

## Chapter 2

### Methodology

This chapter is an explanation of the methodology used for the present thesis. First, in section 2.1, there is a description of the main literature on Santa Mongolian, as well as related languages, and a discussion on the main topics relative to verbs in Santa. In section 2.2, there is a review of the linguistics literature relevant to this thesis. Finally, in section 2.3, there is an exposition on the data collection method and a description of the data itself.

#### 2.1 Santa Literature Review

There have been only a few publications on Santa Mongolian, the most relevant ones are briefly commented on this section. According to Kim (2003), the first publication giving Santa the status of an independent language is by Potanin in 1983. The first author that has specifically dealt with Santa grammar was the Russian linguist Todaeva, who wrote a several papers on grammar and ethnology. A main paper from this author is called *Dongxiangyu* (1980) in Chinese, which is grammar sketch with texts and a short lexicon – the author uses Cyrillic alphabet to write Santa.

Other Chinese authors have also made an effort to describe Santa. Special mention must be made to Liu Zhaoxiong's *Dongxiangyu Jianzhi (Notes on Dongxiang Language)*. This book provides an overview of Santa Mongolian. It is divided into three sections: phonology, vocabulary and grammar. Another important book is *Dongxiangyu Lunji*, edited by Hao Sumin. This book is a collection of articles by different Chinese linguists on Santa Mongolian's phonology and grammar. The main Chinese researcher on Santa is by far Buhe, who wrote three important books: *Dongxiangyu he Mengguyu (Dongxiang and Mongolian languages)*, where the Buhe provides a grammar sketch on Santa Mongolian, comparing it to Khalka Mongolian; *Dongxiangyu cihui (Lexicon of Dongxiang Language)*, where the Buhe provides a large lexicon of Santa; and *Dongxiangyu Huayu Cailiao*, a collection of texts and stories in Santa. More recently, a dictionary Santa-Mandarin has been produced by Ma & Chen, in 2001.

Two foreign researchers have made major contributions for the description of Santa grammar. *Dongxiangyu Cifa Yanjiu (A Study of Dongxiang Morphology)*, by Stephen S.

Kim, is a doctoral dissertation, produced in Chinese. It is the most comprehensive and deep Santa Mongolian grammar produced to date. Its main focus is on the morphology but it also provides very interesting insights on the phonology and the syntax. Kim has also published an article in 2003. Even though it is a very short paper, it is quite comprehensive, giving an overview on Santa Grammar. Finally, Kenneth Fields wrote a doctoral dissertation in 1997, which covers various different topics, including an interesting study on event-switch markers. This, alongside with Kim's paper, are the only material published in English.

### 2.1.1 Literature on Related Languages

The main materials produced on related languages used in this thesis were:

- *The Mongolic languages*, edited by Juha Janhune. It is a very comprehensive book with one article on the grammar of almost all Mongolic languages. It also has a discussion on proto-Mongolic, on the taxonomy of Mongolic languages and the relationship between Turkic and Mongolic languages.
- *A grammar of Mangghuer: A Mongolic language of China's*, by Keith W. Slater. It is comprehensive grammatical overview of Minhe Monguor, since it shares many features with Santa, the discussions on this book were very helpful to shed light on the present thesis.
- *A grammar of Bao'an tu, a Mongolic language of Northwest China*, by Robert Wayne Fried. It is a doctoral dissertation presenting a grammar of the Bao'an dialect spoken in Qinghai. Likewise Slater's book, this one was very insightful to some of the discussions on the present thesis.

### 2.1.2 Important Features of Santa Verbs

This section is a discussion about the research of other scholars on the main features of Santa verbs. For doing so, three main authors are taken into account: Buhe, Kim and Field.

The verb stem in Santa can receive both causative and reciprocals markers. Both are marked by a suffix and appear with both finite and non-finite verbs. They both are valency changing strategies – causatives add one argument to the verb, whereas reciprocals remove one argument. Fields (1997) and Buhe (1986) both defend that these suffixes belong to the class of inflectional morphology, while Kim (2003) argues that they are actually a matter of derivation.

Typically the verbs in Mongolian languages can be divided into finite and non-finite, so it is the case for Santa. The finite verb uses are fully marked with tense-aspect, whereas the non-finite are dependent on the finite. A sentence can have many non-finite verbs, but only one finite. The non-finite verb usages can be divided into two categories: participles – nominalized usage of verbs, and converbs – adverbilized usage of converbs.

There are three participle markers for Santa Mongolian, which are also called nominalizers. Kim (2003) says that the participles “*create dependent nominalized clauses, which may function as arguments of another clause, or may modify a head noun, thus functioning as a relative clause*”. He describes the three markers as being futuritive, perfective and agentive. The futuritive has an imperfective aorist-future temporal-aspectual reference (e.g. ‘A way to walk’). The agentive has a very similar function but it tends to be used as an “independent (substantival) noun” (e.g. ‘This is one that watches the house’). The perfective has a past-perfective reference (e.g. ‘a person who has come’). Buhe (1986) interprets them slightly different, he calls them non-past, past, and topical participle respectively, this interpretation reflects the way he sees the finite marking system. Finally, Fields (1997) interprets them as being imperfective, perfective and progressive, which similarly to Buhe, reflects his way of interpreting the indicative system. Even though they use different labels, they seem to be largely agreeing on the semantic function of these markers, except for what Field calls progressive and the other two call topical or agentive marker.

For the converb markers, the three authors largely agree on the specific meaning and usage of each marker. However, there is a major disagreement on the nature of these markers. Kim (2003) and Buhe (1986) believe that the non-finite clauses are converb constructions, while Field (1997) believes they are clause chaining constructions. The basic difference between converb and clause-chaining constructions is a matter of whether the non-finite clause is embedded in the main clause or not (for more on this see section 2.2 and Chapter 6). The traditional researchers of Mongolic languages have used the term ‘converb’ to describe the non-finite verbs. It is also important to remark that many different meanings have been attributed to a single converb marker, but previous works have failed in describing the specific contexts where these markers are interpreted in each one of these meaning.

Finite verbs can be divided in three different moods: declarative, imperative and interrogative. For imperatives, the authors seem to agree on its function and

categories. Buhe (1986) explain the three types of imperatives. The first one he calls desiderative, referring to the desire to take the action, and is used for first person, singular or plural. The suffix that expresses the desiderative mood is *-ye*. The second one, called imperative, is an order to a second person, plural or singular, with a  $\emptyset$  marking. The author says that some modality words could be added after the verb in order to soften or harden the tone of the order. The last type of imperative is called permissive, and is used for third person, singular or plural, marked by the suffix *-gie*.

The finite declarative morphology is another source of disagreement. Fields (1997) and Kim (2003) agree that the markers *-wo*, *-ne* and *-zho*, mark aspect and function as perfective, imperfective and progressive respectively. On the other hand, Buhe (1986) proposes that the suffixes actually refer to tense. For him, the suffix *-wo* is actually past tense and the suffix *-ne* is actually non-past tense, while *-zho* is actually be a combination of the converb marker *-zhi* and the copula *wo*, generating progressive aspect marker, treating it in his converbs section. This is the greatest discord between them and definitely needs more study, since none explain it completely.

## **2.2 Relevant Linguistic Concepts**

The main concepts that are relevant to the present thesis can be divided into two categories. The first section refers to elements that can influence in the meaning of the verbs, and consequentially the meaning of the utterance. Among these elements, the main ones are tense-aspect-mood markings, Aktionsart of the verbs, syndesis, and pragmatic factor. The second section refers to the syntactic structure of complex events and clause combining strategies.

### **2.2.1 Meaning of Verbs**

Santa commonly makes use of non-finite verbs. Haspelmath (1995) states that the notion of non-finiteness can be problematic. It basically distinguishes verbs that are fully inflected for tense, aspect and mood, from those which are dependent. Therefore, the non-finite verbs will be interpreted through the inflection applied to the finite verb.

Comrie (1976:3) defines aspect as the '*different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation*'. According to Smith (1991), the aspectual meaning of a sentence can express two kind of information. The first one is the particular

perspective or viewpoint, i.e. if the situation is considered entirely as a single unit, called perfective, or with internal time structure, called imperfective.

The second kind of information is refers to the type of situation expressed by the verb, whether it is a state or an activity for instance. Smith (1991) uses the term “situation” to refer to both states and events. In the present thesis they will all be called events and the distinction will be made between stative events and the other kinds of events. This kind of aspectual information is also called lexical aspect or *Aktionsart*, and is inherent to the kind of event. Vendler (1967) distinguishes between four different types of events: state, activities, accomplishments and achievements. The difference between these types of events is a matter of three parameters: whether they are stative or not; whether they are durative or instantaneous; and whether they are telic or not – if they need to have a definite ending point. Smith (1991) summarizes the different types of events, adding the semelfactive, in a table similar to Table 1, presented below.

**Table 1 Temporal features of the situation types (Smith 1991:20)**

Situations	Static	Durative	Telic
States	+	+	-
Activity	-	+	-
Accomplishment	-	+	+
Semelfactive	-	-	-
Achievement	-	-	+

Dowty (1979) gives many examples of the different types of events, as well as proposing tests to distinguish between them. For states he mentions verbs like *know*, *believe*, *have*, *desire* and *love*. For activities he mentions *run*, *walk*, *swim*, *push a cart*, *drive a car*. For accomplishments he mentions *paint a picture*, *make a chair*, *deliver a sermon*, *draw a circle*, *push a cart*, *recover from illness*. For achievements he mentions *recognize*, *spot*, *find*, *lose*, *reach* and *die*.

Finally, when talking about stative events, there is an important distinction made by Kratzer (1995), that is the distinction between individual-level states (non-transitory, like having brown hair) and stage-level events (transitory, like being seated on a chair).

For tense, Timberlake (2007:304) states that “*tense in language starts from the here-and-now of speech and constructs a linkage to a second time – here termed the contextual*

*occasion*". In other words, the tense marks if the event happens before, during or after the speech time. Dowty (1979) differentiates tense and aspect saying that tense relates the time of a situation being describing in relation to the speech time, whereas aspect specifies if the situation has finished or not, if it happens only one time or is iterative, or the beginning, middle or ending is being referred to. However, this distinction can be very blurry, since languages tend to have markers that refer to both aspect and tense, which is the case in Santa. Therefore, in the present thesis, tense and aspect will be considered as a unit, even though they refer to distinct features.

Besides the type of event expressed by the verb, and the tense-aspect markers attached to it, there are independent operators that can contribute to the utterance meaning. König (1995) talks about *syndesis* as one of these semantic factors. *Syndesis* refers to the overt presence of a subordination or coordination marker. These markers can be conjunctions, conjunctive adverbs, focus particles, or case suffixes in some languages. Santa makes uses of focus particles (such as *ye* 'also' and *da* 'still') to express relations between clauses like concessive-conditionals.

## 2.2.2 Clause Linking Strategies

There are basically three types of clause linking strategies: coordination, subordination and cosubordination. Foley and Van Valin (1984) differentiate these types of clause linking strategies in terms of embedding and dependency. The dependent clauses are non-finite and thus dependent on the main verb for tense and aspect interpretations. Van Valin (2005) states that for subordination, one of the clauses must be embedded in the other, functioning either as an argument (complementation), or as a modifier (adverbial clause). So the clauses can be  $\pm$  dependent and  $\pm$  embedded. Slater (2003) adapts a table from Foley and Van Valin (1984) that shows the possible combinations, introducing a fourth type of clause linking – direct quotation. The Table 2 shows these clause combining strategies.

Table 2 Clause combining strategies (Slater 2003:223)

embedded	dependent	Relation
-	-	coordination
+	+	subordination
-	+	cosubordination
+	-	embedded quotation

If a clause is non-dependent and non-embedded in other clause, then they are considered to be coordinate. If a clause is dependent on a main clause and is embedded in it, then it is subordinate to it. This is the classical distinction between coordination and subordination. However, there are some constructions, namely serial verb constructions and clause-chaining constructions that have non-finite, thus dependent clauses that are arguably not embedded in the main clause. These constructions are called cosubordinate. Slater (2003) adds another type of relation, that is common in Mangghuer and also in Santa. He calls it embedded quotation, which is a direct quotation, with full inflected verbs, embedded in a clause, thus + embedded and -dependent.

Haspelmath (1995) defines converbs as a nonfinite verb form that is used adverbially in a subordinate clause. He also compares this construction to other similar ones, especially clause chaining constructions. He concludes that, even though there is much overlap between these, the main difference is that in the former, the non-finite clause is subordinate and the latter is cosubordinate to the main clause. He also presents five criteria for subordination, claiming that any subordinate construction will meet a subset of these criteria and coordinate clauses will fulfill none. An analysis of the five criteria and why they are not applicable to Santa is made in Section 6.1.

On the other hand, Cristofaro (2005) presents the problems of establishing syntactical criteria to define subordination crosslinguistically. She argues that these criteria will fail to account for all the types of subordination strategies languages use. She also points to the fact that the same semantic and/or pragmatic relations can be encoded in different ways by different languages – what is subordinate in one language, may be coordinate in other. Therefore she proposes the use of pragmatic criteria to decide whether a construction is subordinate or not. She argues sentences can have a part that is what the speaker means to communicate and other parts that are used for other purposes. The part the speaker intends to communicate imposes its profile through the whole sentence, therefore this part is the one asserted by the speaker. The other part is pragmatically non-asserted and therefore subordinate. She proposes two tests. The first one is negating a whole sentence, if only one clause is negated, then the other clauses are subordinate, like in (a). The second test is using a tag question, if only one clause is being asked, then the other clauses are subordinate, like in (b). In (a), the negated part is about the fleeing of the burglar, not about the ringing of the alarm. In ii, the part questioned is also the fleeing of the

burglar and not the ringing of the alarms. Therefore she concludes that the clause *alarms ringing* is subordinate.

(a) *It is not the case that, alarms ringing, the burglar fled.*

(b) *Alarms ringing, the burglar fled, didn't he?*

In summary, for analyzing the finite verb, it is very important to take into account the tense-aspect concepts, namely the lexical aspect, also called the *aktionsart*, the morphological tense and aspect, attached as suffix to the verb in Santa, and other particles, like adverbs, that impact the tense and/or the aspect of the verbs. For analyzing the non-finite verbs it is very important to understand the concepts of converbs and clause-chaining. For these three there is a basic important distinction accepted in the literature of embedding, that is to say, that converb are believed to be embedded into the main clause and medial verbs in clause-chaining constructions are not.

## 2.3 Data Collection and Analysis

The data on this thesis is formed by six stories and elicited sentences. Table 3 shows the name of the stories and the number of sentences in each one of them.

Three language helpers were consulted for this thesis. The basic data was elicited from Ma Jinshan, 30, who was raised Daban Town and have moved to Lanzhou city recently. He is fluent in Santa and Standard Mandarin, as well as the local variations of Chinese. The second language helper was Min Xiaohu, 21, also originally from Danban, but has lived in Lanzhou since he was 7 years old. His strongest language is Mandarin, but he is also fluent in Santa and local Chinese dialects. The third language helper was Ma Chao, 25, originally from Daban, but moved to Lanzhou as a baby. His strongest language is Mandarin, but he is also fluent in Standard Mandarin and local Chinese dialects.

**Table 3 Stories collected**

Story	Number of sentences
The Bigshot of the Third Team	34
Going to School Before Sunrise	52
The Sheep's Tail	43
I Know Marei	23
Crying out of Fear	63
Six Daughters	60
Total	275

The first three stories were collected from a woman who is 50 years old and was born and raised in Hongzhuang village, which is part of Daban Town, in Dongxiang County. Her mother tongue is Santa, but she also speaks the local variation of Chinese as well as standard Mandarin. She is the mother of one of my language assistants who recorded these stories from her. The first and second stories are experiences from her childhood in the village, the third one is a folk tale.

The fourth story was collected from another woman from a village in Daban Town, in Dongxiang county. This woman is the mother of another language helper. This story was recorded by the language helper, while she was talking with her uncle.

The fifth story, was recorded from a man who was born in Longquan Township, in Dongxiang County, but has migrated to Zhongchuan Town, which is part of Lanzhou City. This story was directly recorded by me in Lanzhou. It is a narrative of personal experiences.

The last story was recorded from an elder man who is from Longquan Township, in Dongxiang county and still lives there. This story is a folk tale and was also directly recorded by me.

All data was recorded either using a cell phone or using a digital recorder. This data was then transcribed into the computer, using the writing system described in section 3.1. Finally, the data was internlearized and further analyzed with the help of the software Fieldworks.