

Chapter 7

Conclusion

Santa is the third largest Mongolian language, however it is still one of the most under-researched. The present thesis contributes to the understanding of Santa's grammar in many aspects. It also contributes to the understanding of tense-aspect system of languages that work outside of the European paradigm. Finally, this thesis also contributes to the understanding of the semantic structure converbs and the factors that contribute to their meaning.

The discussion about the desiderative construction using *-ne giezho* and the *irrealis* inceptive construction using *-ne giezhi* were not present in past works. It is a complex construction apparently using two finite verb markers (*-ne gie-zho*) or using one non-finite marker after a finite marker (*-ne gie-zhi*). If that were the case, these constructions would be violating the rule that a sentence must have only one finite marker and it must happen sentence finally. These constructions were analyzed as grammaticalization of direct quotations constructions, using the expressing verb *-gie*. The desiderative would have its meaning coming from *giezho* 'is thinking' and the verb marked in future with the non-perfective marker *-ne*, therefore meaning 'is thinking: I will do...' generating the meaning 'wants to do'. The inceptive would have its meaning from the conditional converb *-se* 'when ... was thinking' and the verb marked in future with the non-perfective marker *-ne*, therefore meaning 'when ... was thinking: I will do...' generating the meaning 'when he was about to do'. Field (1997) notes that the tense-aspect system in Santa is rather simple, this could be a way in which, after centuries of simplifications, Santa is now developing a more complex system. Further studies could reveal whether other Mongolic languages can do the same with their quotation markers.

One of the main insights of this thesis is the contribution to the understanding of the aspectual system in Santa. There is an aspectual distinction that is very important for this language and is present in both the finite and non-finite verbs. The aspectual system in Santa can be described as a distinction between two parameters: whether the event is referred to as having started or not and whether it is referred to as having finished or not. This is the very distinction between what is called in the present thesis imperfective and non-perfective. The imperfective must have started, but it could have finished or not. On the other hand, the non-perfective could have

started or not, but necessarily it could not have finished. This has a few consequences. First is that the imperfective is more specific than the non-perfective, since it refers to a specific event, or set of events, that have already started. Second is that, since it can refer to events that have not, the non-perfective can refer to *irrealis* situations, whereas the imperfective is bound to *realis* situations. Adding these two factors together, we can see that the imperfective when referring to a habitual or iterative event expresses more certainty than the non-perfective, even though their meanings overlap to a great extent.

This system also explains why the non-perfective is the only one that can be used with individual-level stative events. Since these states are inherent, theoretically they do not have a finishing point.

Another consequence of this system is that the perfective, which refers to events that have both started and finished, is bound to past events. It is not like in other languages where perfective can be used with future tense. The imperfective and the non-perfective have more freedom in terms of tense. However, the non-perfective is the only one that can refer to pure future situations. Consequently, it is not accurate to talk about a tense only system or an aspect only system, since one marker conveys both tense and aspectual information. Therefore, we can conclude that the previous views, although not totally accurate, were not wrong. Field (1997) and Kim (1998 and 2003) both considered the system to be aspectual, differentiating perfective *-wo*, imperfective *-ne* and progressive *-zho*. On the other hand, Buhe (1986) considered it to be a tense system differentiating past *-wo*, non-past *-ne*, and giving some space for aspectual interpretation of *-zhi + wo*, arguing that it works like progressive. These views, together with the view presented on the present thesis are shown in Table 29.

Table 29 Different views on the declarative mood markers

	Buhe (1983)	Field (1997) and Kim (2003)	Present thesis
<i>-wo</i>	Past	perfective	perfective
<i>-ne</i>	non-past	imperfective	non-perfective
<i>-zho</i>	progressive	progressive	imperfective

Santa's declarative mood system refers to both aspect and tense, therefore it is not wrong to say that *-wo* is past, or perfective, or even past perfective. The idea of non-perfective can both entail that it can be used for non-past and imperfective situations. Finally, progressive is a type of imperfective. However there are many

other types of imperfective such as habitual or iterative, which actually occur with *-zho*. Maybe further studies will show that this distinction is also helpful to explain the tense-aspect system of other Mongolic languages.

Another important contribution of the present thesis was the detailed study of each one of these tense-aspect markers interacting with the *Aktionsart* of the different types of events. This study shed light on how the markers are interpreted in the different situations. One important finding was that for instantaneous events, the imperfective marker would be interpreted as habitual or perfect aspect, depending on the context. This usage of the imperfective marker *-zho* has not been described in previous works.

On the discussion about the converbs, it became clear that the definition of converb as necessarily being subordinate, as well as the criteria used to determine subordination given by Haspelmath (1995) are not suitable to Santa. However, these converbal clauses are clearly dependent and clearly function as adverbial clauses modifying the main clause. The test proposed by Cristofaro (2003) made it clear that pragmatically, the converbal clauses are subordinate to the main clause.

The discussion introduced by Field (1997) about switch-event markers was also very helpful to clearly describe the different kinds of converbs – same event converbs and different event converbs. This distinction was very helpful to explain two patterns. The first is why some converbs can only occur in same subject construction, it is interesting that these converbs always have a temporal relation of simultaneity, besides other semantic relations. These facts are clearly explained by the fact that they belong to the same event as the next verb. The different event converbs, on the other hand, are free to have different subject, and all of them follow the pattern of having a basic temporal meaning, and getting other meanings depending on the context. This is also explained by the fact that they are expressing other event. Finally the quasiconverbs, can only have the basic temporal meaning. This could be because they are not totally grammaticalized yet. Maybe a diachronic study could reveal that different event converb markers used to have only a temporal meaning, and have developed the other relations over the time. This would allow us to expect that the present quasiconverbs will develop other semantic relation meanings.

Another important contribution of the present thesis is the careful study on which elements have an impact on the meaning of the converbs. All the authors agree that they may have different meanings in different situations. However no systematic study has been made to understand what helps the speaker to interpret the meaning

of the converbs. This thesis uses some the important elements pointed by König (1995), namely: the TAM of the main clause; *syndesis*; the *Aktionsart* of the verb marked; and pragmatic factors. This study has proved to be very productive and has shed light on what meaning can be expected in each situation. This study has also been fruitful to evidence contexts where different converbs can have overlapping meanings, as well as the subtle differences between them.

Further Studies

This thesis has also made it clear some areas that do need more study. One point that has repeatedly come up is whether a certain word should be considered a suffix or not, or whether determined suffix should be treated as a separate word or not. That is the case for the causative *-gha*. Evidence for treating it as a separate word is the fact that the plural marker *-ndu* has a special position before it to mark cause plural, and another one to mark causer plural. Since the plural marker cannot be repeated without the causative marker, this could be evidence that the verb would be separated from the verb, with *-ndu* marking subject plural, and *gha* would be a separate verb.

Another case is the ability and inability auxiliary verbs. These are the only auxiliary verbs that do not occur independently. Moreover, no marker can be attached to the verb that precedes it. Further studies could reveal that these verbs are actually suffixes. Finally the completive converb marker *-dene*, is treated as a separate word in Mangghuer and Bao'an. The evidences for it to be treated as a different word are the phonological stress and the possibility of co-occurring with voluntative marker – even though in a very marginal usage.

Another important area that greatly needs further studies is discourse analysis in Santa. To my knowledge, no studies on discourse level have been made in Santa so far. A study like that would be helpful to understand the choice between the *-wo* and *-zho* for events that have finished, as well as the choice between *-ne* and *-zho* for habitual events in the past. Another possible area that could be clarified by a discourse analysis study is the choice between the negators *ese* and *wuye*. The present thesis presents only one, rather marginal, context where they differ, namely polar questions.

Another area that remains undetermined is the syntactic status of the converbal clause, whether it is embedded or not in the main clause. The tools so far used to make that distinction crosslinguistically have proven to be unsuitable to the analysis for Santa. New tools or an adaptation of the actual tools must be developed.