, this chapter restricts its discussion of the realisation of TENSE to the ‘non-assessed’ declarative clauses only. When the interrogative particles *mɛ* and *i*, the exclamative particle *i*, and a small amount of modal particles (*ʃɪmu*, *wanjaŋ*, *ʃidə*) are used after the verbal group, the realisation of Tense is v-x for [non-past] and v-sən for [past]. For a detailed discussion of the preselection of the MOOD features from verb features, see Zhang (2020).

<sup>12</sup> Phonologically speaking, the different lexicalisations of Negator are sensitive to the pattern of syllabification in Khorchin Mongolian. When the VG TENSE is [non-past], the tense suffix -x forms a syllable with the negation adverb; when the VG TENSE is [past], the tense suffix -sən and the negation adverb forms separate syllables.



2. *tʰər ixin ən ʊrtʰɛ sənɔ kər jɛp-tʃ*  $\varepsilon\text{:}-tʃ$   $f\varepsilon$   
 DIST daughter POSS before trike INS | commute-**PROG** COP-**PST** | MP  
 verbal group  
 ‘[You know that] her daughter was commuting (to school) by trike before.’
- T2 3. *ukue sətʰin ni:təm motʰo kər jɛp-tʃ*  $\varepsilon\text{:}-nʊ$   
 NEG Secin always motorbike INS | commute-**PROG** COP-**NPST**  
 verbal group  
 ‘No, Secin is always commuting by motorbike.’
- T1 4. *ukue sənɔ kər pɛs jɛp-tʃ*  $\varepsilon\text{:}-tʃ$   $f\varepsilon$   
 NEG trike INS also | commute-**PROG** COP-**PST** | MP  
 verbal group  
 ‘No, [I know that] (she was) also commuting by trike.’
- T2 5. *ɔ:*  
 Oh  
 ‘Oh.’

The verbal groups in (24) together with the choices they instantiate are shown in (25). The feature [progressive] is realised through verb class *v-tʃ* and an auxiliary copula  $\varepsilon\text{:}$ .<sup>14</sup>

- (25) [progressive/non-past/positive] *jɛp-tʃ*  $\varepsilon\text{:}-n$   
 commute-PROG COP-NPST  
 ‘is commuting’
- [progressive/past/positive] *jɛp-tʃ*  $\varepsilon\text{:}-tʃ\varepsilon$   
 commute-PROG COP-PST  
 ‘was commuting’

Structurally, I use the terms Aspect and Auxiliary to refer to the functions of *v-tʃ* and  $\varepsilon\text{:}$  in the verbal group. The selection of [progressive/positive] is realised by inserting Aspect and Auxiliary as shown in examples from (26) to (30) below. The selection of [progressive/negative] is realised differently in relation to the selection from VG TENSE. When [past] is selected, both Aspect and Auxiliary are required in the structure as in (31) and (32) below; on the other hand, when [non-past] is selected, only an Aspect function is required as in (33) and (34) below.

The structural configuration of the co-selection [progressive/positive] and the features from VG TENSE in an eventive verbal group is shown in (26) and (27). The features selected from VG TENSE in (26) and (27) are [non-past] and [past] respectively. In both cases, Aspect is conflated with Event and Auxiliary is conflated with Tense. There is no explicit realisation of [positive].

<sup>14</sup> Bayançoğlu (e.g. 2002: 335) treats this syntagm as an affix, *-tʃ\varepsilon\text{:}*. However, particles such as *il* can be realised between *-tʃ* and  $\varepsilon\text{:}$  to construe a repetitive continuous occurrence, e.g. *jab-tʃ il \varepsilon\text{:}-na* ‘keeps walking (back and forth)’, which means that *-tʃ* and  $\varepsilon\text{:}$  are separate morphemes.

(26) *jɛp-tʃ*                     $\varepsilon:-n$   
 commute-PROG    COP-NPST  
 Event/Aspect    Auxiliary/Tense  
 ‘is commuting’

(27) *jɛp-tʃ*                     $\varepsilon:-tʃ\varepsilon$   
 commute-PROG    COP-PST  
 Event/Aspect    Auxiliary/Tense  
 ‘was commuting’

In the same way, a non-eventive verbal group can also select from ASPECT. This is exemplified in (28). The mother (M) asks about her daughter’s (D) physiological state because the weather is warming up. The non-eventive verbal group in (28.1) co-selects [progressive], [non-past], and [positive].

(28) M: 1. *tʰi xɛlut-tʃ*                     $\varepsilon:-\emptyset^{15}$                     *m\varepsilon*  
 2SG | feel.hot-PROG    COP-NPST | QP  
           | verbal group  
 ‘Are you feeling hot?’

D: 2. *uk\varepsilon*  
 NEG  
 ‘No.’

As far as the structure of the verbal group in (28.1) is concerned, State in the non-eventive verbal group is conflated Aspect and Tense is conflated with Auxiliary. The structural configurations of the co-selection [progressive/positive] and the features from VG TENSE in a non-eventive verbal group are shown in (29) and (30). The features selected from VG TENSE in (29) and (30) are [non-past] and [past] respectively.

(29) *xɛlut-tʃ*                     $\varepsilon:-n$   
 feel.hot-PROG    COP-NPST  
 State/Aspect    Auxiliary/Tense  
 ‘is feeling hot’

(30) *xɛlut-tʃ*                     $\varepsilon:-tʃ\varepsilon$   
 feel.hot-PROG    COP-PST  
 State/Aspect    Auxiliary/Tense  
 ‘was feeling hot’

In contrast to [progressive/positive], the co-selection [progressive/negative] from ASPECT and VG POLARITY generates different structures. When the co-selection is [negative/progressive/past], Aspect is conflated with Event or State and Auxiliary is conflated with Tense; the Negator generated by [negative] is lexicalised as *ku\varepsilon*. This is illustrated for the eventive verbal group in (31) and the non-eventive verbal group in (32).

(31) *jɛp-tʃ*                     $\varepsilon:-s\varepsilon n$                     *ku\varepsilon*  
 commute-PROG    COP-PST                    NEG  
 Event/Aspect    Auxiliary/Tense    Negator  
 ‘was not commuting’

---

<sup>15</sup> The [non-past] is realised by  $-\emptyset$  due to its interaction with the question particle *m\varepsilon*.

- (32) *xɛlut-tʃ*            *ɛ:-sɔn*            *kuɛ*  
 feel.hot-PROG    COP-PST            NEG  
 State/Aspect    Auxiliary/Tense    Negator  
 ‘was not feeling hot’

In contrast, when the features selected are [negative/progressive/non-past], no Auxiliary function is required. Aspect is conflated with Event or State. Tense on the other hand does not have an identifiable realisation; it is conflated with Negator, which is lexicalised as *ukuɛ*. This is illustrated for the eventive verbal group in (33) and the non-eventive verbal group in (34).

- (33) *jɛp-tʃ*            *ukuɛ*  
 commute-PROG    NEG  
 Event/Aspect    Tense/Negator  
 ‘is not commuting’

- (34) *xɛlut-tʃ*            *ukuɛ*  
 feel.hot-PROG    NEG  
 State/Aspect    Tense/Negator  
 ‘is not feeling hot’

Figure 2.3 formalises the features selected from ASPECT, VG TENSE, and VG POLARITY, along with their structural realisations. The realisation statements on the right only account for selections which concern [progressive]. For the realisations of VG TENSE and VG POLARITY without the selection of [progressive], see Section 4.1.3 above. Note that the conflation of Aspect with Event or State is not included in the diagram. The sequencing of Event or State also varies in relation to selections from VG MODALITY and RELATIVE TENSE as they are discussed in Section 4.1.4 and 4.1.5. A double colon (::) is used to show lexicalisation (e.g. Negator:: *ukuɛ* means ‘Negator is lexicalised as *ukuɛ*’).

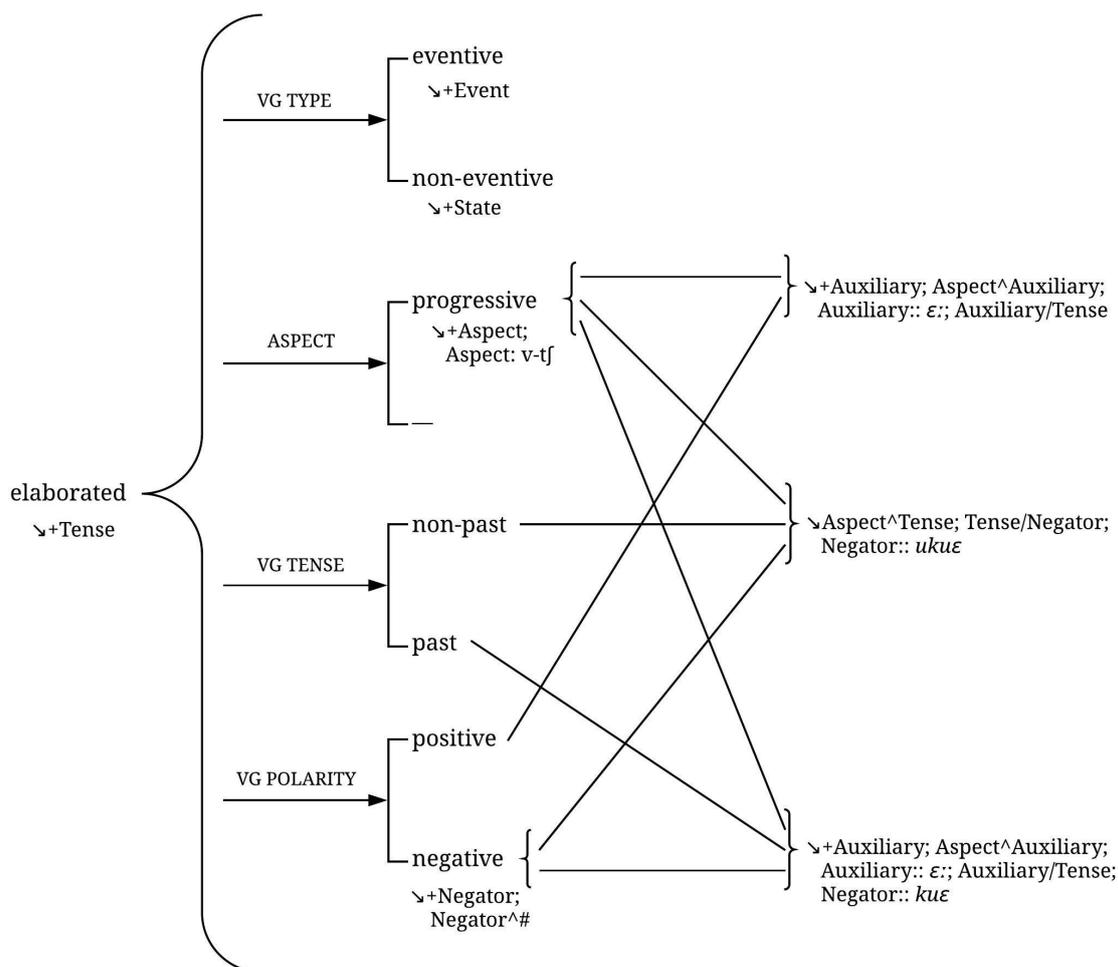


Figure 2.3 VG TYPE, VG POLARITY, VG TENSE and ASPECT in the elaborated verbal group

In the remainder of Section 4.1, two further systems, VG MODALITY and RELATIVE TENSE are discussed. The two systems are only available for the eventive verbal group, and RELATIVE TENSE can only occur when neither ASPECT nor VG MODALITY occurs. We will begin with VG MODALITY.

#### 4.1.4 VG MODALITY

One defining feature of an eventive verbal group is that it selects from VG MODALITY. This is the case when what is being negotiated is a proposal (i.e. goods & service). A proposal in Halliday's sense (1994: 89) can be modulated. In Khorchin Mongolian, one of the ways to modulate a proposal is through the verbal group<sup>16</sup>.

Two kinds of modulation are possible: [permission] and [ability]. The verbal group in (35.1) exemplifies the modulation of a proposal in terms of [permission]. The aunt (A) reminds her nephew that the way his dumpling has been made is not permitted (because the fillings will come out). Modulation in Khorchin Mongolian selects from VG TENSE.

<sup>16</sup> In contrast, propositions are modalised mainly through adverbial groups or clause final particles at clause rank.

- (35) A: 1. *ɲət*      *pɛr-tʃ*      *pɔl-x*      *uɛ*      *kɔbi*  
           this way    | make-CVB    allow-NPST    NEG    | dear  
                           | verbal group  
           'Dear, (you) are not allowed to make (it) this way.'
2. *ən*      *pɔl*      *xəkə-x*      *uɛ*  
       PROX    THEME | meet.the.standard-NPST    NEG  
                   | verbal group  
       'This does not meet the standard.'

The modulation of a proposal in terms of [permission] is achieved through the modal verb *pɔl* 'be allowed to' as in (35.1). I use the term Modality to refer to the function of the modal verb in the verbal group. Structurally, the Modality function is realised after Event; Event is realised by v-t<sup>17</sup>. Modality is conflated with Tense when there is no selection from ASPECT. The structure of the verbal group in (35.1) is analysed in (36).

- (36) *pɛr-tʃ*      *pɔl-x*      *uɛ*  
       make-CVB    allow-NPST    NEG  
       Event      Modality/Tense    Negator  
       'is not allowed to make'

In (36), although Modality and Tense are conflated at group rank, the realisation of each function is identifiable. Modality is lexicalised as *pɔl*; Tense is realised by v-x.

When the verbal group selects [positive], on the other hand, there is no explicit function which realises the feature; Event is followed by the conflation of Modality and Tense as in (37). Modality is lexicalised as *pɔl*; Tense is realised by v-n.

- (37) *pɛr-tʃ*      *pɔl-ən*  
       make-CVB    allow-NPST  
       Event      Modality/Tense  
       'is allowed to make'

Similarly, an eventive verbal group can realise the modulation of a proposal in terms of [ability] through the modal verb *ʃɔl* 'be able to'. The exchange in (38) is an excerpt from the negotiation of shifts between teachers. The teacher states her preference for the evening shift.

- (38) 1. *pi*      *pɔl*      *urb*      *ir-tʃ*      *ʃɔl-x*      *uɛ*  
           1SG    THEME    morning | come-CVB    be.able.to-NPST    NEG  
                           | verbal group  
           'I am not able to come in the morning.'
2. *ærcæn*      *tʃitʃur*      *pɔl*      *ʃɔl-ən*  
       evening    shift    COND | be.able.to-NPST  
                           | verbal group  
       'If (it is) evening shift, (I) am able to (come).'

The verbal groups in (38.1) and (38.2) illustrate the co-selections of [ability/non-past/negative] and [ability/non-past/positive] respectively. Note that in (38.2) the verb which realises Event, *ir-tʃ* 'come-CVB', is elided.

<sup>17</sup> The suffix *-tʃ* is traditionally glossed CVB 'converbal'; this will not be problematised here.



(43)	<i>tʰəʀ</i>	<i>pətɛ</i>	<i>itʰ-tʃ</i>	<i>ʝl-tʃ</i>	<i>ɛ:-səʀn</i>	<i>kue</i>
	3SG	meal	eat-CVB	be.able.to-PROG	COP-PST	NEG
			verbal group			
			Event	Modality/Aspect	Auxiliary/Tense	Negator

‘He was not being able to eat meals.’

In (43), Modality is lexicalised as the modal verb *ʝl*; Aspect is realised by *v-tʃ*, and Tense by *v-səʀn*; Negator is lexicalised as *kue*.

To summarise, an eventive verbal group optionally selects [modulated]; when the feature is selected, a Modality function is inserted. Modality is either lexicalised as *pəl* ‘be allowed to’ or *ʝl* ‘be able to’, which respectively realise features [permission] and [ability]. When [progressive] from ASPECT is not selected, Modality is realised after Event and is conflated with Tense. When [progressive] is selected, on the other hand, Modality is realised after Event and is conflated with Aspect.

#### 4.1.5 RELATIVE TENSE

Another defining feature of an eventive verbal group is that it selects from RELATIVE TENSE. RELATIVE TENSE can only occur when there is no selection of [progressive] from ASPECT or [modulated] from VG MODALITY. It allows the construal of a relative [future] in relation to the ‘absolute time’ construed by VG TENSE, which deals with temporality in relation to the time of a speech event (i.e. [past] or [non-past]).

The move (44.3) exemplifies the co-selection of [future/non-past]. The exchange is part of a conversation between a wife (W) and her husband (H) on their phone through WeChat. The wife is waiting for her husband to come back for dinner. She asks what time he is coming home in (44.1). The husband states that he is going to be a while since the carwash is washing other people’s cars in (44.2). He then reassures his wife by telling her that their car is going to be washed in (44.3) and asks her to keep waiting in (44.4).

- |      |    |    |                |               |              |               |                                |              |  |
|------|----|----|----------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------------------------|--------------|--|
| (44) | W: | 1. | <i>pəs</i>     | <i>nəktʰi</i> | <i>ət-ø</i>  | <i>mɛ</i>     | <i>tʰi</i>                     |              |  |
|      |    |    | also           | a.while       | last-NPST    | QP            | 2SG                            |              |  |
|      |    |    |                |               | verbal group |               |                                |              |  |
|      |    |    |                |               |              |               | ‘Are you going to be a while?’ |              |  |
|      | H: | 2. | <i>uəʀ</i>     | <i>xun</i>    | <i>nɛ</i>    | <i>tʰəʀək</i> | <i>i:</i>                      | <i>ʊv-tʃ</i> | <i>ɛ:-nɐ</i>                             |
|      |    |    | other          | people        | GEN          | car           | ACC                            | wash-PROG    | COP -NSPT                                |
|      |    |    |                |               |              |               |                                | verbal group |  |
|      |    |    |                |               |              |               |                                |              | ‘(They) are washing other people’s car.’ |
|      |    | 3. | <i>ət</i>      | <i>mən</i>    | <i>nɛ</i>    | <i>ki</i>     | <i>ʊv-ntʃ</i>                  | <i>ɛ:-nɐ</i> |  |
|      |    |    | now            | 1PL           | GEN          | ACC           | wash-FUT                       | COP-NPST     |  |
|      |    |    |                |               |              |               | verbal group                   |              |  |
|      |    |    |                |               |              |               |                                |              | ‘(They) are going to wash ours now.’     |
|      |    | 4. | <i>xule-tʃ</i> | <i>ɛ:</i>     |              |               |                                |              |  |
|      |    |    | wait-PROG      | COP.IMP.2     |              |               |                                |              |  |
|      |    |    | verbal group   |               |              |               |                                |              |  |
|      |    |    |                |               |              |               |                                |              | ‘Stay waiting.’                          |

The verbal group in (44.2) *ʊv-tʃ ɛ:-nɐ* ‘wash-PROG COP-NPST’ co-selects [progressive], [non-past], and [positive] as discussed in Section 4.1.3; the verbal group in (44.4) *xule-tʃ ɛ:* ‘wait-PROG COP.IMP.2’ functions in an imperative clause, which is described in Section 4.2.

In (44.3), the verbal group construes an occurrence which is going to happen after the speech time. In terms of IDEATION in discourse (Hao 2015, 2019; Martin 1992; Martin & Quiroz this volume; Martin & Rose 2007) the co-selection from RELATIVE TENSE (i.e. [future]) and from VG TENSE (i.e. [non-past]) sequences a figure at a ‘future’ time in relation to the ‘present’ established in the discourse. Therefore, the features selected from the two systems are named as [‘relative tense’ in ‘absolute tense’] – [future in past] and [future in non-past] (following Halliday 1976, 1985 [1994]).

As illustrated in (45), the feature [future] in RELATIVE TENSE is realised by the verb class *v-ntf* and an auxiliary copula  $\varepsilon$ ; the selection from VG TENSE ([non-past] in this instance) is realised on the auxiliary copula.

- (45) *mən nɛ ki v-ntf ε:-nɐ*  
 1PL GEN ACC | wash-FUT COP-NPST  
 | verbal group  
 ‘(They) are going to wash ours.’

The reference time can also be [past] (i.e. [future in past]). The example (45) is adapted as (46) to exemplify the positioning of a figure at a ‘future’ time in reference to the ‘past’.

- (46) *mən nɛ ki v-ntf ε:-tʃɛ*  
 1PL GEN ACC | wash-FUT COP-PST  
 | verbal group  
 ‘(They) were going to wash ours.’

Brosig (2014) treats the syntagm *v-ntf*<sup>ε</sup> as a marker of ‘prospective’ aspect. His position is not adopted on the following two grounds: First, the temporal meaning construed is not concerned with the ‘internal temporal constituency’ of a situation (Comrie 1976); rather the meaning is concerned with the positioning of a figure as a whole in relation to another. Second, the meaning construed by *v-ntf*<sup>ε</sup> has rather different *valeur* than the choice [progressive] in the system of ASPECT as it is discussed in Section 4.1.3. The choice of [progressive] is not restricted to the VG TYPE of verbal group ([eventive] or [non-eventive]); nor is it restricted to the VG DEIXIS of the verbal group ([elaborated] or [restricted]).<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, [progressive] can also co-select [modulated]. In contrast, relative [future] is a choice possible only for an eventive elaborated verbal group, and is mutually exclusive with VG MODALITY.

The structures that realise [future in past] and [future in non-past] are exemplified in (47) and (48). The functions of *v-ntf* and  $\varepsilon$  are referred to as Relative Tense (R.Tense) and Auxiliary respectively. In this way, when an eventive verbal group selects [future] from RELATIVE TENSE and [positive] from VG POLARITY, two functions are inserted: R.Tense and Auxiliary. R.Tense is realised by *v-ntf* and is conflated with Event; Auxiliary is lexicalised as  $\varepsilon$  and is conflated with Tense.

- (47) *v-ntf ε:-tʃɛ*  
 wash-FUT COP-PST  
 Event/R.Tense Auxiliary/Tense  
 ‘was going to wash’

<sup>18</sup> The selection from ASPECT in the restricted verbal group is discussed in Section 4.2.

- (48) *vɛ-ntʃ*                      *ɛ:-nɛ*  
wash-FUT                      COP-NPST  
Event/R.Tense    Auxiliary/Tense  
‘is going to wash’

Similar to the interaction between ASPECT and VG POLARITY, the co-selection of [future in non-past] and [negative] deserves special attention. When the choice is [future in non-past/negative], only R.Tense is required for the realisation of [future]. There is no identifiable realisation of Tense; it is conflated with Negator, which is lexicalised as *ukuɛ*. The choice [future in non-past/negative] is exemplified in (49).

- (49) *vɛ-ntʃ*                      *ukuɛ*  
wash-FUT                      NEG  
Event/R.Tense    Tense/Negator  
‘is not going to wash’

On the other hand, when the co-selection is between [future in past] and [negative], an Auxiliary function is required and is conflated with Tense. This co-selection is exemplified in (50).

- (50) *vɛ-ntʃ*                      *ɛ:-sɔn*                      *kuɛ*  
wash-FUT                      COP-PST                      NEG  
Event/R.Tense    Auxiliary/Tense    Negator  
‘was not going to wash’

In (50), Event is conflated with R.Tense, realised by *v-ntʃ*; Auxiliary is conflated with Tense, realised by *v-sɔn*; Negator is lexicalised as *kuɛ*, following Tense.

The structures which realise the interaction between RELATIVE TENSE, VG TENSE, and VG POLARITY are summarised below. The feature [future] in RELATIVE TENSE in an eventive verbal group is an optional choice. When [future] is selected we find the following possibilities:

- [future]  $\supset$  +R.Tense; R.Tense: *v-ntʃ*  
[positive]  $\supset$  +Auxiliary; R.Tense^Auxiliary; Auxiliary:: *ɛ*; Auxiliary/Tense  
[negative]  $\supset$  +Negator; Negator^#  
[future in past/negative]  $\supset$  +Auxiliary; R.Tense^Auxiliary; Auxiliary:: *ɛ*;  
Auxiliary/Tense; Negator:: *kuɛ*  
[future in non-past/negative]  $\supset$  R.Tense^Tense; Tense/Negator; Negator:: *ukuɛ*

## 4.2. The restricted verbal group

Restricted verbal groups function in imperative clauses. A restricted verbal group obligatorily selects from the system VG PERSON and optionally selects [progressive] from the system ASPECT. Both eventive and non-eventive verbal groups select from these two systems. Section 4.2.1 and 4.2.2 describes VG PERSON and ASPECT respectively. In each section, eventive verbal groups are discussed first, followed by discussions of non-eventive verbal groups.

#### 4.2.1 VG PERSON

The system VG PERSON has three features: [first person], [second person], and [third person]. A restricted verbal group realises the Predicator in an imperative clause (see Section 2) and obligatorily chooses from one of the three features.

In terms of discourse, the realisation of Predicator has to do with the modally responsible participant (i.e. the participant that is responsible for the provision of the goods & services). When the modally responsible participant includes the speaker (i.e. speaker inclusive), the Predicator of the imperative clause is realised by a verbal group which selects [first person]. When the modally responsible participant does not include the speaker (i.e. speaker exclusive), the Predicator of the imperative clause is realised by a verbal group which selects [second person]. In contrast, when the verbal group realisation of the Predicator selects [third person], the modally responsible participant may either include or exclude the speaker.

The exchange in (51) (repeating (2) above) exemplifies the role of the eventive verbal group in both speaker exclusive and speaker inclusive imperative clauses. The imperative clause in (51.1) positions the addressee as the modally responsible participant, i.e. speaker exclusive; the imperative clause in (51.3) positions the speaker as the modally responsible participant, i.e. speaker inclusive (G=grandmother; H=Hayirhan, the granddaughter). The clause in (51.2) is not an imperative clause, and thus is not included in the analysis. Note that the name *xɛ:rxɛn* in (51.1) is a Vocative realised on a separate tone group.

- (51) G 1. *xɛ:rxɛn* *itə*  
 Hayirhan | eat.IMP.2  
                   | Predicator  
                   | verbal group  
 ‘Hayirhan, eat.’
- H 2. *ɔ: ukue nɛi it-x uɛ lɛ*  
 oh NEG grandma eat-NPST NEG RES  
 ‘Oh, no, grandma, I won’t eat.’
- G 3. *tʰvmɔ t ʃiʋʃi nɛ uk-jə*  
 2SG DAT small GEN | give-IMP.1  
                                   | Predicator  
                                   | verbal group  
 ‘Let (me) give you the smaller ones.’
- H 4. [Accepts and eats the orange.]

The clause in (51.1) exemplifies one type of speaker exclusive imperative clause. It positions the addressee as modally responsible without any explicit affixation in the verbal group. In contrast, the speaker inclusive imperative clause in (51.3) uses the verb class v-j to realise the modally responsible participant in the Predicator.

The verbal group realisations of Predicator in imperative clauses agree with the pronominal realisation of the ‘actor’. Examples (52) and (53) illustrate speaker inclusive imperative clauses with explicit pronominal realisation of the participant performing the action of giving (i.e. ‘speaker only’ in (52) and ‘speaker and non-interlocutor’ in (53)).

(52) *pi tʰɛmɛ t ʃiʃi nɛ uk-jə*  
 1SG 2SG DAT small GEN | give-IMP.1  
 |  
 | Predicator  
 | verbal group  
 ‘Let me give you the smaller ones.’

(53) *pɛtən tʰɛmɛ t ʃiʃi nɛ uk-jə*  
 1PL 2SG DAT small GEN | give-IMP.1  
 |  
 | Predicator  
 | verbal group  
 ‘Let us give you the smaller ones.’

The suffix *-jə* in the verbal groups ‘agrees with’ the first person pronouns: first person singular in (52) and first person plural in (53). This is why the verbal group option is called [first person].

In the same way, the second person pronoun in the speaker exclusive imperative clause exemplified in (51.1) can be made explicit. This is illustrated in (54) and (55).

(54) *tʰi itə*  
 2SG | eat.IMP.2  
 |  
 | Predicator  
 | verbal group  
 ‘You eat.’

(55) *tʰɛtən itə*  
 2PL | eat.IMP.2  
 |  
 | Predicator  
 | verbal group  
 ‘You eat.’

The non-inflected verbs in the verbal groups agree with the second person pronouns: second person singular in (54) and second person plural in (55). This is why the verbal group option is called [second person].

The third type of imperative clause in Khorchin Mongolian is ambiguous as to whether the modally responsible participant includes or excludes the speaker. Unlike the speaker inclusive and the speaker exclusive imperative clauses, this type is used to permit the occurrence of the action realised in the verbal group. For a detailed account of this type of imperative clause in relation to the other two, see Zhang (2020). In (56) the sister informs her brother what she is going to do. The move in (56.1) positions her brother as modally responsible for permitting the boiling of the pot<sup>19</sup>.

(56) 1. *tʰɔkɔ pœʃɔl-tʃ ɛ:-kɛ*  
 pot | boil-PROG COP-IMP.3  
 |  
 | Predicator  
 | verbal group  
 ‘Let the pot boil,’

<sup>19</sup> The same structure can also be used to position both the speaker and the addressee as modally responsible for permitting the occurrence of an action. For exemplifications and discussions on this point, see Zhang (2020).

2. *pi kɛxɛ ki tʰitʃə-kət ir-jə*  
 1SG pig ACC | feed-PFV | come-IMP.1  
 |  
 | Predicator  
 | verbal group | verbal group  
 ‘Let me feed the pigs and come back.’

In (56.1), Predicator is realised by a verbal group with the final component realised by the verb class v-k. The ‘actor’ *tʰək* cannot be replaced by either the first person or the second person pronouns. It can be replaced by the third person pronouns as in (57) and (58).

- (57) *tʰɔr pœʃl-tʃ ɛ:-kɛ*  
 3SG | boil-PROG COP-IMP.3  
 |  
 | Predicator  
 | verbal group  
 ‘Let it boil.’

- (58) *tʰstɔn pœʃl-tʃ ɛ:-kɛ*  
 3PL | boil-PROG COP-IMP.3  
 |  
 | Predicator  
 | verbal group  
 ‘Let them boil.’

The suffix *-kɛ* in the verbal groups ‘agrees with’ the third person pronouns: third person singular in (57) and third person plural in (58). This is why the verbal group option is called [third person].

Structurally speaking, we will use the term Person to refer to the function realising choices from VG PERSON. In eventive verbal groups as exemplified so far, Event is conflated with Person. The selections of [first person], [second person], and [third person] in an eventive verbal group are illustrated in (59), (60), and (61) respectively via the verb *uk* ‘give’.

- (59) *uk-jə*  
 give-IMP.1  
 Event/Person  
 ‘(Let me) give’

- (60) *uk*  
 give.IMP.2  
 Event/Person  
 ‘(you) give’

- (61) *uk-ək*  
 give-IMP.3  
 Event/Person  
 ‘(Let her) give’

Table 2.1 shows the correspondence between the different types of imperative clause and the verb classes involved in the verbal group which realises the Predicator in each type. The verb *it* ‘eat’ is used for exemplification. Note that when there is no selection of [progressive] from the ASPECT system discussed in Section 4.2.2, the verbal group comprises only one verb. When [progressive] is selected a combination of verbs constitute the verbal group. In other words, these ‘verbs’ are

described as verbal groups because of their potential selection from different verbal group systems.

Table 2.1 Imperative clauses and the realisations of the Predicator

clause rank feature in MOOD	group rank feature in VG PERSON realising the Predicator	word rank verb class	examples
speaker inclusive	first person	v-j	<i>it-jə</i>
speaker exclusive	second person	v	<i>it</i>
speaker inclusive or exclusive	third person	v-k	<i>it-ək</i>

The non-eventive verbal group interaction with VG PERSON is similar to that of the eventive verbal group. Although there is no instance of a non-eventive verbal group selecting VG PERSON in my corpus, instances such as (62) are acceptable. It is commonly used from parents to children when the children's behaviour needs to be regulated. In a non-eventive verbal group, State conflates with Person.

- (62) *tʃukəɾ* *pɛ:*  
 quiet | COP-IMP.2  
           | verbal group  
           | State/Person  
 '(You) be quiet.'

In (62), the verbal group selects [second person]. The addressee, e.g. the children, is positioned as modally responsible for being quiet.

The adjective *tʃukəɾ* in (62) can in fact be used in different senses in relation to the different choices speakers make from the verbal group system VG PERSON. When the verbal group selects [first person] as in (63), the adjective *tʃukəɾ* means 'stay out of'.

- (63) *tʃukəɾ* *pɛ:-jə*  
 stay.out.of | COP-IMP.1  
               | verbal group  
               | State/Person  
 'Let me stay out of (this).'

In (63), the clause positions the speaker as modally responsible for staying out of the situation. When the verbal group selects [third person] as in (64), the adjective *tʃukəɾ* is best interpreted as 'undisturbed'.

- (64) *tʃɪr* *tʃukəɾ* *pɛ:-kə*  
 3SG undisturbed | COP-IMP.3  
                       | verbal group  
                       | State/Person  
 'Let him be undisturbed.  
 (=Leave him alone.)'

In (64), the clause positions the addressee as modally responsible for permitting a non-interlocutor to stay undisturbed.

To summarise, the structures generated by the co-selections from VG TYPE and VG PERSON are listed below:

- [eventive]  $\supset$  +Event
- [non-eventive]  $\supset$  +State
- [restricted]  $\supset$  +Person
- [first person]  $\supset$  Person: v-j
- [second person]  $\supset$  Person: v
- [third person]  $\supset$  Person: v-k
- [eventive/restricted]  $\supset$  Event/Person
- [non-eventive/restricted]  $\supset$  State/Person

#### 4.2.2 ASPECT

As with elaborated verbal groups, restricted verbal groups optionally select [progressive] from the ASPECT system. We have seen the co-selection of ASPECT and VG PERSON in an eventive verbal group in (56), repeated as (65). The verbal group in (65.1) co-selects [progressive] and [third person]. The Event and Aspect functions are conflated and the Auxiliary and Person functions are conflated.

- (65) 1. *tʰɔkɔ pœʃɔl-tʃ ɛ:-kœ*  
 pot | boil-PROG COP-IMP.3  
       | verbal group  
       | Event/Aspect Auxiliary/Person  
 ‘Let the pot boil.’
2. *pi kœxœ ki tʰitʃə-kət ir-jə*  
 1SG pig ACC | feed-PFV | come-IMP.1  
               | verbal group | verbal group  
 ‘Let me feed the pig and come back.’

In (65.1) Event is lexicalised as *pœʃɔl*; Aspect is realised by *v-tʃ*; Auxiliary is lexicalised as *ɛ:-*; and Person is realised by *v-k*.

In (65.2), we have a verbal group complex. It is adjusted as (66) below to exemplify the co-selection of [progressive] and [first person] in a single verbal group<sup>20</sup>.

- (66) *pi kœxœ ki tʰitʃə-tʃ ɛ:-jœ*  
 1SG pig ACC | feed-PROG COP-IMP.1  
               | verbal group  
               | Event/Aspect Auxiliary/Person  
 ‘Let me feed the pigs.’

Similarly, with the co-selection of [progressive] and [third person], the choices from each system have distinct realisations. Event is lexicalised as *tʰitʃə*; Aspect is realised by *v-tʃ*; Auxiliary is lexicalised as *ɛ:-*; and Person is realised by *v-j*.

The clause in (66) is adjusted as (67) to exemplify the co-selection of [progressive] and [second person]. Event is conflated with Aspect and Auxiliary is conflated with Person.

<sup>20</sup> To account for the perfective in (65.2), we need to introduce the way verbal group complex works in Khorchin Mongolian, which needs another occasion.

(67)	<i>tʰi</i>	<i>kɛxɛ</i>	<i>ki</i>	<i>tʰitʰə-tʃ</i>	<i>ɛ:</i>
	2SG	pig	ACC	feed-PROG	COP.IMP.2
				verbal group	
				Event/Aspect	Auxiliary/Person

‘You feed the pigs.’

In (67), Event is lexicalised as *tʰitʰə*; Aspect is realised by v-tʃ; Auxiliary is lexicalised as *ɛ:*; and Person is realised by v.

As far as non-eventive verbal groups are concerned, their selections from ASPECT and VG PERSON resemble that of eventive verbal groups. The verbal group in (68) exemplifies the co-selection of [progressive] and [second person] in a non-eventive verbal group. The speaker requests the addressee to stay wherever she is. Structurally, State is conflated with Aspect and Auxiliary is conflated with Person.

(68)	<i>tʰi</i>	<i>tʰəntər</i>	<i>pɛ:-tʃ</i>	<i>ɛ:</i>
	2SG	there	COP-PROG	COP.IMP.2
			verbal group	
			State/Aspect	Auxiliary/Person

‘You be there.’

The clause in (68) positions the addressee as modally responsible for staying at a place for a prolonged period of time. In the verbal group, State is lexicalised as the copular verb *pɛ:*; Aspect is realised by v-tʃ; Auxiliary is lexicalised as *ɛ:*; and Person is realised by v.

The clauses in (69) and (70) adjust that in (68) to exemplify the co-selection of [progressive] and [first person], and [progressive] and [third person] in a non-eventive verbal group. The modal responsibility of staying at a location is assigned to the speaker and the addressee in (69); the assignment of the modal responsibility of permitting a non-interlocutor’s staying at a location is ambiguous in (70).

(69)	<i>pɛtən</i>	<i>tʰəntər</i>	<i>pɛ:-tʃ</i>	<i>ɛ:-jɐ</i>
	1PL	there	COP-PROG	COP-IMP.1
			verbal group	
			State/Aspect	Auxiliary/Person

‘Let’s be there.’

(70)	<i>tʰɔr</i>	<i>tʰəntər</i>	<i>pɛ:-tʃ</i>	<i>ɛ:-kɛ</i>
	3SG	there	COP-PROG	COP-IMP.3
			verbal group	
			State/Aspect	Auxiliary/Person

‘Let her be there.’

In the verbal groups in (69) and (70), States are lexicalised as the copular verb *pɛ:*; Aspects are realised by v-tʃ; Auxiliaries are lexicalised as *ɛ:*; and Person is realised by v-j in (69) and v-k in (70).

The structures which realise the co-selection from VG PERSON and [progressive] in ASPECT in the restricted verbal group are summarised below.

- [restricted] ⊃ +Person
- [first person] ⊃ Person: v-j
- [second person] ⊃ Person: v
- [third person] ⊃ Person: v-k

[eventive]  $\supset$  +Event  
[non-eventive]  $\supset$  + State  
[progressive]  $\supset$  +Aspect; +Auxiliary; Aspect: v-tf; Auxiliary::  $\varepsilon$ :  
[progressive/eventive/restricted]  $\supset$  Event/Aspect; Auxiliary/Person  
[progressive/non-eventive/restricted]  $\supset$  State/Aspect; Auxiliary/Person

## 5. Conclusions

This chapter provides a systemic functional account of the verbal group in Khorchin Mongolian. Two basic verbal group systems, VG DEIXIS and VG TYPE, are established based on the role the verbal group plays in a clause. The VG DEIXIS system includes the features [elaborated] and [restricted]. Elaborated verbal groups function in indicative clauses, whereas restricted verbal groups function in imperative clauses. The system VG TYPE includes the features [eventive] and [non-eventive]. Eventive verbal groups function in non-relational clauses, whereas non-eventive verbal groups function in relational clauses. The systems VG DEIXIS and VG TYPE are simultaneous co-selecting systems. An eventive elaborated verbal group selects from the systems VG POLARITY, VG TENSE, ASPECT, VG MODALITY, and RELATIVE TENSE; a non-eventive elaborated verbal group selects from the systems VG POLARITY, VG TENSE, and ASPECT. Both eventive and non-eventive restricted verbal groups select from the systems VG PERSON and ASPECT. These systemic relations are summarised as a system network in Figure 2.4. The structures which realise the co-selections from these systems are excluded to avoid repetition. They can be found in their respective sections.

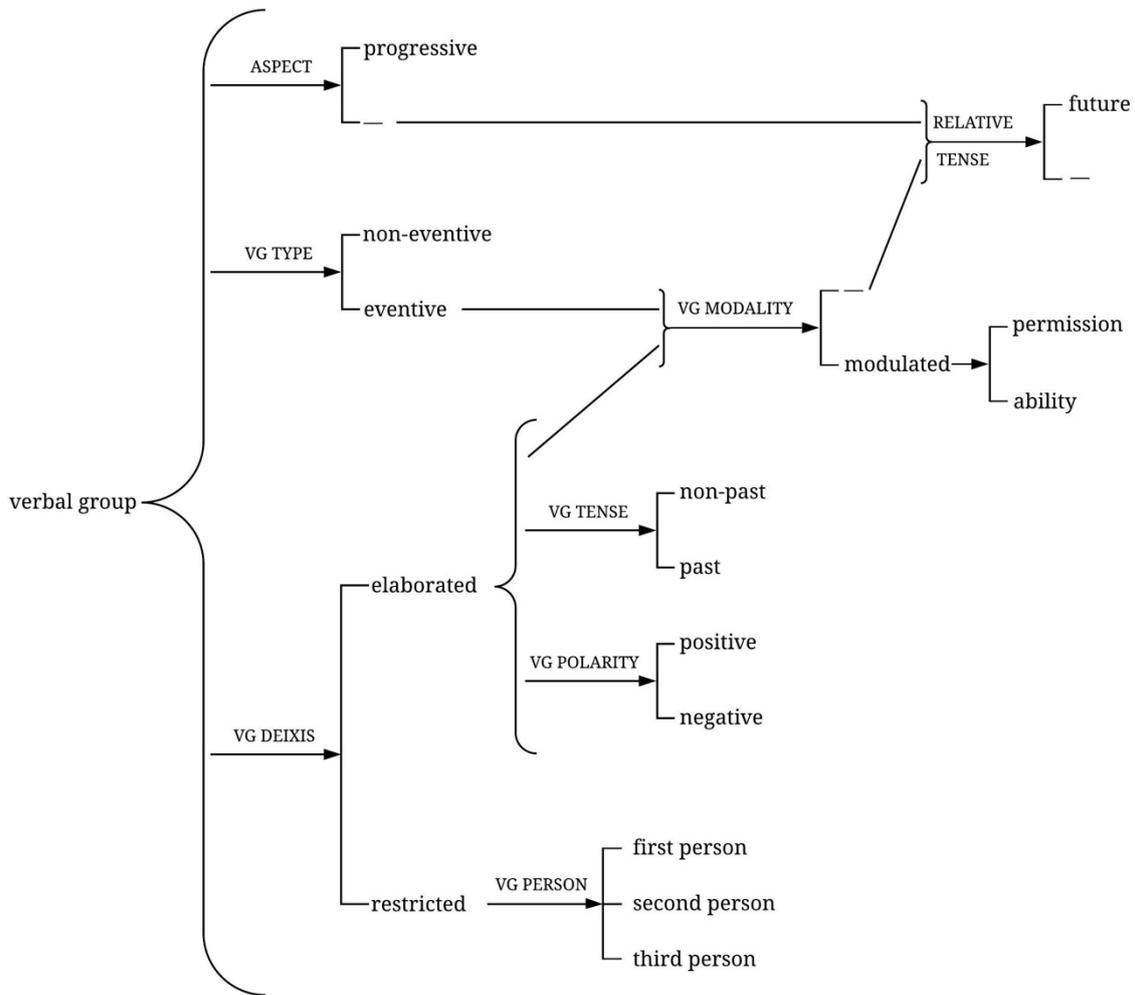


Figure 2.4 The verbal group in Khorchin Mongolian

The interactions between the systems in Figure 2.4 are based on axial argumentation at ranks below the clause. In Section 2 and Section 3 the paradigmatic relations in the systems VG DEIXIS and VG TYPE are established from above in relation to the role the verbal group plays in a Khorchin Mongolian clause. In Section 4 the systems of VG POLARITY, VG TENSE, ASPECT, VG MODALITY, RELATIVE TENSE, and VG PERSON are motivated from below with respect to the structural patterns in the syntagmatic organisation of the verbal group and from round about with respect to the interdependencies between systems.

In terms of the syntagmatic organisation of the verbal group, confluences of function structures are frequently observed in Section 4 (e.g. Modality/Aspect, Auxiliary/Tense). One of the explanations is that for the features realised by these structures the ‘division of the grammatical labour’ is at group rank but the ‘location of the grammatical labour’ is at word rank (Matthiessen 2015). For example, systems such as VG TENSE and VG PERSON interacts with the other systems at group rank. However, the distinctions in these systems are established at word rank through suffixes (-*n* and -*x* for [non-past], and -*tʃɛ* and -*sɔn* for [past] in the VG TENSE system; -*j* for [first person] and -*k* for [third person] in the VG PERSON system). Similar conflation of function structures due to the distribution of the division and the location of the grammatical labour across rank scale is also observed between clause, group, and word rank in other languages (e.g. Spanish realisation of the

participant roles through pronominal clitics at group rank and inflectional morphology at word rank, see Martin et al. in prep; Quiroz 2017, this volume).

In terms of the paradigmatic organisation of the verbal group, the system network usefully shows the *valeur* of a specific grammatical category. For example, the categories that have previously been described as ‘aspect’ markers (e.g. Brosig 2014) are described here as [progressive] and [future] in two separate systems, ASPECT and RELATIVE TENSE. The system network in Figure 2.4 shows that [progressive] and [future] interact with the other systems in different ways. The choice [progressive] is not restricted to the VG TYPE of verbal group ([eventive] or [non-eventive]); nor is it restricted to the VG DEIXIS of the verbal group ([elaborated] or [restricted]); [progressive] also co-selects [modulation]. In contrast, relative [future] is a choice possible only for the elaborated eventive verbal group; and it is mutually exclusive with VG MODALITY.

This paper also attests the usefulness of starting the description of lower ranking units from above drawing on resources in the higher ranking units (e.g. MOOD and TRANSITIVITY) or resources in the more abstract strata (e.g. exchange structure and IDEATION in discourse semantics). This approach sheds lights on issues which await further exploration. One area of description in Khorchin Mongolian which needs further attention is verbal group complexes, which we encountered in (65), *pi kəxə-ki tʰitʰə-kət ir-jə* ‘1SG pig-ACC feed-PFV come-IMP.1’. This phenomenon needs to be accounted for in relation to the logical meaning the verbal group realises in clause complexing. Following the line of reasoning adopted in this chapter, the system of CONNEXION<sup>21</sup> developed in SFL work on discourse semantics (Hao 2018; Martin 1992; Martin & Quiroz this volume; Martin & Rose 2007) seems a promising starting point.

## Acknowledgements

I am grateful for the constructive and stimulating feedbacks from the editors on the earlier drafts of this paper. I also would like to acknowledge the tremendous help on my writing from A/Prof. Susan Hood. Finally, this research would not have been possible without the generous consent from my informants for recording their conversations during my field trip. They are teachers from the Mongolian Sector at Hūgijltu Primary School and Baoxiang’s family from Guóyíng Mùchǎng (国营牧场), and Nara’s family from Aldartu Somu (ālādá’ěrtǔ 阿拉达尔吐) at Jalaid Banner, Hinggan League in Inner Mongolia.

## References

- Bayancogtu. 2002. *horcin aman ayalgun u sodulul (A study of Khorchin dialect)*. Hohhot: Inner Mongolia University Press.
- Berry, Margaret. 1981. Systemic linguistics and discourse analysis: A multi-layered approach to exchange structure. In Malcolm Coulthard & Martin Montgomery (eds.), *Studies in discourse analysis*, 120–145. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Brosig, Benjamin. 2014. The tense-aspect system of Khorchin Mongolian. In Pirkko Suihkonen & Lindsay J. Whaley (eds.), *On diversity and complexity of languages spoken in Europe and North and Central Asia*, 3–65. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Comrie, Bernard. 1976. *Aspect: An introduction to the study of verbal aspect and related problems*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

---

<sup>21</sup> This system is called CONJUNCTION in Martin (1992).

- Halliday, M. A.K. 1976. The English verbal group. In Gunther R. Kress (ed.), *Halliday: System and function in language*, 136–158. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Halliday, M. A.K. 1985. *An introduction to functional grammar*. London: Arnold.
- Halliday, M. A.K. 1994. *An introduction to functional grammar (2nd edn.)*. London: Arnold.
- Halliday, M. A.K. 2009. Methods – techniques – problems. In M. A.K. Halliday & Jonathan Webster (eds.), *Continuum companion to Systemic Functional Linguistics*, 59–86. London: Continuum.
- Hao, Jing. 2015. Construing biology: An ideational perspective. The University of Sydney.
- Hao, Jing. 2018. Reconsidering “cause inside the clause” in scientific discourse - From a discourse semantic perspective in systemic functional linguistics. *Text & Talk* 38(5). 525–550. doi:10.1515/text-2018-0013.
- Hao, Jing. 2019. *Analysing scientific discourse from a systemic functional perspective: A framework for exploring knowledge building in biology*. London: Routledge.
- Martin, J. R. 1992. *English text: System and structure*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Martin, J. R. 2013. *Systemic functional grammar: A next step into the theory - Axial relations*. Beijing: Higher Education Press.
- Martin, J. R. 2018. Introduction. Interpersonal meaning: Systemic functional linguistics perspective. *Functions of Language* 25(1). 2–19. doi:10.1075/fol.17018.mar.
- Martin, J. R., Beatriz Quiroz, Pin Wang & Yongsheng Zhu. in prep. *Systemic Functional Grammar: Another step into the theory – grammatical description*. Beijing: Higher Education Press.
- Martin, J. R. & David Rose. 2007. *Working with discourse (2nd edn.)*. London/New York: Continuum.
- Matthiessen, C.M.I.M. 2015. Systemic Functional Morphology: The lexicogrammar of the word. In Edson Rosa Francisco de Souza (ed.), *Estudos de descrição funcionalista: Objetos e abordagens*, 150–199. Muenchen: Lincom GmbH.
- Nasunbayar, Haserdeni, Turgun, Cogtu, Tawadagba, Naranbatu & Secen. 1982. *orcin cag un monggul hele (Modern Mongolian)*. Hohhot: Inner Mongolia Education Press.
- Quiroz, Beatriz. 2013. The interpersonal and experiential grammar of Chilean Spanish: Towards a principled systemic-functional description based on axial argumentation. The University of Sydney.
- Quiroz, Beatriz. 2017. The verbal group. In Tom Bartlett & O’Grady Gerard (eds.), *The Routledge handbook of systemic functional linguistics*, 301–318. New York: Routledge.
- Zhang, Dongbing. 2020. An interpersonal grammar of Khorchin Mongolian. University of Sydney.