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Dongbing Zhang

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TENSE in Khorchin Mongolian: An interpersonal perspective

Abstract

This paper examines the TENSE system in Khorchin Mongolian from an interpersonal perspective based on the theoretical assumptions of Systemic Functional Linguistics. Previous studies on TENSE in Khorchin Mongolian have mainly taken a representational view, focusing primarily on the way different tense suffixes construe relationships between events. However, this perspective cannot sufficiently address the distinction between participle and non-participle tense suffixes (e.g. *-x* vs. *-n* for non-past, *-sən* vs. *-tʃɛ* for past). This paper, on the other hand, interprets the difference in meaning between the participle and non-participle realizations of TENSE from an interpersonal perspective in relation to the co-occurring modal particles and interrogative particles at the level of clause by drawing on discourse patterns in exchange and the phenomenon of embedding. It is shown that while the non-participle tense suffixes in Khorchin Mongolian are involved in the process of settling propositions, the participle tense suffixes are not. The paper complements the representational perspective on TENSE in Khorchin Mongolian and models a methodology for interpreting morphological distinctions in the context of larger and more abstract units.

Keywords: tense; Khorchin Mongolian; interpersonal meaning; embedding; exchange structure

1. Introduction

This paper is concerned with the TENSE system in Khorchin Mongolian, a variety of Mongolian spoken in eastern Inner Mongolia, China.¹ It focuses on the distinction in meaning between the participle and non-participle realizations of the central contrast in the Khorchin Mongolian TENSE system – past and non-past. The various realizations of the TENSE options are shown in Table 1. The phonological realizations of the suffixes vary with respect to vowel harmony and syllabification patterns.

¹ Following the conventions in Systemic Functional Linguistics, system names are written with small capitals.

Table 1 Morphological realizations of TENSE in Khorchin Mongolian

	past	non-past
non-participle	<i>-tʃɛ</i> (~ <i>-tʃ</i> , <i>-tʃʰɛ</i> , <i>-tʃʰ</i>)	<i>-n</i> (~ <i>-nʋ</i> , <i>-nə</i> , <i>-nɔ</i> , <i>-ɔn</i>)
participle	<i>-sɔn</i> (~ <i>-sɔ</i> , <i>-s</i>)	<i>-x</i> (~ <i>-ø</i> , <i>-ɔx</i>)

The participle suffixes have traditionally been called ‘adjectival verb suffixes’ (Bayancogtu 2002; Nasunbayar et al. 1982) or ‘verbal noun suffixes’ that have functions similar to tense suffixes (Wu 1992, 1995, 1996). Previous studies on TENSE in (Khorchin) Mongolian have mainly focused on the ‘representational’ meaning of the system. For example, Wu (1992, 1995, 1996) critically reviews studies that aim to distinguish between the different non-past and past tense suffixes primarily in terms of the representation of events in relation to the moment of speaking (e.g. distant past). He also interprets the meaning of the tense suffixes in terms of Vendler’s (1957) classification of verbs. Brosig (2014), in his study of the TENSE-ASPECT system of Khorchin Mongolian, focuses on the way events are construed by different TENSE choices and their interaction with the ASPECT system.

This paper, in contrast, examines the realizations of TENSE in their clausal and discourse environment in terms of the interlocutors’ assessment of the propositions at stake – that is, an interpersonal perspective within the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) (Martin [2013] and Matthiessen and Halliday [2009] provide accessible introductions to SFL theory). It will be argued that while the participle tense suffixes are not involved in the process of settling propositions, the non-participle tense suffixes are typically associated with such processes. This point of view complements the studies on the representational meaning of TENSE in (Khorchin) Mongolian (Brosig 2014; Wu 1992, 1995, 1996). The paper also models a methodology for interpreting morphological distinctions in the context of larger and more abstract units.²

The remainder of the paper is organized in a ‘top-down’ manner. Section 2 introduces the patterns in interactions against which the grammatical patterns are interpreted – namely the description of exchange structure in SFL. In relation to the discourse patterns introduced in Section 2, Section 3 interprets the distinction

² In Systemic Functional Linguistics, the representational meaning of language is called ‘ideational’, comprising the ‘experiential’ and ‘logical’ components. Experiential meaning is related to the way languages construe experience – both outer and inner – and the logical meaning has to do with the generalized logical relationship between the construed experiences.

in meaning between the different realizations of the tense suffixes in their clause context based on the co-occurrence of the participle and non-participle tense suffixes and the various clause final particles. Section 4 provides further support for the interpretations in Section 3 with respect to the phenomenon of embedding. Section 5 locates the TENSE system in Khorchin Mongolian along the theoretical dimension of rank.

2. Exchange structure

The model of interaction used to interpret the distinctions in the realizations of TENSE in their clausal context (see Section 3) is the exchange structure analysis introduced in Berry (1981a, 1981b, 1981c) and its later developments (Martin 1992; Martin and Rose 2007; Ventola 1987; Author 2020a). In this model, interactions are divided into exchanges with recognizable patterns of obligatory and optional elements. A distinction is made between exchanges that are concerned with the interlocutors' knowledge of the information under negotiation and those that are concerned with the interlocutors' responsibility for performing an action. They are known as knowledge exchange and action exchange respectively. Given that our discussion of TENSE is primarily related to the negotiation of information, we will focus on knowledge exchange in this paper.

According to Berry (1981a, 1981b), for a knowledge exchange to be well-formed, there must be a slot where one of the interlocutors makes contribution by providing the information and is positioned to have authority over the information being negotiated. Following Berry's work, the interlocutor role positioned with such authority is termed the primary knower; the interlocutor role positioned without such authority is termed the secondary knower.

The exchange in (1) exemplifies a secondary-knower-initiated exchange.^{3, 4} The government official (O) takes up the secondary knower role; and the peasant (P) is cast in the role of the primary knower. The function of the slot in an exchange

³ The data are transcribed using IPA symbols. Case markers are transcribed as postpositions instead of suffixes following Wang (1983). The morpheme-by-morpheme glossing in this paper mainly follows the Leipzig Glossing Rules (<https://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/pdf/Glossing-Rules.pdf>). Abbreviations not included therein are: CONT = continuative, EMP = emphatic, INT = intensive, INTJ = interjection, IP = interrogative particle, MP = modal particle, PERM = permissive, TEMP = temporal.

⁴ Technically speaking, it is the patterns of exchange that assign to the interlocutors particular roles, not the other way around, as the names such as 'secondary-knower-initiated exchange' would imply. In other words, there is no secondary knower present in the speech event before the inception of the speech event.

where one adopts the secondary knower role and at the same time casts the addressee as primary knower is termed K2; the function of the slot where the addressee accepts the primary knower role is termed K1.⁵

(1) between a government official (O) and a peasant (P)

1. O: K2 *xən ir-s i*
 who come-PST.PTCP IP
 'Who came?'

2. P: K1 *utʃæŋpu nɛ xun ir-tʃ*
 Armed.Forces.Department GEN people come-PST
 'People from the Armed Forces Department came.'

Instead of accepting the assigned primary knower role as in a secondary-knower-initiated exchange, one may adopt the primary knower role and cast the addressee in the secondary knower role in a primary-knower-initiated exchange. Two patterns emerge when this happens. The speaker may claim primary knower authority right away – as in (2). This exchange is from a workplace interaction between teachers (T = teacher). The two K1s in (2) are in an elaborating relation, which is indicated by the equal sign. For complexing relations between moves (elaboration, extension and enhancement), see Ventola (1988); for a discussion of exchange boundary in relation to complexing, see Martin (1992: 57-59).

(2) between colleagues (T = teacher)

1. T1: K1 *pi pəl urlə ir-tʃ jəl-x ue*
 1SG TOP morning come-CVB be.able.to-NPST.PTCP NEG
 'I am not able to come in the morning.'

2. =K1 *ærcæn tʃitʃur pəl jəl-ən*
 evening shift COND be.able.to-NPST
 'If (it is) evening shift, (I) am able to (come).'

Alternatively, the speaker may elicit candidate information from the addressee and delay the stamping of primary knower authority till after this information is provided – as in (3). This exchange is modified from an interaction between a four-year-old girl (niece = N) and her uncle (U).

⁵ Following the SFL conventions, function labels are written with initial capital letters.

(3) between niece (N) and uncle (U)

1. N: Dk1 *ən ju kər xi-sən tɘ*
 this what INS make-PST.PTCP IP
 ‘What was this made from?’
2. U: K2 *kɔjər*
 flour
 ‘Flour.’
3. N: K1 *tʰɛ:r-tʃʰ*
 correct-PST
 ‘(It) is correct.’

According to Berry (1981a) and Martin (1992), a knowledge exchange is considered well-formed or resolved when K1 is instantiated. It is often the case that the secondary knower follows up the K1 in a K2f slot. When the secondary knower follows up in a secondary-knower-initiated exchange, the function of the follow-up is to reinforce the adopted secondary knower role – as in (4).

(4) between a government official (O) and a peasant (P)

1. O: K2 *xən ɪr-s i*
 who come-PST.PTCP IP
 ‘Who came?’
2. P: K1 *utʃuəŋpu nɛ xun ɪr-tʃʰ*
 Armed.Forces.Department GEN people come-PST
 ‘People from the Armed Forces Department came.’
3. O: K2f *ɔ:*
 INTJ
 ‘I see.’

When the secondary knower follows up in a primary-knower-initiated exchange, they accept the secondary knower role they are assigned – as in (5).

(5) between colleagues (T = teacher)

a. T1: K1 *pi pɔl urlə ir-tʃ jɔl-x uɛ*
1SG TOP morning come-CVB be.able.to-NPST.PTCP NEG
'I am not able to come in the morning.'

b. =K1 *ærcæn tʃitʃur pɔl jɔl-ən*
evening shift COND be.able.to-NPST
'If (it is) evening shift, (I) am able to (come).'

c. T2: K2f *ɔ:*
INTJ
'I see.'

It is also possible for the primary knower to follow up K2f. This will not be exemplified here since it does not contribute to our discussion. According to Berry (1981a), as far as the well-formedness of exchanges is concerned, K1 is obligatory under all circumstances. K2 is obligatory when an exchange is initiated by the secondary knower and when there is Dk1. K2f is optional under all circumstances. Dk1, K2, K1, K2f are thus the predictable elements of an exchange. In real life interactions, however, the expected flow of an exchange is constantly disrupted by queries (also known as tracking) and challenges (Berry 2016, 2017; Martin 1992: 66-76). These unpredictable elements of an exchange will be introduced where relevant.

How does the structure of exchange relate to the tense suffixes we are interested in? To see these relationships, we need to consider the tense suffixes in their clausal context. It is clauses that select independently for MOOD – i.e. independent clauses together with the clauses that depend on them or embedded in them – that realize the moves introduced so far (Martin 1992: 50-59).

3. TENSE in its clausal context

3.1 TENSE and MOOD

TENSE is a system available to the verbal group in Khorchin Mongolian, which is realized clause finally (see Section 5; for more detail see Author 2020b). The use of the non-participle and participle tense suffixes in declarative and interrogative clauses are shown in (6) to (9) below. TENSE options are realized by the non-participle suffixes in (6) and (7) and by the participle ones in (8) and (9). The tense

suffixes are highlighted in bold. The examples are adapted from an exchange between a government official and a peasant.

- (6) *tʰɛtɨn t ortʰɛ tʃil nɨk mɨl uk-tʃɛ*
 2PL DAT past year one cattle give-**PST**
 ‘(The government) gave you one cow last year.’
- (7) *tʰɛtɨn t ɨn tʃil nɨk mɨl uk-ɨn*
 2PL DAT this year one cattle give-**PST**
 ‘(The government) will give you one cow this year.’
- (8) *tʰɛtɨn t ortʰɛ tʃil nɨk mɨl uk-sɨn mɛ*
 2PL DAT past year one cattle give-**PST.PTCP** IP
 ‘Did (the government) give you one cow last year?’
- (9) *tʰɛtɨn t ɨn tʃil nɨk mɨl uk-ø mɛ*
 2PL DAT this year one cattle give-**NPST.PTCP** IP
 ‘Will (the government) give you one cow this year?’

In (8) and (9) the suffixes *-sɨn* and *-ø* are glossed as ‘participle’ (as in Brosig 2014) given that when verbs modify nouns they are marked with these suffixes (see Section 5.2). According to Wu (1996), these ‘participle’ suffixes (what he calls ‘verbal noun suffixes’) are typically used in interrogative and negative clauses in all Mongolic languages except Dongxiang. The negative counterparts of (8) and (9) are provided below in (10) and (11). The suffix *-x* in (11) is a variant of *-ø* as in (9).

- (10) *tʰɛtɨn t ortʰɛ tʃil mɨl uk-sɨn kue*
 2PL DAT past year cattle give-**PST.PTCP** NEG
 ‘(The government) did not give you cattle last year.’
- (11) *tʰɛtɨn t ɨn tʃil mɨl uk-x ue*
 2PL DAT this year cattle give-**NPST.PTCP** NEG
 ‘(The government) will not give you cattle this year.’

However, in Khorchin Mongolian, the participle suffixes are also used in declarative clauses when they end with particular modal particles as in (12) and (13) below (Author 2020a) (also mentioned in Caganhada (1991) in terms of their use with the

particle *ʃəmu*). The modal particles are glossed in square brackets in the translation lines.⁶

- (12) *tʃʰɛtəŋ t ortʰɛ tʃil nək mɛl uk-sən weijeŋ*
 2PL DAT past year one cattle give-PST.PTCP MP
 ‘[It is known that] (the government) gave you one cow last year.’

- (13) *tʃʰɛtəŋ t ɛn tʃil nək mɛl uk-ø weijeŋ*
 2PL DAT this year one cattle give-NPST.PTCP MP
 ‘[It is known that] (the government) will give you one cow this year.’

This paper argues, in relation to the discourse patterns introduced in Section 2, that the difference between the participle suffixes – as used in (12) and (13) – and the ‘non-participle’ suffixes – as used in (6) and (7) – is related to whether the proposition at stake is in the process of being settled. The clauses in (6) and (12) above, for example, are the same in terms of the representational meaning they realize (i.e. crudely ‘The government gave the addressee one cow last year’); but they differ in terms of the speaker’s assessment of the knowledge of the addressee. For example, in (12) the information is presented as shared between the interactants (i.e. both the speaker and the addressee are positioned as knowing the information), which is realized through the interaction between the tense suffix and the modal particle *weijeŋ*. This suggests that to account for the meaning of TENSE in Khorchin Mongolian in a more comprehensive manner, the relevant suffixes need to be examined in relation to the other components of the clause.

The realization of TENSE in Khorchin Mongolian is closely associated with the clause final particles – modal particles in declarative clauses and interrogative particles in interrogative clauses. The possible combinations of the participle and non-participle suffixes and the modal and interrogative particles found in my corpus are summarized in Table 2.

⁶ A discourse semantic characterization of the modal particles in Khorchin Mongolian can be found in Author (2020c).

Table 2 Co-occurrence of tense suffixes and particles in Khorchin Mongolian

tense suffix	modal particles in declarative	interrogative particles	
		polar	elemental
non-participle	<i>ʃɛ, kənə, xoi, ʃitoi, ʃitə, ʃoi, ʃo, ʃi, pɐ, tɐ</i>	<i>u:</i>	<i>tɐ</i>
participle	<i>ʃɒmu, wɛijɛŋ, ʃitə</i>	<i>mɛ, mu</i>	<i>i:, mɛ, tɐ</i>

We will now turn to interpreting the co-occurrence of the different tense suffixes and the modal and interrogative particles in relation to the exchange structure patterns described in Section 2. For ease of reference, the clause in which a particle follows the non-participle suffix will be called a settling clause; as will be argued below, these clauses are involved in the process of settling propositions. On the other hand, the clause in which a particle follows the participle suffix is not typically associated with the process of settling propositions. These will be called non-settling clauses.⁷

3.2 Participle suffixes in declarative clauses

A declarative non-settling clause – which involves the co-occurrence of participle suffixes and modal particles – presents a proposition either as settled – i.e. its validity is non-negotiable – or as its validity not being at stake. The two commonly used modal particles – *wɛijɛŋ* and *ʃitə* – will be used to illustrate this point. In (14) below, for example, the non-settling clause in (14.5) presents the proposition as presumed between the interlocutors. It is used to elaborate a preceding K1 – i.e. the peasants sold their sheep at a very low price given that even the price of the grown ones were less than four hundred yuan.

(14) between a government official (O) and a peasant (P)

Exchange 1

1. O: K2 *xɔti* *xolt-s* *i:*
 how.much sell-PST.PTCP IP
 ‘How much did (you) sell?’

⁷ The term ‘settling’ is borrowed from Shin’s (2018) description of Korean informal grammar, where he uses it to refer to the meaning of particular suffixes involved in presenting propositions as ‘case open’ in contrast to ‘case closed’, the latter termed ‘settled’ clauses. The term ‘settling’ is used in this paper in the sense that the interlocutors are in the process of ‘closing the case’ on a proposition.

2. P: K1 *pɛpɛi* *to:*
 eight.hundred more
 ‘More than eight hundred (less than nine hundred).’

3. O: K2f *ɔ:*
 INTJ
 ‘I see.’

Exchange 2

4. P: K1 *xɛp~xɛmtɛ*
 INT~cheap
 ‘Very cheap.’

5. =K1 *b* *xœn* *sɛ:* *sɛnpɛi* *to:* *juɛn* *tol-sɔn* ***wɛijɛŋ***
 grown sheep only three.hundred more yuan reach- **MP**
PST.PTCP
 ‘[It is known that] (the price of) the grown sheep only reached between three hundred and four hundred.’

Unlike non-settling clauses ending with *wɛijɛŋ*, which are normally used to support another proposition – as in (14.5) above, non-settling clauses with *fitɔ* are used to point out the obvious where counter-expectancy is involved. For example, in (15.5), the nephew points out what the uncle said previously when the uncle’s behavior contradicts his own claim. Exchange 1 is not analysed in terms of exchange structure because it is resolved around an action instead of knowledge – i.e. an action exchange. Note that *tʰœr-ul* ‘circle-CAUS’ in (15.1) is a verb in Khorchin Mongolian (cf. the English translation).

(15) between aunt (A), uncle (U), and nephew (N); over cooking

Exchange 1

1. W: *ɔn* *xɛ:lɔk* *tɔ:r* *tʰœr-ul-ɔt* *tʰɛpɛ-ø*
 PROX steamer on circle-CAUS-PFV put-IMP
 ‘Put (the dumplings) on the steamer in a circle.’

2. H: *pi* *tʰɛp-x* *uɛ*
 1SG put-NPST.PTCP NEG

'I won't.'

Exchange 2

3. H: K1 *pi fɛt-x* *uɛ*
 1SG know.how-NPST.PTCP NEG
 'I don't know how.'

4. W: ch *tʰi fɛt-əx* *in ukue*
 2SG know.how-NPST.PTCP thing NEG
 'There is nothing you know how to do.'

(Some time later the uncle was putting the dumplings on the steamer as instructed.)

Exchange 3

5. N: K1 *pɛi-tʃ fɛt-x* *uɛ kə-sən* *ʃitə*
 place-CVB know.how-NPST.PTCP NEG say-PST.PTCP MP
 '[Contrary to what you are doing, we know] (you) said
 (you) do not know how to place (them).'

From the exchanges in (14) and (15), we can see that non-settling declarative clauses do not typically initiate an exchange. When they do initiate an exchange – as in (15) – a counter-expectant context motivates such initiation. It is also unlikely for them to realize K1 in a K2^K1 structure – that is, it is not typical of them to be used to accept the projected primary knower authority from the previous speaker. In this sense, non-settling declarative clauses are akin to embedded clauses (see Section 4). They construe propositions as presumed by the interlocutors and hence not in the process of being settled.

3.3 Non-participle suffixes in declarative clauses

Unlike non-settling clauses, settling declarative clauses, whose options in TENSE are realized by non-participle suffixes, indicate that the propositions are in the process of being settled. It is thus common for them to function as initiating K1 or K1 in a K2^K1 structure as well as in the unpredictable elements of exchanges – typically challenges. In (16) below, for example, T1 introduces a proposition at K1 in (16.1), which is challenged by T2 in (16.2). This is in return challenged by T1 in (16.3), which is accepted by T2 in (16.4). The tense suffixes and the modal particles are

highlighted in bold. (ch = challenge; rch = response to challenge; rrch = response to response to challenge)

(16) between colleagues; T = teacher

1. T1: K1 *tʰər ixin ɤn ortʰe sənlo kər jɛp-tʃ* *ɛ:-tʃ* *fɛ*
 DIST daughter 3POSS before trike INS commute- COP- **MP**
 PROG **PST**

‘[I know; you may know] her daughter was commuting (to school) by trike before.’

2.) T2: ch *ukue sətʰin ni:təm motʰo kər jɛp-tʃ* *ɛ:-nʌ*
 NEG Secin always motorbike INS commute-PROG COP-**NPST**

‘No, Secin is always commuting by motorbike.’

3. T1: rch *ukue sənlo kər pəs jɛp-tʃ* *ɛ:-tʃ* *fo*
 NEG trike INS also commute-PROG COP-**PST** **MP**

‘No, [I know; you don’t know] (she was) also commuting by trike.’

4. T2: rrch *ɔ:*

Oh

‘Oh.’

The settling clause with *fɛ* – as in (16.1) – is used to introduce a proposition as if it is shared between the interlocutors. The settling clause with *fo* – as in (16.3) – is used to show that the speaker knows the information while the addressee does not; and it is commonly used to challenge another proposition. The settling clauses – including the declarative clause in (16.2) that does not end with a modal particle – are used in the process of settling the proposition as to the parent’s mode of transport.

To foreground the different meaning conveyed by settling and non-settling clauses, consider the settling clause in (17.4) below. The modal particle *fitə* can be used with either the participle suffixes or the non-participle suffixes. Its use with the participle suffixes (i.e. a non-settling clause) to point out the obvious has been exemplified in (15) above. The settling clause in (17.4), in which the modal particle *fitə* is used with the non-participle suffix, shows that the proposition is derived from

reasoning based on the information given previously in the exchange (or the neighboring exchanges).⁸

(17) between government officials (O1 and O2) and a peasant (P)

Exchange 1

1. O1: K2 *tʰirək ne əməd təl əms-tf εː-s mə*
military GEN lower.clothing clothes wear-PROG COP-PST.PTCP IP
'(Were they) wearing military uniform?'

2. P: K1 *ηː*
INTJ
'Yes.'

3. O1: K2f *ɔː*
INTJ
'I see.'

Exchange 2

4. O2: K1 *utʃuəŋpu ne xun ir-tf fitə*
Armed.Forces.Department GEN people come-PST MP
'[I infer] people from the Armed Forces Department came.'

5. O1: K2f *mː*
INTJ
'Yes.'

As far as exchange structure is concerned, the settling clause in (17.4) is used to realize K1. The proposition could have been challenged by O1 if contradictory evidence were present.

As in the context of declarative clauses, participle and non-participle tense suffixes may also co-occur with different interrogative particles in interrogative clauses. The distinction in meaning between settling and non-settling interrogative clauses is very subtle. It will be discussed separately for polar and elemental interrogative

⁸ The move (17.4) is a case where the speaker's knowledge of the information is downscaled and other possible propositions are implicated. For a discussion of this in relation to Martin and White's (2005) ENGAGEMENT system, see Author (2020a: 132-155, 2020c, 2020d).

clauses. Keep in mind that the discussion presented in relation to interrogative clauses in Section 3.4 and 3.5 are tendencies observed in my corpus. Investigation of larger corpora based on statistical methods is needed to further support the argument presented here.

3.4 TENSE in polar interrogative clauses

Non-settling polar interrogative clauses – those that involve the co-occurrence of participle tense suffixes and interrogative particles – are typically used to realize an initiating K2 without other exchanges leading up to it, i.e. a ‘genuine question’. The interrogative particle used in this type of clause is *mε*. In (18) below, the K2 is realized by a non-settling polar interrogative clause. The exchange is adapted from an interaction between two Mongolian teachers.

(18) between colleagues (T = teacher)

1. T1: K2 *ən u:lpər tʰv:r-ø mε*
PROX sentence correct-NPST.PTCP IP
‘Is this sentence correct?’

2. T2: K1 *tʰv:r-nε*
correct-NPST
‘(It) is correct.’

In contrast, settling polar interrogative clauses are typically used to query a previous proposition (‘other-initiated repair’ in Conversation Analysis [Dingemanse and Enfield 2015; Schegloff et al. 1977]). They are thus associated more closely with the process of settling a proposition. Queries will be called ‘tracking’ following Martin (1992). The interrogative particle used in this type of clause is *u:*. The initial K2 in (19.1) is followed by a tracking sequence; and the responding K1 at (19.4) is further tracked in (19.5). Both tracking functions are realized by elliptical settling polar interrogative clauses. (Ellipsis is a prominent feature of tracking; tr = tracking, rtr = response to tracking.)

(19) T = teacher

1. T1: K2 *tʰi ti tʃi tʃi uk-ɔntʃ ɛ:-ø mɛ*
 2SG number which session give-FUT COP-NPST.PTCP IP
 ‘Which session are you going to give me?’

2. T2: tr *pi u:*
 1SG **IP**
 ‘Me?’

3. T1: rtr *ŋ:*
 INTJ
 ‘Yes.’

4. T2: K1 *ti sɔ*
 number four
 ‘Fourth session.’

5. T1: tr *sɔ niɛntʃi nɛ u:*
 four grade GEN **IP**
 ‘The fourth grade’s?’

6. T2: rtr *ɔ:*
 yes
 ‘Yes.’

The non-elliptical version of (19.5) is given in (20) below. TENSE in the non-elliptical clause is realized by a non-participle suffix.

(20) *sɔ niɛntʃi nɛ ki uk-ɔntʃ ɛ:-n kɔ-tʃ u:*
 four grade GEN ACC give-FUT COP-NPST mean-**PST** **IP**
 ‘Do (you) mean (you) are going to give me the fourth grade’s (session)?’

The tracking sequences in (19) contribute to the process of settling the proposition about the sessions the teachers are swapping.

3.5 TENSE in elemental interrogative clauses

Like non-settling polar interrogative clauses, a non-settling elemental interrogative clause may also function as a ‘genuine’ K2 – as in (21) (repeating (1)). The interrogative particle used for this purpose is *i*.

(21) between a government official (O) and a peasant (P)

1. O: K2 *xən ir-s i*
 who come-**PST.PTCP** **IP**
 ‘Who came?’

2. P: K1 *utʃuŋpu nɛ xun ir-tʃ*
 Armed.Forces.Department GEN people come-PST
 ‘People from the Armed Forces Department came.’

When a non-settling elemental interrogative clause realizes a K2 that is led up to by other exchanges, it could be the case that the interlocutors have digressed from a topic and the speaker is trying to get the interaction back on track. The interrogative particle used in this context is *mɛ*. The K2 in (19.1) above is a case in point (repeated as (22) below). In this interaction the teachers are swapping their sessions. T1 uttered (22) after the interlocutors had digressed from swapping sessions to the reason for the swap and further to the reason why T2 was sick.

(22) between colleagues (T = teacher)

- T1: K2 *tʃi ti tʃi tʃɛ uk-ɔntʃ ɛ:-ø mɛ*
 2SG number which session give-FUT COP-**NPST.PTCP** **IP**
 ‘Which session are you going to give me?’

The other usage of non-settling elemental interrogative clauses is to realize Dk1. The interrogative particle used in this context is *tɔ* or *i*. This is exemplified in (23), the exchange between the niece and uncle we considered in (3) above.

(23) between niece (N) and uncle (U)

1. N: Dk1 *ən ju kər xi-sən tɔ*
 this what INS make-**PST.PTCP** **IP**
 ‘What was this made from?’

2. U: K2 *kojər*
 flour
 ‘Flour.’

3. N: K1 *tʰv:r-tʃʰ*
 correct-PST
 ‘(It) is correct.’

Although non-settling interrogative clauses are less commonly used in the process of settling propositions, it is observed in the data that when a non-settling elemental interrogative clause realizes a statement (involving ‘grammatical metaphor’ in SFL terms or ‘indirect speech act’ in Speech Act Theory), it can be used as a challenge – and hence participates in the process of settling the proposition that is challenged. The interrogative particle used with the participle tense suffix is *tʰ* – as in (24.3) below. In (24), the T1 puts forward a claim about the reason as to why T2 had caught a cold, which was challenged by T2.

(24) between colleagues; T = Teacher

Exchange 1

1. T1: K1 *tʰʒr ərʰt̪ ɔ̃rœ xytʰʒn t*
 DIST morning night cold DAT
 ‘[It is known that] you’ll be feeling cold

tʰv:r-tʃʰ pə:r-tʃʰ ɛ:-x wɛjɛŋ
 feel.cold-CVB shiver-PROG COP-NPST.PTCP MP
 in the morning and night.’

2. K1 *tʰʒr kɛnmɔ-x uɛ xɐ jɛp:-ø i:*
 DIST catch.a.cold-NPST.PTCP NEG where go-NPST.PTCP IP
 ‘What else would happen but to catch a cold?’

3. T2: ch *tʰŋul ɟtʰn jɛp-sʌn kuɛ*
 if.so 3PL commute-PST.PTCP NEG

xutʰl-sʌn kuɛ kʌn jɛk-sʌn tʰ
 move-PST.PTCP NEG TOP what-PST.PTCP IP
 ‘If so, what about the ones that didn’t commute?’

Exchange 2

4. T1: K2 *pəs kənmo-sən me*
 also catch.a.cold-PST.PTCP IP
 ‘Did they also catch a cold?’
5. T2: K1 *u: xɔ xutsl-tʃ jɔl-x ue le*
 INTJ all move-CVB be.able.to-NPST.PTCP NEG RES
 ‘They all become unable to move.’

In fact, in (24.3) the non-settling elemental interrogative clause makes the statement that those who did not commute also caught a cold. The proposition construed in this clause is presented as non-negotiable or settled. In this regard, the clause is similar to the non-settling declarative clauses introduced in Section 3.2.

Unlike non-settling clauses, the use of settling elemental interrogative clauses is relatively restricted. The possible interrogative particle used with the non-participle tense suffix is also *tɐ*. It is typically used to show curiosity. In the exchange in (25) below, the aunt demands that the nephew finish all the dumplings after the nephew claims that the dumplings they have made are enough for dinner.⁹ Both (25.2) and (25.4) are settling elemental interrogative clauses. In this particular instance, the nephew is teasing the aunt. Exchange 1 is an instance of action exchange; its structure is thus not analysed.

(25) between aunt (A) and nephew (N) over cooking

Exchange 1

1. A: *xɔni it-ø v: tʃi:m pɔl*
 all eat-IMP EMP like.that COND
 ‘If so (= if you think the dumplings are enough), eat them all.’

Exchange 2

2. N: K2 *xɔni it-tʃ pɐr-x ue pɔl jɐ:-n tɐ*

⁹ This is a way of showing hospitality in the speech community. The host usually cooks more food than necessary. In this instance, the nephew is visiting the aunt.

all eat-CVB finish-NPST.PTCP NEG COND what-NPST IP
 ‘What happens if I don’t finish them all?’

3. A: K1 *fakuan*
 fine
 ‘(I) will fine (you)’

Exchange 3

4. N: K2 *xəti* *fɛ:lən* *tɛ*
how.much fine-NPST IP
 ‘How much will (you) fine me?’

5. A: K1 *utʃ-əʃ* *ɛ:-kɛt* *pəl-nɔ*
 see-PROG COP-PFV decide-NPST
 ‘(I) will decide while (I) am seeing (≈it depends).’

The settling elemental interrogative clauses in (25) are cohesively linked to the previous exchanges – i.e. the first move in Exchange 2 reformulates Exchange 1 as a dependent condition clause and the first move in Exchange 3 further questions the proposition completed in Exchange 2. The settling elemental interrogative clauses thus contribute to the process of settling the proposition about what would happen if the nephew cannot finish all the dumplings.

The interpretation of the interaction between the tense suffixes and the modal/interrogative particles in their clausal environment from the perspective of exchange structure is summarized in Table 3 below. For declarative clauses, the meaning conveyed through K1 (e.g. presenting inferred information) depends on the modal particle used. Table 3 only provides the meanings exemplified in this paper.

Table 3 Interpretation of settling and non-settling clauses

	declarative (with our without modal particles)	interrogative (with interrogative particles)
settling (with non-participle tense suffixes)	- initiating K1 - K1 in K2 ^ K1 structure - challenge - K1 presenting inferred information	- K2 cohesively linked to previous exchanges - tracking

non-settling (with participle tense suffixes)	- elaborating K1 - K1 presenting counter- expectant direct experience	- initiating K2 - K2 resuming from digression - Dk1 - challenge (when realizing a statement presented as non- negotiable)
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The interpretation of the use of the tense suffixes from the perspective of the discourse patterns illustrated in this section will be further supported by the phenomenon of embedding in Section 4 below.

4. Embedding and negotiability

To discuss how the tense suffixes are realized in embedded clauses and where the system of TENSE is located in Khorchin Mongolian (see Section 5), this section first introduces the theoretical dimension of rank in SFL.

4.1 Rank

Rank deals with the relationship between paradigmatic contrasts across units and the structural configurations that realize these contrasts (Halliday 1961, 1966; Martin 2013; Halliday and Matthiessen 2014). For example, the paradigmatic relation between indicative and imperative clauses in English – as exemplified in (26) and (27) below (cited from Halliday and Matthiessen 2014: 136) – is closely related to the paradigmatic contrast between finite and non-finite verbal groups.

(26) *He's giving her the teapot./What is he giving her?*

(27) *Give me that teapot.*

While the finite verbal groups functioning in indicative clauses have the potential to be marked for temporal and modal DEICTICITY (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014: 410–411) – i.e. they make available further paradigmatic contrasts, e.g. *gives, gave, will give, should give, can give* and the like – the non-finite verbal groups functioning in imperative clauses do not have such potential.

Paradigmatic relations are conceptualized as systems in SFL. The aforementioned distinction between indicative and imperative is a choice in the MOOD system and

that between finite and non-finite is a choice in the FINITENESS system. The systems make statements about the paradigmatic options available at particular units, and the relations between these different units are called rank. The MOOD system is a system at clause rank and the FINITENESS system is located at group rank in English.

To make explicit the relationship between the MOOD and FINITENESS system, we need to introduce another concept that underpins the dimension of rank – function structure. The structure of the English indicative clause requires the functions Subject and Finite, which realize the contrast between the subtypes of indicative – declarative and interrogative – as exemplified in (28) and (29).

(28) **He** **is** *giving her the teapot.*
 Subject **Finite**

(29) *What* **is** **he** *giving her?*
 Finite **Subject**

Unlike indicative, imperative clauses in English do not require a Finite. Instead, imperative clauses typically begin with a Predicator – as in (30).

(30) **Give** *me that teapot.*
 Predicator

Now we can specify that the Finite in an English indicative clause (together with the Predicator, e.g. *giving*) is realized by a finite verbal group and the Predicator in an imperative clause is realized by a non-finite verbal group. This relationship between the MOOD system at clause rank and the FINITENESS system at group rank is represented schematically in Figure 1.¹⁰ The two systems at different ranks are mediated through the function structure at clause rank. Note that Figure 1 is a simplified version of the MOOD system in English. For instance, it does not take into account the more delicate options in interrogative, e.g. that the Subject *Who* in *Who gave her the teapot?* does not follow the Finite realized in *gave*.

¹⁰ Notations used in the figure: →[‘disjunctive OR relation’, ∖ ‘realize’, + ‘insert function’, : ‘realize function by class’, ^ ‘sequence functions’.

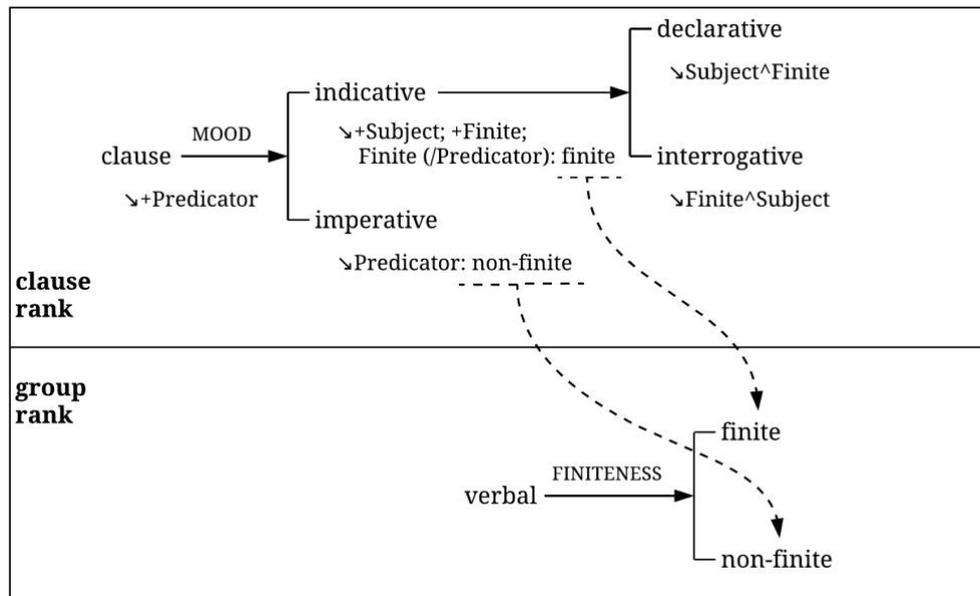


Figure 1 Rank, system, and structure

Two advantages of such systemic rank-based modelling are relevant to this paper. First, the model allows downward rankshift (also known as ‘embedding’). It involves a unit of a particular rank realizing a function at the rank next below or at its own rank (Halliday 1961). For example, the clause *wearing those shoes* in *[[Wearing those shoes]] is wrecking my feet* is a downranked or embedded clause (indicated by a double square bracket) (cited from Martin et al. 2010: 17–18). Its internal organization identifies it as a clause – i.e. Predicator (*wearing*) followed by Complement (*those shoes*). Externally, however, it functions as the Subject of another clause – Subject (*wearing those shoes*), Finite (*is*), Predicator (*wrecking*), Complement (*my feet*). This is represented in the tree diagram in Figure 2.

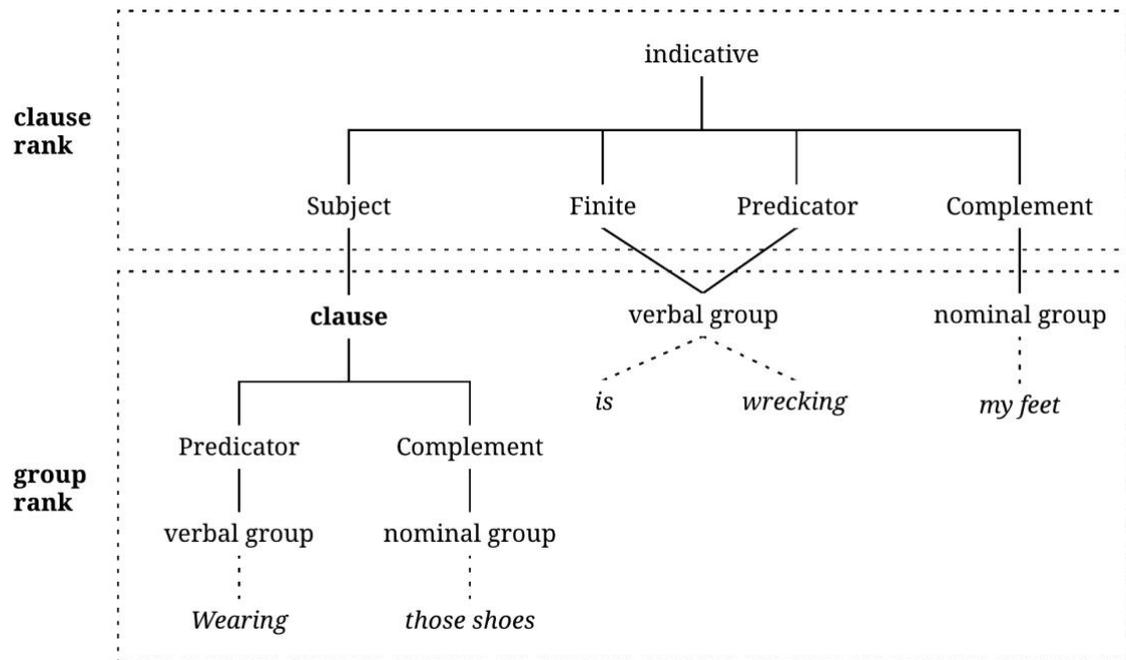


Figure 2 Embedding

The downward shift in rank (i.e. downranking) means that the embedded clause loses some of its status as a clause – e.g. it cannot select independently for MOOD. A rank-based model avoids describing such phenomenon as ‘the clause is used as a noun’, which does not specify the function of the unit. In Figure 2, the embedded clause realizes the Subject of the ranking clause, a function which is typically realized by a nominal group in English. Embedding will be used to further support the discourse-based interpretation of the realizations of TENSE in Khorchin Mongolian in Section 4.2 below.

Second, the model makes it possible to argue about how a particular system interacts with other systems. For example, the TENSE system (past, present, future) in English is described as a verbal group system (Halliday 1994; Halliday and Matthiessen 2014). i) It interacts with the system of SECONDARY TENSE (traditionally described as ASPECT in English) to generate verbal groups such as *is working*, *will be working*, *had been working*, *will have been going to have worked* and the like. ii) It is mutually exclusive with modal finite verbal groups such as *will work*, *must be working*, *should have been working* and so on. iii) The verbal groups generated by the systems realize functions at the rank next above – in our case the Predicator at clause rank.

- (32) *təŋul ətən jɛp-sən ɔn xutəl-sən ɔn jɛk-sən tɛ*
 if.so 3PL commute-PST.PTCP TOP move-PST.PTCP TOP what-PST.PTCP IP
 'If so, what about the ones that did commute?'

The embedded clauses in (31) and (32) present the propositions as non-negotiable – i.e. they are presupposed as support for the proposition construed by the main clause. In order to illustrate the non-negotiable status of the embedded clauses in (31), the interaction in which it occurred is provided in (33) below (the complete version of (24)). Readers are reminded that in this interaction T1 puts forward a claim about the reason as to why T2 has caught a cold, which is challenged by T2. The target clause is (33.5).

(33) between colleagues; T = Teacher

1. T1: *tʰi mən ətʰi ɔrɔɛ tʰɛpɔr t tʰɛtʰ-ətʰ jɛp-sɛr*
 2SG PROX early.morning night wind DAT drag-CVB commute-CONT
 'You've caught a cold because you kept commuting

pɛ:-tʰ ɛ:-kɛt kɛnmɔ-tʰɛ tʰi ja
 COP-PROG COP-PFV catch.a.cold-PST 2SG TOP
 in the wind of the early morning and night.'
2. T2: *kɔr t ən jɛp-ø lɛ tʰən tʰɛ xɛmɔ tʰɛ mɛ*
 home DAT POSS commute-PST.PTCP TEMP 3SG COM relation COM IP
 'What does my commuting from home have to do with that (=catching a cold)?'
3. T1: *tʰɔr ətʰi ɔrɔɛ xytʰən t*
 DIST morning night cold DAT
 '[It is known that] you'll be feeling cold

tɔ:r-tʰ pɔ:r-tʰ ɛ:-x wɛijɛŋ
 feel.cold-CVB shiver-PROG COP-NPST.PTCP MP
 in the morning and night.'
4. T1: *tʰɔr kɛnmɔ-x uɛ xɛ jɛp-ø i*
 DIST catch.a.cold-NPST.PTCP NEG where go-NPST.PTCP IP
 'What else would happen but to catch a cold?'
5. T2: *təŋul ətən jɛp-sən kuɛ*
 if.so 3PL commute-PST.PTCP NEG

xutɔl-sɔn ***kuɛ*** ***kɔn*** *je k-sɔn* *tɛ*
move-PST.PTCP **NEG** **TOP** what-PST.PTCP IP
 ‘If so, what about the ones that didn’t commute?’

6. T1: *pɛs* *kɛnmɔ-sɔn* *mɛ*
 also catch.a.cold-PST.PTCP IP
 ‘Did they also catch a cold?’

7. T2: *u:* *xɔ* *xutɔl-tʃ* *ʃɔl-x* *uɛ* *lɛ*
 INTJ all move-CVB be.able.to-NPST.PTCP NEG RES
 ‘They all become unable to move.’

In (33.6) and (33.7), the proposition that is carried forward is whether those who did not commute also caught a cold instead of whether they commuted or not. This is not to say that the interactants cannot further negotiate the proposition presented in the embedded clause. It would take more effort for them to do so – i.e. more back-&-forth turns, and the interactants would most likely come back to the proposition construed in the main clause.

The same reasoning applies to clauses downranked to function in nominal groups. In the interaction in (34) (the original version of (1)), the peasant is telling the government officials about the people who came to their house to determine if they qualify for low-income support from the government. The nominal groups in (34.3) and (34.5) that contain embedded clauses are highlighted in bold. Both embedded clauses give descriptions of the people who visited the peasant’s home.

(34) between government officials (O) and a peasant (P)

1. O1: *xɔn* *ir-s* *i:*
 who come-PST.PTCP IP
 ‘Who came?’

2. P: *korɔp* *turɔp* *xɔ* *tʃɛn-x* *uɛ*
 three four all know-NPST.PTCP NEG
 ‘Three or four; I don’t know any of them.’

3. P: ***tʃɔr*** ***utɔr*** ***mɛntɔl*** ***kɔ*** ***nɛ*** ***tʃɛ***
DIST **day** **Mandel** **brother** **GEN** **COM**

The young man who went to brother Mandel's home

tʰvɛmɛ tʰɛ tʰok ɔf-sɔn tʰɔr tʰɛlu pɛs pɛ:-n
2SG COM together go-PST.PTCP DIST young.man also COP-NPST
 with you the other day is also there.'

4. O1: ɔ:

INTJ

'Okay.'

5. P: *pɛs nɔk tʰirɔk nɛ ɔmɔt ɔms-tʃ ɛ:-sɔn xun pɛ:-nɛ*
tɔ:l
 also **one military GEN clothes wear- COP- people** COP-
PROG PST.PTCP NPST

'There is another person who was also wearing military uniform.'

6. O1: *utʃuɛŋpu nɛ xun ir-tʃ ʃitɔ*
 Armed.Force.Department GEN people come-PST MP
 '[I infer] people from the Armed Force Department came.'

7. O2: m:

INTJ

'Yes.'

TENSE in both embedded clauses in (34.3) and (34.5) is realized by the past participle suffix *-sɔn*. The propositions are construed as presumed and settled. The flow of the interaction also shows that it is concerned with who the people are, instead of whether one of the people who came was the young man who went to brother Mandel's home together with one of the government officials – as in (34.3) – or was that one wearing military uniform – as in (34.5).

To briefly summarize, in terms of embedding, the particular suffixes (participle or non-participle) that are used to realize TENSE are closely related to the speakers' assessment of the proposition as being settled or not. The participle suffixes in the context of embedding are associated with propositions that are conceived as settled or non-negotiable.

5. Notes on the location of TENSE

So far the interpersonal significance of TENSE in Khorchin Mongolian has been examined in its clausal context from the perspective of exchange structure and embedding. This section briefly notes the interaction of the TENSE system in relation with other relevant systems. It will be shown that the distinction between past and non-past is relevant to both the verbal group and the verb in Khorchin Mongolian, while the distinction between participle and non-participle suffix is a word rank contrast, the meanings of which has to be interpreted in relation to their functions in the larger units – e.g. clause – in their discourse context – as we did throughout Section 2 to 4.

5.1 TENSE as a verbal group system

TENSE in Khorchin Mongolian is a group rank system. This is shown by its interaction with the systems of ASPECT and POLARITY in verbal groups (Author 2020b). The interaction between two teachers in (35) exemplifies the co-selection of progressive aspect and past and non-past tense. The teachers are discussing the modes of transport a mother now uses and previously used to take her children to school. The progressive aspect is realized by the suffix *-tʃ* in the event verb and the following copula *ε*, which is affixed for TENSE. The verbal groups are highlighted in bold.

(35) between colleagues; T = teacher

1. T1: *sʃtʰin ni:tʃm motʰo kər jɛp-tʃ ε:n xoi*
 Secin always motorbike INS **commute-PROG** **COP-NPST** MP
 ‘[I saw that] Secin is always commuting by motorbike.’

2. *tʰɔr ixin ɣn ortʰe sɛnlo kər jɛp-tʃ ε:tʃ fɛ*
 DIST daughter 3POSS before trike INS **commute-PROG** **COP-PST** MP
 ‘[I know; you may know] her daughter was commuting (to school) by trike before.’

3. T2: *ukue sʃtʰin ni:tʃm motʰo kər jɛp-tʃ ε:nɛ*
 NEG Secin always motorbike INS **commute-PROG** **COP-NPST**
 ‘No, Secin is always commuting by motorbike.’

4. T1: *ukue sɛnlo kər pɛs jɛp-tʃ ɛ:-tʃ fo*
 NEG trike INS also **commute-PROG** **COP-PST** MP
 ‘No, [I know; you don’t know] (she was) also commuting by trike.’

5. T2: *ɔ:*
 Oh
 ‘Oh.’

The verbal groups in (35.1) and (35.3) are marked for progressive aspect and non-past tense. Those in (35.2) and (35.4) are marked for progressive aspect and past tense. When a verbal group marked for progressive aspect and past tense is negated, the participle suffix is used to realize TENSE in the copula; and the verbal group ends with the negation item *kuɛ* – as in (36).

- (36) *jɛp-tʃ ɛ:-sɔn kuɛ*
 commute-PROG COP-**PST.PTCP** **NEG**
 ‘was not commuting’

On the other hand, when a verbal group marked for progressive and non-past tense is negated, TENSE is not explicitly realized and the event verb is followed by *ukue* – as in (37).

- (37) *jɛp-tʃ ukue*
 commute-PROG **NEG**
 ‘is not commuting’

The interaction between TENSE, ASPECT, and POLARITY is formalized as a system network in Figure 3. The dash in ASPECT means that it is an optional system – i.e. a verbal group is not necessarily marked for ASPECT. The curly bracket represents a conjunctive AND relation. Note that participle and non-participle are not distinctive at group rank, but are distinguished at word rank as it is shown in Section 5.2 below.

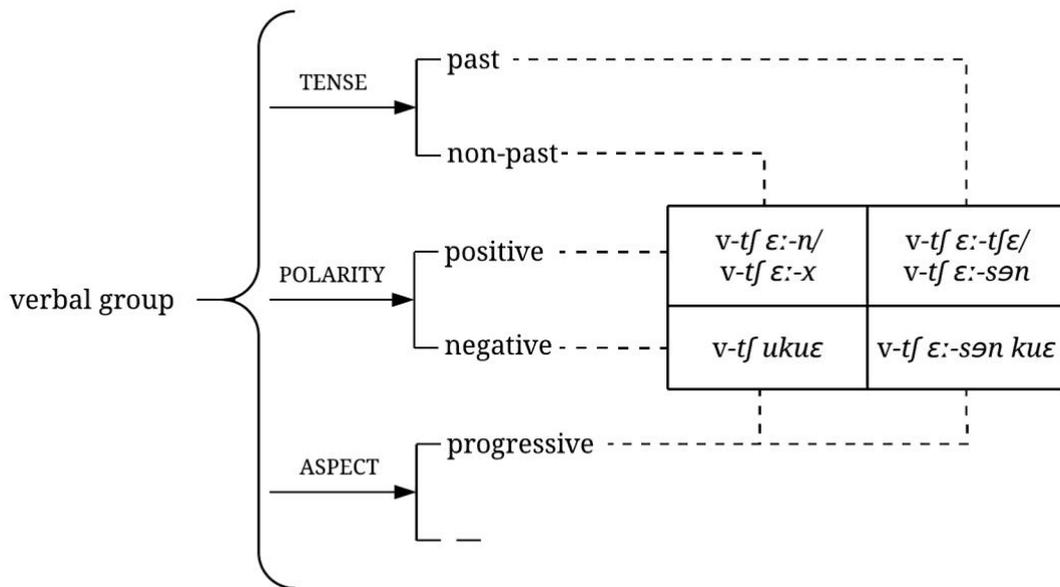


Figure 3 TENSE, ASPECT, and POLARITY at group rank

5.2 TENSE as a verb system

At word rank, the choice between past and non-past enters into a co-selecting relationship with the distinction between participle and non-participle. The participle-&-non-participle distinction is established based on the functions of verbs in both verbal groups and nominal groups.

When a verbal group is negative, TENSE in the head verb is realized by the participle suffix. This is exemplified in (38) below (repeating part of (15)). The participle tense suffixes and the following negation items are highlighted in bold.

(38) between husband (H) and wife (W); over cooking

1. W: *ən xə:lək tə:r tʰær-ul-ɔt tʰepə-ø*
 PROX steamer on circle-CAUS-PFV put-IMP
 'Put (the dumplings) on the steamer in a circle.'

2. H: *pi tʰep-x ue*
 1SG put-**NPST.PTCP** **NEG**
 'I won't.'

3. H: *pi fɛt-x ue*
 1SG know.how-NPST.PTCP NEG
 'I don't know how.'

4. W: *tʰi fɛt-əx im ukue*
 2SG know.how-NPST.PTCP thing NEG
 'There is nothing you know how to do.'

In (38.4) above, the wife responds to the husband's rejection by nominalizing the inability expressed in (38.3), i.e. *fɛt-əx im* 'know.how-NPST.PTCP thing'. In the nominal group, the verb *fɛt-əx* 'know.how-NPST.PTCP' is a modifier of the head noun *im* 'thing' as it is analysed in (39). The non-past tense is realized by the participle suffix *-əx*.

(39)	<i>fɛt-əx</i>	<i>im</i>
	know.how-NPST.PTCP	thing
	Modifier	Head
	verb	noun
	'things one knows how to do'	

The uses of the past participle suffix *-sən* in a nominal group and a negative verbal group are exemplified in (40) and (41) respectively.

(40) *ɔf-sən ketʰir*
 go-PST.PTCP place
 'places one went to'

(41) *ɔf-sən kue*
 go-PST.PTCP NEG
 'did not go'

Conversely, when the verb does not modify a noun and is positive, the non-participle suffix is used to realize TENSE. This is exemplified for non-past and past in (42) and (43). As it is discussed in Section 3 above, the participle suffix is also used with some modal and interrogative particles.

(42) *ɔf-ɔn*
 go-**NPST**
 ‘will go/goes’

(43) *ɔf-tʃɛ*
 go-**PST**
 ‘went’

The paradigm of TENSE at word rank thus established is formalized as a system network in Figure 4. The representative variants of the suffixes that realize options in TENSE are shown in the table.

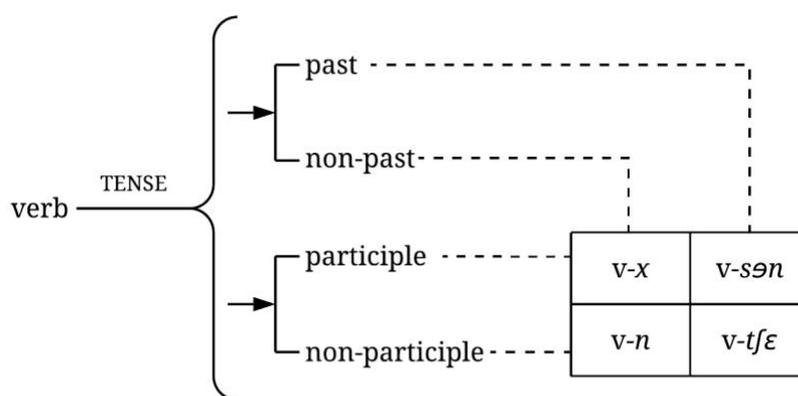


Figure 4 TENSE at word rank

6. Conclusions

This paper has examined the TENSE system in Khorchin Mongolian from an interpersonal perspective within the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics. The difference in meaning between the participle and non-participle realizations of TENSE has been interpreted in relation to the modal and interrogative particles they co-occur with in their clausal context by drawing on exchange structure analysis. The interpretation is further supported by the evidence of embedding. It has been argued that the non-participle tense suffixes in Khorchin Mongolian are associated with the process of settling propositions. In contrast, the participle tense suffixes are not associated with such a process except when the clauses they occur in involve tension between meaning and wording (i.e. grammatical metaphor). In doing so, the paper complements the existing studies on TENSE in (Khorchin) Mongolian, which are concerned mainly with the representation of events.

Apart from giving a systematic account of TENSE from an interpersonal perspective, the paper also demonstrates a methodology for investigating the meaning of morphemes in relation to their larger context of use. It provides an explicit description of the interaction between systems at different ranks that involves morphological realizations. When the meanings of the morphemes cannot be made fully explicit, considerations of the way grammatical resources function in discourse may provide additional insights that would have been obscured in a purely morphosyntactic approach.

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