

LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

PAST AND PERFECT IN MODERN MONGOLIAN

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1. *Introductory.*

You may recall how in Stevenson's *Treasure Island* the "old sea dog" Billy Bones came to the Admiral Benbow Inn, thus setting off a series of events which led to the voyage of the ship *Hispaniola* to Treasure Island. Billy Bones' one great fear had been a blind sailor on a pegleg, who inevitably arrived one day to claim Bones' booty. Alas for Pew of the wooden leg and his confederates: Billy was already dead from rum; his hoard and his treasure map had gone with a very frightened Jim Hawkins. When Pew urged his men into the inn to look for Billy, bellowing in rage, "In, in, in!",

Four or five of them obeyed at once, two remaining on the road with the formidable beggar. There was a pause, then a cry of surprise, and then a voice shouting from the house: ---
"Bill üxcixjee!"^{1,2} (Stivenson 28.2.2)³ In the original they shouted, "Bill's dead!"

There are two interesting points about the translation of "Bill's dead!" by "Bill üxcixjee!" The first is that the English *present* tense is being glossed by a Mongolian *past* tense. The second point requires us to look further ahead to that magnificent chapter wherein Jim encounters the unfortunate Ben Gunn who has been marooned for three years on the deserted island. Of course Gunn begs Jim to take him off and offers to lead him to the famous treasure if he will. But, as Jim recounts,

. . . at this there came suddenly a lowering shadow over his face, and he tightened his grasp upon my hand, and raised a forefinger threateningly before my eyes.

"Now, Jim, tell me true: that ain't Flint's ship?," he asked.

(Chapter 15)

To which Jim replies, "Flintijn xölög biš. Flint üxcixsen." (Stivenson 85.6.2)⁴ In the English he says, "It's not Flint's ship, and Flint is dead." Once again the English present becomes the Mongolian past, but in this instance, although the root *üx-* and stem affix *-cix-* remain the same, the translator uses *-sen* instead of *-jee*.

Now why does this happen? We shall see that there is a method in the use of these two forms. In fact, this question is as good an introduction as any to the general question of the use of the Mongolian tenses, and specifically the three so-called past tenses, *-jee*, *-ev*, and *-lee*.⁵ At one point (p.92) Sanžeev was led to state that "the differences between [the three past tense] forms, which are almost imperceptible, are still debated by students of Mongolian; the three past tense forms are used interchangeably." I do not think, however, that Sanžeev meant to say this, since elsewhere, for example in his book on the

comparative grammar of the verb in Mongolian languages, he clearly shows that they are not used interchangeably and that the difference between them is hardly imperceptible. In fact, the three forms are quite different in use, and one of my purposes here is to describe their differences and to place those differences within the context of a linguistic theory. This is not to say that an adequate theory of tenses exists, but there are certainly valuable observations which can be made within a self-consistent framework.

Furthermore, as we have seen, there is a close connection between the so-called perfective ending *-sen* and these past tense endings. Is *-sen* (used predicatively) precisely equivalent to any one of these endings, or is it yet a fourth way of referring to the past? And if the English present (and perfect, as we shall see) can be translated by at least one of the past tense endings, in this case *-jee*, is there any distinction in Mongolian between the perfect and the past as tenses? My second purpose is to hazard an answer to this further question.

2. Meaning and use.

Let us start by demonstrating that the three past tenses are certainly not used interchangeably. First of all, every grammar book, including those written by native speakers in Mongolia, distinguish them. For example, the past (*öngörsön cag*) is split up into the *öngörön tögssön* tense (the *-ev* form), the *öngörön ürgeļjilsen* tense (the *-jee* form), and the *sajaxan tögssön* tense (the *-lee* form).⁶ In my informant work with a native speaker these forms were likewise shown to differ in numerous ways, some of which I will return to later.

Supporting these distinctions is the evidence of translations from or into Mongolian. The *-jee* form is almost always coordinated with a present or the perfect which marks a result. Thus Vietze translates *öngörüüljee* 'ist stehengeblieben' (Vietze 26.3), and *ene cag javaxaa bol'jee* 'die Uhr geht nicht mehr. . . .' (Vietze 145.3).⁸ Poppe translates, however, *baidž* 'es lebte' (Poppe 1955, 188.1) and *xīdž* 'veranstaltete'.⁹ In translations of Turgenev, Cervantes, and Mao seems consistently to gloss forms equivalent to the perfect;¹⁰ thus a sentence in Mao ending *bolojee* (Mao 3.5) ends in the English translation 'has brought' (I have not had the original Chinese checked). In the *Treasure Island* translation, *-jee* is often used to gloss presents and perfects but also past tenses.

The *-lee* form also often glosses presents and perfects. Vietze translates *namdlaa* 'hat sich gelegt' (Vietze 32.4) and Poppe *dūrlē* 'ist zu Ende' (Poppe 1955, 190.7); the common expression *bajarlalaa* is roughly equivalent to our 'thank you' (Vietze 23.9 ff.).¹¹ However, *-lee* has past and even future glosses as well.

While *-ev* can gloss or be glossed by present and perfect, as when Vietze translates *juu bolov*¹² (Vietze 19.6) by 'was ist los?', a past translation is more usual, and in the literary language at least there is generally a careful distinction between, say, *suusan*, glossed by Vietze 'steckengeblieben' (Vietze 41.6) and *suučiṣav*, used to translate Turgenev (Sodov 340.12) where the English translation has 'sat down'.¹³

If further proof is required that the tenses differ, we need only consider their use in texts of different sorts. In folktales, for example, a great many sentences end in *-jee*. Thus in the story *Uraṇ Guā Dagīn* (Poppe 1955, 188-223), of the first fifty sentences in the narration, excluding the *genē* 'they say'

which is purely a narrative device, eighteen end in *-jee*, twenty-five in *-ev*, and seven in other endings. It is interesting to note that most of the *-ev* forms occurred within the scope of *genē*. On the other hand, in the quotes embedded in the story, *-jee* is rare. Of the first fifty quoted sentences, only one ends in *-jee*, four in *-ev*, and forty-five in other forms. Clearly *-jee* is used here as a narrative-forwarding device. Compare this with the more descriptive style of newspapers, specifically *Ünen*.¹⁴ Here events in the past are almost as likely to occur with the ending *-ev*. In an article on the visit of a Russian dignitary to the Mongolian People's Republic (Montgomery 3-10), *-ev* ends four sentences, *-jee* nine, and other forms (including several *-lee*'s) fifty. In the style of an author of a school textbook on foreign literature (Sandag), *-jee* is preferred over *-ev* for such statements as *Tomas Mor . . . ömgööldөгө байjee* 'Thomas More was an advocate' (Sandag 67) and *1564 оны 4 дүгээр сарын 23-нд төрjee* 'he [that is, Shakespeare] was born on April 23, 1564' (Sandag 68).

Are these purely stylistic devices? In part this may be so, just as our sportswriters, financial reporters, news reporters, and novelists prefer to use different perspectives in reporting events.¹⁵ Yet underlying these various usages there must be real differences, just as there is a real difference underlying the virtual synonymy of "is he back yet?" and "has he come back yet?" in English.

There are more substantive facts that argue to a contrast in usage for the various past tense forms. First, all of the forms can be used in questions, and to each statement there is a corresponding question, e.g., *ted суусан uu?* 'they sat,' *ted суусан uu?* 'they sat?' However, the questions, like the statements, do not serve the same purposes. WH-questions seeking information, e.g., *juu болов* 'what happened?,' and yes-no questions, asking facts, e.g., *Ene цин' Flintийн xөлөг үү?* (Stivenson 85.6.1) 'that ain't Flint's ship?,' more literally, 'this thing of yours, is it Flint's ship?,'¹⁶ take *-ev*. They are usually answered with *-sen* in the colloquial language; thus the answer to *Ta xaanaas irev?* 'Where did you come from?' might be *Bi xotoos irsen* 'I came from the city.'¹⁷ (Hangin 10).

On the other hand, *-lee* is rarely used in questions. One example occurs when the rebelling (and superstitious) buccaneers, who have come to give Long John Silver the dreaded Black Spot, are chided by him for putting it on a sheet torn from a Bible:

"Ah, there!," said Morgan --- "there!

Wot did I say? No good'll come o' that,

I said." (Chapter 29)

In Mongolian Morgan asks rhetorically, "Bi juu гэж xellee?"¹⁸

While most of the grammars and studies I consulted have examples of *-jee* in questions, like those I am about to cite, examples of *-jee* in real questions seem uncommon in actual text. Consider Ramstedt's *t'a ynt'božū* 'schließen Sie (soeben)?' (Ramstedt 18);¹⁹ Beffa's *ter garc uu* 'est-il sorti?' (Beffa 83); Kasjanenko's *xaa očiž* 'kuda pošël?' (Kasjanenko 20). Hangin notes, however, that in asking *Ter xooloo idej үү?* 'Did he eat his dinner?' one is asking "Did you see or find out?," which differs from merely asking if he had eaten dinner. (Hangin 114) In fact, questions with *-jee* appear in texts mainly with the quotative verb *ge-* and are almost entirely either rhetorical or confirmation-seeking echo questions, a notable exception in the texts being the folkloric

tšamad xamā baidžū 'Was geht es dich an?' (Poppe 1955, 152.5.2).^{20,21} But in nearly all examples only *gej* occurs. At one point in *Fathers and Sons* (Chapter 27), for example, Bazarov asks his father for some caustic, saying that he had cut his finger and it might become (or already had become) infected. When he says that four hours have already passed, his father asks, "Didn't the district doctor have any lunar caustic?": . . . *xošuuny emčid tamyn čuluu bajsangūj gej üü?* (Sodov 360.3),²² suggesting that he cannot quite believe that he had not. Similarly, Chairman Mao inquires, "Have people not seen or heard about these facts?" (English version, p. 74) --- *xümüüs edgeer barimtuudyg duulj xaraagūj gej üü?* (Mao 77.4).²³ Notice the negative in the English translations, suggestive of doubt, seeking confirmation: surely the doctor had caustic, surely everyone knows these facts. When he harangues his hostile crew, Long John Silver brings up their idea of killing Jim Hawkins. He says, "Are we a-going to waste a hostage? No, not us; he might be our last chance. . . . Kill that boy? Not me, mates!" (Chapter 29). The Mongolian has *Ene xüüg alax gej üü?*,²⁴ as if he were questioning a suggestion right before him. Questions with *gej* often correspond to English questions with negatives²⁵ or which presuppose the hearer's previous statements or attitudes.²⁶

Yet other facts are clear indications of the differences between the tenses and are reflexes of those differences, often being cited in grammars in conjunction with descriptions of purported uses of the forms. Thus Poppe 1951 and Hangin, for example, observe that the *-jee* form usually occurs in the third person though, as we have seen, that is not invariably the case. Ramstedt, Poppe 1951, and Street observe that *-lee* is not used with a second person subject. In fact, in its "future" use it is rather restricted to the first person, though Mao has *Impērialistuud urt naslaxgūj bolloo*.²⁷ (Mao 80.2) 'Imperialism (lit. imperialists) will not last long. . . .' There are no such restrictions on *-ev* or *-sen*.

A similar fact has to do with negation. Generally, in the modern literary and colloquial languages, no finite indicative tense form ever occurs negated, though in the literary language one occasionally sees the indicatives with the old negatives *es* or *ül*.²⁸ Instead, participles with the ending *-gūj* 'less' (from *ügūj*, 'without') are used. The three past tenses all are negated with *-sen*, the perfect participle, plus *-gūj*. Thus when asked the negation of (1a), the native informant gave (1b); a similar response occurred for (2). (1b) is of course the negation of (3).

(1a) *End olon xün bajv*. 'Here there were many people.'²⁹ (Notes 14)³⁰

(1b) *End olon xün bajsangūj*.

(2a) *Olon xün tend bajlaa*. 'Many people were there.'

(2b) *Olon xün tend bajsangūj*.

(3) *End olon xün bajsan*.³¹

It is interesting that while the *-jee* form likewise usually is negated with *-sen* + *-gūj*, the informant tended at times to negate it using the imperfect or continuous participle in *-ee* or the perfect converbal in *-eed*.³²

(4a) *Öglöö boljee*. 'It became morning.'

(4b) *Öglöö boloo(d)gūj*. 'It hasn't yet become morning.'

(5) *Bi idee(d)gūj*. 'I haven't eaten yet.' (Notes 26)³³

Another interesting fact is that the so-called future use of *-lee*, like the non-past tense form in *-ne*, can be negated using the future participle or

infinitive in *-ex*: thus the informant negated (6a) as (6b):

(6a) *Bi odoo javlaa*. 'I'm going now.' (Said when you have not actually started.)

(6b) *Odoo bi javaxgūj*.³⁴ 'Now I'm not going to go.' (Notes 22)³⁵ Note, however, that (6b) while the negation of (6a), is not precisely its negation.

The foregoing arguments serve, I hope, to demonstrate that the verb forms in question do differ in *use*. But do they differ in *meaning*? There is good reason, in fact, to believe that they do not.

First, under negation, nominalization, and embedding, the distinction between the forms is neutralized, and the only past (or perfect) forms which occur are, respectively, the perfect participle in *-sen* and the perfect gerund in *-eed*. Thus all the statements in (7) receive, under general conditions, the negation (8), they all form relative clauses as in (9); they all nominalize as in (10), and when embedded in an adverbial syntactic position, they all appear as in either (11a) or (11b).³⁶

(7a) *Luvсан irev*.

(7b) *Luvсан irġee*.

(7c) *Luvсан irlee*.

'Luvсан came.'

(8) *Luvсан irsengūj*. 'Luvсан didn't come.'

(9) *Ter irsen xīn Luvсан gedeg*. 'The man who came is called Luvсан.'

(10) *Irsenij n' bid medeġ bajna*. 'We know that he came.'

(11a) *Luvсанy irsend, bid tend bajsangūj*. 'When Luvсан came, we weren't there.'

(11b) *Luvсан ireed, bid tend bajsangūj*. 'Luvсан came and we weren't there.'³⁷

Rather than analyze this as neutralization of semantic oppositions, we should say that some distinction is being lost and ask ourselves what sort of distinction can be, and is, lost in these positions.

If the forms in question differed in meaning, it ought to be the case that there were conditions under which at least one of them would be true and at least one of them at the same time false; that is, there ought to be at least one situation describable by one alone of the three forms. If we examine the forms in question we see that in fact this cannot be. Any of the situations expressed by *-lee* or *-ġee* can be expressed by *-ev*. It may be that not every sentence with one or the other of these forms is directly translatable into one in *-ev*: there may be some adverbs, subject pronouns, etc., that can co-occur with *-ġee*, say, but not with *-ev*. However, this need not imply a *semantic* difference.

As regards these two forms, they again do not describe distinct states of the world. If I say *Luvсан irġee* or *Luvсан irlee*, outside of context there is simply no difference: all we learn is that at some time in the past a man called Luvсан came. It is true that there are minor semantic differences between these forms, but I am concerned here with their central differences.

What we find is that the difference in *use* of these forms has nothing to do with the event described, as such, and those commentators who try to make it do so are wrong. Rather, as others have more correctly suggested, the difference is in the way the speaker views the event. If the event is something the

speaker is vouching for, or is information which is well-known and stated not to convey new information but for another purpose, the *-lee* form may be used. If the event is presumptive or stated as suddenly acquired knowledge, the *-jee* form is used. *-ev* is attitudinally neutral.

We can now explain the difference between our earlier examples *üxcixjee* and *üxcixsen*. It is not that the pirate in shouting "Bill *üxcixjee*!" is making any claim about the time of Bill's death or its nature; he is stating that Bill *has* died, thereby implying that he *is* dead, and incidentally informing us that he has just found out. (But in context we know this.) It would be odd for him to have shouted, "Bill *üxcixlee*!"; this presupposes that this is known already, not only to him, but to us. If he had shouted, "Bill *üxcixev*" or "Bill *üxcixsen*,"³⁸ this would be a little odd, and probably would be more appropriate in a context where the question of Bill's death had already come up, though which he was, dead or alive, remained unknown. When Jim tells Ben Gunn that Flint is dead, *üxcixsen*, he merely states a fact; he neither assumes that Ben knows this nor does he state that it is new information to himself.

If we accept that the differences of use of these forms are not differences of meaning, but rather differences of what we should call discourse pragmatics, then we have a ready explanation for the contexts of their neutralization and for the highly marked nature of questions with these forms. It is the function of declarative sentences to make statements, but the force of statements may or may not be to provide new information. The function of questions may be to request new information, or it may not. Thus the questions in *gej* do not request new information any more than rhetorical questions in English do.

The importance of the sort of analysis I have just given is, as I see it, to enable us to clarify the problems of the past tense forms in Mongolian. For far too long there has been no attempt to provide argumentation or a theoretical underpinning for the rather vague and impressionistic statements of scholars, however correct or important these statements may be. I do not pretend, as I have said, to provide an adequate theory or a definitive solution, but I hope that I have turned the discussion in a new and, I hope, more fruitful direction.

3. *Perfect and past.*³⁹

Let us return now to the perfect. My claim is that the use of terms like "perfect(ive) past" for the indicative forms is incorrect, and that they have no direct semantic content which such a term can explicate. At the same time I have admitted (a) that in numerous contexts *-sen* or *-eed*, the perfect(ive) verbal nominal (or participle) and gerund respectively, appear in place of the finite indicative forms, and (b) that in the colloquial spoken language *-sen* replaces *-ev* in statements (though not in questions, where *-ev* contrasts with *-sen*). How is it, if the finite indicatives really lack semantic content, that *-sen* can replace them? And what about the distinction between past and perfect? Is it unreal? If not, what do these facts say about it?

Here we must observe that in fact the indicative forms do not completely lack semantic content. Even if they do not *assert* aspectual (and hence semantic) relations, they "implicate" them (here I am using a technical term).⁴⁰ For example,

if I am involved in the discovery of a fact, it is *likely* that the fact has only recently come about. But it is no part of the meaning of the *-jee* form, say, that this is so. More importantly, though, all three past tenses do assert that the event, E, preceded the time of the speech act, S. Otherwise we should be able to use the present-future form. But while at any given point S_1 it might be true, say, that Billy Bones will die, or is dying, it is not necessarily true at S_1 that he has died or even has been dying.

This explains how the past tense forms can be replaced by *-sen* and *-eed*, for these forms are purely aspectual, and merely assert that E preceded some other event E_2 . Normally the past indicative tense is used when $E_2 = S$, but in the predicative use of *-sen* it can be assumed that $E_2 = S$; there is an implicit copula even when *bajna* 'is' is deleted which, in the colloquial language, is normal in unmarked situations. Aspectually the finite forms and the non-finite differ only in the assumption that $E_2 = S$. Thus *-sen* and *-ev* are essentially fully equivalent, since *-ev* merely maps, atop the precedence relation of aspect, a relatively neutral temporality. Temporal oppositions, however, play no role in other than the positions finite verbs occur in, namely where they are used as main-clause verbs to make assertions, etc. (See Binnick concerning main-clause phenomena.)

I might note in passing that current semantics-based theories of tense can provide no explanation for these facts, since they do not refer to a relationship of E to S. Furthermore, they do not take into account pragmatics at all.⁴¹

This leaves us one final puzzle. In the modern literary language *-ev* and predicative *-sen* are distinct in both declarative and interrogative sentences. Moreover, even in the colloquial language they are distinct in questions, since questions with predicative *-sen* do occur:

- (12) *Či nögöö emee uusan biz? Ene er emee uusan uu, ta min'?*
'Did you take that medicine? Did he take that medicine, men?' (Stivenson 166.7.8; Chapter 30)⁴²
- (13) *Xüü min', xaasaa javsan ve?*⁴³
'Which way [was he walking], sonny?' (Stivenson 11.2.1; Chapter 2)⁴⁴
- (14) *Bié agsajj čičirsен үү?*
'Have you had chills, too?'⁴⁵ (Sodov 360.16.1; Chapter 27)⁴⁶

What these examples clearly show is that the *-sen* form has a distinction from the preterite that we have not mentioned, and that this distinction is always indicated in questions, though it need not be in statements. With *uu*, *-sen* is used roughly like the English perfect to indicate an event which happened prior to S but at no definite time, whereas *-ev* points to a definite point in time as in the following examples; thus some scholars, e.g., Bosson, refer to the *-ev* form as the "definite past tense."

Compare the following examples:⁴⁷

- (15) *Či öčigdör nom unšiv uu?*
'Hast du gestern ein Buch gelesen?' (Vietze 44)
- (16) *Mitjuxa ene erxem saja čamajg juu gej xočilsnyg duulav uu?*
'D'you hear that, Mitya? . . . Hear what the gentleman called yer?' (Sodov 345.7.1; Chapter 2)⁴⁸
- (17) *Neg nusā gōdžūlsan mū xūg üdzewü ta?*
'Haben Sie einen erbärmlichen Bengel gesehen, dem Rotz aus der Nase heraushängt?' (Poppe 1955, 192.2.12)⁴⁹

(18) *Xāgūr xāgūr jawadž, soniŋ saixan jum dūlwū?*

'Wo bist du gereist? Hast du [auch] irgend etwas Interessantes und Gutes gehört?' (Poppe 1955, 208.2.5)⁵⁰

In (15) *᠔ciᠭdör* provides a definite context; in (16) the just-uttered statement provides the definite context; (18) is uttered in the context of a previous statement concerning the hearer's travels. Even (17) may be explicable in terms of a definite period of time, since it doesn't mean "have you *ever* seen. . . .," etc., but applies to a certain pragmatically defined stretch of time.

It should not surprise us that predicative *-sen* should differ in this way from *-ev*, which is neutral relative to *-jee* and *-lee*, but clearly has this additional force. Nor should we be surprised by the loss of the distinction in statements which happens elsewhere, e.g., in American English where "went" can mean "has gone," although a precise explication of this demands further study.

4. Conclusion.

I have been concerned here with investigating the uses and mutual relationships of four forms used in Mongolian today to refer to events in the past. If I have done nothing else, I hope that I have demonstrated that these forms do not contrast in the time of the event referred to, nor in its aspectual nature, but basically differ in the discourse pragmatic function to which the speaker puts them. I hope that now we can begin to develop a deeper and more soundly established theory of the Mongolian, and hence the Altaic, verb system.⁵¹

Notes

1. Examples from the modern literary language in Cyrillic script have been transliterated as follows, the Cyrillic letters becoming, respectively,

a b v g d é ě j z i j k l m n o ö p r s t u ü f x c č š šč " y ' e ju (or jü) ja.

2. Literal gloss: die(*ūx-*)+suddenly/completely(*-ci-x-*)+FI. The following symbols and abbreviations are used in the literal glosses:

+	morpheme boundary	impf	imperfect(ive)
/	or	inf	infinitive
abl	ablative	neg	negation
acc	accusative	part	particle (function unspecified)
caus	causative		
CL	converbal (gerund)	pass	passive
com	comitative	pf	perfect(ive)
cop	copula	PL	plural
dat	dative	Q	yes-no question particle
FI	finite indicative	RP	reflexive-possessive ("own")
	ending	VN	verbal noun (participle)
gen	genitive		

3. The sources are given at the end of the paper. Generally the first number is the page, the last the sentence or example, and the middle, if any, the paragraph. I have given only the chapter or section for non-Mongolian texts where editions will differ in pagination.

4. Gloss: Flint+gen(*-ijn*) ship not. Mongolian omits the present cop here.

-sen is literally a pf VN; strictly speaking a present auxiliary cop has been deleted here, but in the colloquial language, at least, -sen is often used predicatively and, as we shall see, normally substitutes for the past in -ev.

5. -jee does not change for vowel harmony; -ev and -lee have four forms each, with a, o, ö, or e. -jee also appears as -cee, -č, and -j. For details of the morphophonology, see Street, Poppe 1951, or Poppe 1970.

6. Literally, 'completed passing,' 'prolonged passing,' and 'just completed.' Slight variants of these terms are cited by several authors, e.g., Vietze, Beffa, and in various Mongolian publications, e.g., Š. Luvsanvandan, ed., *Orčim Cagijn Mongol Xel Züj* (Ulaanbaatar, 1966), pp. 148-153.

7. Yidamjab Meng.

8. *öngörүүл-* is actually the caus (-үүл-) of *öngör-* 'pass.' Gloss of second example: this clock go(jav-)+inf(-ax)+RP cease(bol'-)+FI.

9. Poppe 1955 uses a phonemicized transcription; *baidž* = our *bajž* (baj- 'be'); *xīdž* = *xijž* (xij- 'do, make').

10. I have not investigated the originals, but this seems true from an examination of the corresponding English translations.

11. *Bolgo-* is the caus of *bol-* 'become, happen'; *namd-* 'calm down'; *düür-* (cf. note 9) 'end, stop'; *bajarla-* 'rejoice' (cf. *bajar*, 'happy').

12. Gloss: what happen+FI.

13. *suu-* 'sit, live'; *-čix-* 'suddenly/completely.' It should be noted that this stem affix also occurs with -sen, as we saw with *üxcixsen*. The form in -sen has numerous non-predicative uses; -ev is only predicative. In its non-predicative uses, -ev is unambiguously a perfect, i.e., *öngörsөн жил* means 'last year; the year (which is) past/has passed.' However, even here a preterite gloss is possible, e.g., *tend suusan xün* 'person who sat there.'

14. This is the Mongolian equivalent of *Pravda*; its name likewise means 'truth.'

15. See pp. 191-192 in Sanžeev's *Sravnitel'naja Grammatika Mongol'skix Jazykov* --- *Glagol* (Moscow: Izd. Vostočnoj Literatury, 1963) concerning the "free" use of the -jee form as a purely stylistic device. For the "free" use of tenses, an interesting article on another Altaic language is Özcan Başkan's "Interchangeability of tenses in colloquial Turkish" (*Litera* 9, Ankara, 1968), pp. 4-8. Also in H. E. Brekle and L. Lipka, eds., *Wortbildung, Sprache, und Morphologie* (The Hague: Mouton, 1968).

16. *ömgööлө-* 'defend'; *-gč* is the agent nominalizer. Glosses: 1564 year+gen (-y) 4+-th month(<moon)+gen(-yn) (4th month = April) on-the-23rd(23-nd) be-born (*tör-*). They sit/live+pf-VN; they sit/live+pf-VN Q. What happen+FI. This your Flint+gen ship Q.

17. Glosses: you(PL) where+abl(with -n-) come+FI. I city+abl come+pf-VN.

18. Gloss: I what *gej* (quotative particle) say+FI.

19. = our *ta untaž uu*. Gloss: you(PL) sleep+FI Q.

20. Glosses: he(lit. the/that-one) go-out+FI Q; where go-to+FI; he food/meal +RP eat+FI W. Poppe's example is *čamad xamaa bajž uu*. Gloss: you+dat affair be+FI Q. Here 'be'+dat = possessive, 'do you have any affairs?'

21. James Bosson in a personal communication suggested these might be impf CL forms in elliptical sentences. This is certainly possible, as the two forms are identical. However, the existence of -jee questions cited by various authors plus the distribution of the questions in dispute suggests that they are not elliptical; certainly the glosses do not suggest this.

22. *Xošuu(n)* 'district' + gen(-y); *emč* 'doctor'; *tamyn čuluu* is lit. 'stone of hell' (lunar caustic is silver nitrate); *bajsangüj* 'hasn't been'; *gej* 'saying'; *üü* is Q.

37. Glosses of (9-11b):(9) the come+pf-VN person Luvsan is-usually-called; (10) come+pf-VN+acc the/his we know+impf-CL be+FI; (11a) Luvsan+gen come+pf-VN+dat, we there be+pf-VN+neg; (11b) Luvsan come+pf-CL, we there be+pf-VN+neg.

38. Usually a preterite assumes a definite time, whereas a perfect does not. Thus in British English "he went home" cannot answer (i), though it can answer (ii); "He's gone home" can answer (i), but not (ii).

(i) Where's Bill? (I don't see him.)

(ii) What did Bill do when Sue stood him up for their date?

(She was supposed to meet him at the club.)

I am not certain whether *-ev* and *-sen* differ in this way in either the colloquial spoken or the more literary written languages of today.

39. The details of the pragmatic conditions on the use of the tense terms are omitted in this version. They are being prepared for a future, complete version of this paper.

40. "Implicate" is used here in lieu of "imply" to indicate that the implication is by certain types of logical principles called "implicatures." See, e.g., Ruth M. Kempson, *Presupposition and the Delimitation of Semantics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975).

41. I am thinking of both theories in the tradition of Otto Jespersen's *Language* and Hans Reichenbach's *Elements of Symbolic Logic*, and logical theories, be they model-theoretic approaches to natural language or modal/temporal logics. Recent work by Elizabeth Riddle promises, however, to provide a pragmatic theory of tense with considerable explanatory power. A fuller discussion will be provided in the final version of this paper.

42. *Či* 'you,' *nögöö* 'this, that,' *emee* 'own medicine,' *uu-* 'drink,' *biz* (copular particle with a certain pragmatic force of supposition), *ene* 'this,' *er* 'man,' *ta* 'you,' *min* 'my.'

43. *Ve* is described (Poppe 1951, 96) as a "copula" used in WH-questions. Its precise syntactic analysis is unclear, though Street 126 ff. treats it as merely an interrogative particle like *uu*. He does note, however, that it usually appears in truncated sentences--thereby suggesting a treatment like Poppe's--though he also gives examples with copula, e.g., *nom xaa bajna ve?* 'where's the book?'

44. *Xüü* 'boy,' *min* 'my,' *xaasaa* 'where to,' *jav-* 'go.'

45. Here the English translation is more useful than the Russian original, since the past ending in Russian also has perfect meaning.

46. *Biē* 'body/self,' *agzaj-* 'shiver,' *čičir-* 'tremble with cold,' *üü* Q.

47. Cf. the following example where *bolov*, although past, really has present force: *Tany aldar nerijg medej boloxson bolov uu?* Lit.: your family-name name+acc(-ijg) know+impf-CL become+inf+perfect become+FI Q. 'May I ask your name and patronymic?' (Sodov 344.9.3; Chapter 2). Cf. Poppe 1955, 188.2.9, 188.5.4.

48. *Či* 'you,' *öčigdör* 'yesterday,' *nom* 'book,' *unš-* 'read,' *ene* 'this,' *erxem* 'gentleman,' *saja* 'just now,' *čamaig* 'you'(acc), *juu* 'what,' *gej* 'saying,' *xočil-* 'give a nickname to'+pf-VN+acc(-yg), *duul-* 'hear.'

49. = our *Neg nusaa gočjuulsan muu xüüg üzev üü ta?* one mucous+RP drip+caus+pf-VN bad boy+acc see+FI Q you(PL). The *ta* is a postponed subject, not merely a vocative. This is a rare exception to the rule that nothing can follow the Q.

50. = our *Xaaguur xaaguur javaj, sonin sajxan jum duulav uu?*

where where go+impf-CL news fair thing hear+FI Q

51. I would like to thankfully acknowledge the assistance of Mr. Yidamjab

Meng which contributed much to this work. It has been a pleasure to have the opportunity to pick his brains and native intuitions.

At the conference a number of interesting comments were made on the paper. Two by Professor Poppe are worth noting here. First, with the *-jee* form there is sometimes the sense "it turned out that" or "it turned out after all that." The second comment was that example *Ene cag javaxaa bol'jee* is literally 'has ceased to work' and could equally well have been glossed "hat aufgehört zu gehen." He went on to say that often there is an interchange of meanings, as regards such Mongolian examples in English or German gloss, between present, perfect, or even preterite tenses. I thank all who had observations to make during the discussion period.

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