

Classifications of Some Sentence-final Modal Particles in Khalkha Mongolian

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Abstract

Among sentence-final modal ‘particles’ in Khalkha Mongolian, five ‘particles’ exhibit different behaviors from the others. This article first describes the peculiarities of these five ‘particles’ (i) from the viewpoint of the degree of autonomy of a word, and (ii) with respect to inflection. It will be shown that these ‘particles’ should not be classified as particles in the sense of definition provided in the literature, but that they are independent words. Second, it will be discussed to which lexical categories these five ‘particles’ really belong.

1. Introduction

1.1 Structure of the present article

Particles in Mongolian are defined in the literature as dependent words which cannot compose a sentence alone, and which do not inflect. Particles can further be classified into several subgroups. A certain group of particles, i.e., sentence-final modal particles (hereafter, simply ‘sentence-final particles’), appear after the predicate, and express modal meanings such as question, (un)certainty, conviction, and inference.¹ For an example of a sentence-final particle, see the following sentence, where *bol* ‘I wonder ...’ is present after the predicate.

- | | | | |
|-----|---------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| (1) | <i>Dorž</i> | <i>xajč-san</i> | <i>bol</i> ² |
| | PN.NOM | go.where-VN.PST | MP.Q |
| | ‘I wonder where Dorj has gone.’ | | |

¹ The subcategory ‘sentence-final particle’ is nearly equivalent to what is merely called *particles* in Kullmann and Tserenpil (1996: 326-349), or to *ögiülberijn dagan čimex ügs* ‘sentential decorating words’ in Önörbajan (2004: 331-337). However, *particles* (by Kullmann and Tserenpil) include not only dependent words which appear after the predicate, but also those appearing in other positions in the sentence. For example, the particles *ül* ‘not’ and *es* ‘not’, which are listed as members of *particles* in Kullmann and Tserenpil (1996), must appear BEFORE a verb. In contrast, sentence-final particles stand AFTER a verb (more correctly, a predicate). The present article only deals with particles which only appear after the predicate, and excludes such dependent words as *ül* and *es* (and *l* ‘only’ and *č* ‘too’, which also appear in other positions than after the predicate) from the scope of our investigation.

² The present article employs the orthography used in Mongolia, with the Cyrillic characters transliterated into Latin ones: a=a, 6=b, b=v [β], r=g, d=d, e=jc/jö, 6=jo, ʒ=ž [dʒ~tʃ], ʒ=z [dz~ts], ɯ=i, ʏ=j, k=k, ɮ=l [ɮ], m=m, n=n, o=o [ɔ], ø=ö [ø], ɱ=p, p=ɮ, c=s, ɮ=t, y=u [ʊ], ɣ=ü [u], φ=f, x=x, ɮ=c [ts^h], ɮ=č [tʃ^h], ɮ=š [ʃ], ɮ=ʂ, ɮ=ʃy [i:], ɮ=ʂ, ʒ=ʒ, ɮ=jɯ/jü, ɮ=ja. For the abbreviations used in the glosses, see the end of the article.

As mentioned in the definition of particle above, particles in general cannot compose a sentence by themselves, nor can they be inflected. However, a few studies point out that some sentence-final ‘particles’ do not exhibit these properties. The present article examines characteristics of these ‘non-prototypical’ sentence-final ‘particles’ by the following structure. The first two sections provide general information on the grammar of Khalkha Mongolian (Section 1) and on sentence-final particles (Section 2). In Section 3, we identify the sentence-final ‘particles’ which manifest different characteristics from the others. Finally, Section 4 discusses the possibility to classify these peculiar ‘particles’ as independent words belonging to the verb or the substantive.

1.2 Khalkha Mongolian

Khalkha Mongolian is one of the largest dialects of the Mongolian language (Mongolian proper), which is a member of the Mongolic language family. Khalkha Mongolian (hereafter, simply ‘Mongolian’) is spoken in Mongolia and is estimated to have more than two million native speakers. Mongolian is an agglutinative language, employs suffixes rather than prefixes, and uses postpositions, not prepositions. It is dependent-marking and non-configurational, and has the nominative-accusative case system. The basic word order is SOV, and a modifier usually precedes the head that it modifies.

The data in the present article were composed by our two language consultants (a male born in 1971, and a female born in 1979, both of them born in Ulaanbaatar). The sources of the sentences quoted from the preceding studies are given after their translations in parentheses. Examples without source information are those composed by our language consultants.

1.3 Lexical categories

Independent words in Mongolian are classified into at least two lexical categories: the verb and the substantive. ‘Substantive’ is an umbrella term which includes the noun, adjective, and adverb. In Mongolian, nouns, adjectives, and adverbs exhibit similar morphological behaviors to one another. (For example, nouns, adjectives, and adverbs can take a case suffix.) Therefore, it is not an easy task to draw clear lines among these, and opinions vary among researchers as to the demarcation among the noun, adjective, and adverb.

In the following discussions, we (tentatively) differentiate three subcategories of substantive, i.e., the noun-like substantive, adjective-like substantive, and adverb-like substantive. The three subcategories differ from one another in the following respects: Noun-like substantives are mainly used with a case suffix (including the zero morph of the nominative). They usually do not modify another substantive without a case suffix (e.g., **delgüür xaalga* but *delgüür-ijn xaalga* (shop-GEN door) ‘the door of the shop’); Adjective-like substantives are chiefly used without a case suffix to modify another substantive; Adverb-like substantives principally appear without a case suffix to modify the predicate. In (2) below, for instance, *cenxer* ‘blue’ is an adjective-like substantive, *nom-yg* ‘book-ACC’ a noun-like substantive, and *öcigdör* ‘yesterday’ an adverb-like substantive. (In the English translations, the words in square brackets are ‘translations’ of the words that do not exist in the original Mongolian sentences.)

- (2) *Ene cenxer nom-yg öčigdör av-san.*
 this blue book-ACC yesterday buy-VN.PST
 ‘[I] bought this blue book yesterday.’

Dependent words belong neither to the verb nor the substantive. As with the case with independent words, opinions differ as to how to classify dependent words. Önröbajan (2004: 171, 313-339), for instance, divides dependent words into two subcategories: *xolbox ügs* ‘connecting words’ and *čimex ügs* ‘decorating words, particles’. Sentence-final particles, which are of our concern, are a subgroup belonging to the latter, according to Önröbajan’s classification.

1.4 Substantive

Substantives inflect in eight cases. Cases are expressed by suffixes. (The nominative case is marked by a zero suffix.) A case suffix usually agglutinates to its stem (in accordance with vowel harmony). However, a case suffix can be fused with the stem when attached to a pronoun.

1.5 Verb

Verbs inflect. Inflectional forms of a verb are classified into three groups (i.e., verbs obligatorily appear in one of the three kinds of forms listed below).

- (a) Terminating forms (formed by the attachment of a terminating suffix), e.g., past, non-past, and optative.
- (b) Converb forms (formed by the attachment of a converb suffix), e.g., perfective, imperfective, and conditional.
- (c) Verbal-nominal forms (formed by the attachment of a verbal-nominal suffix), e.g., past (or perfective), non-past, imperfective, and habitual.

The functions of these conjugational forms are as follows.

- (a) A terminating form is used as a finite verb and concludes a sentence, i.e., it forms an independent sentence or a main clause, e.g., *jav-na* in (3).
- (b) A converb form can be used as an adverbial or can compose an adverbial clause, e.g., *ir-vel* in (3).
- (c) A verbal-nominal form (i) can be used as a nominal or can form a nominal clause, e.g., *jav-sn-yg* in (4), (ii) can be used as an adnominal modifier or can form an adnominal clause, e.g., *ög-sön* in (5), and (iii) can have the same function as a terminating form, namely, to conclude a sentence, e.g., *baj-g-aa* in (4) and *gee-sen* in (5). Note that verbal-nominal forms can take a case suffix when employed in Usage (i).

- (3) *Tüün-ijg ir-vel bi jav-na.*
 3SG-ACC come-CVB.COND 1SGNOM go-TV.NP
 ‘If he comes, I will go.’
- (4) *Tüün-ijg Japon jav-sn-yg med-e-ž baj-g-aa juu?*
 3SG-ACC Japan go-VN.PST-ACC know-EP-CVB.IPFV be-EP-VN.IPFV MP.Q
 ‘Do [you] know [that] he has gone to Japan?’
- (5) *Bold Dorž-ijn ög-sön nom-yg gee-sen.*
 PN.NOM PN-GEN give-VN.PST book-ACC lose-VN.PST
 ‘Bold lost the book [that] Dorj gave [him].’

The functions of the three conjugational forms are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Verb conjugation

Function Conjugational form	Finite	Non-finite		
	Concluding a sentence (an independent sentence)	Adverbial clause	Nominal clause	Adnominal clause
Terminating	+			
Converb		+		
Verbal nominal	+		+	+

Negative forms of verbs are formed by two methods. (i) A negative particle (*ül* or *es*) is placed before a verb (in any of the three kinds of conjugational forms, i.e., terminating, verbal-nominal, or converb), or (ii) the negative suffix *-güj* is attached to a verb in a verbal-nominal form. (*-güj* cannot be attached to a verb in a terminating, or converb form.) See (6a) for an example of a negative form using *ül*, and (6b) for an example of a negative form using *-güj*.

- (6a) *ljnxiü jos Mongol-oos öör uls+oron-d ül baj-dag.*
 like.this custom.NOM Mongolia-ABL other country-DAT NEG be-VN.HAB
 ‘A custom like this cannot be seen in countries other than Mongolia.’
- (6b) *ljnxiü jos Mongol-oos öör uls+oron-d baj-dag-güj.*
 like.this custom.NOM Mongolia-ABL other country-DAT be-VN.HAB-NEG
 ‘A custom like this cannot be seen in countries other than Mongolia.’

Negative forms using *ül* or *es* are mainly used in formal and literary styles, while those formed by the attachment of *-güj* are widely employed irrespective of style.

1.6 Predicate

The predicate of a clause is of two kinds: the verb predicate, and the substantive predicate.

When a verb-predicate clause is used as an independent sentence or as a main clause, the verb must be either in a terminating form, e.g., *jav-na* in (3), or in a verbal-nominal form, e.g., *gee-sen* in (5). (See also Table 1.)

A substantive predicate is composed of a substantive and a copular verb (*baj-* ‘to be’ or *bol-* ‘to become’). (However, a copular verb may not appear in the present tense. For some of the conditioning factors that determine the appearance or absence of a copular verb, see Kullmann & Tserenpil (1996: 194-195).) Copular verbs in substantive predicates conjugate in the same fashion as verbs in verb predicates. When a copular verb is used in an independent sentence or in a main clause, it must be in a terminating form or in a verbal-nominal form.

- (7) *Bi* *öčigdör* *zavgüj* *baj-san.*
 1SG.NOM yesterday busy be-VN.PST
 ‘I was busy yesterday.’

2 Sentence-final particles

2.1 Sentence-final particles listed in the literature

As mentioned in Section 1.3, sentence-final particles are members of a subgroup of particle. The particle, in general, can be defined as follows. (‘Weak words’ in the following definition correspond to ‘particles’ in our terminology.)

(8)

A group of words in the Mongolian lexicon — which lack concrete lexical meanings but have [modal and grammatical] relational meanings and only express various nuances of the speaker’s emotional movements, and (i) which cannot be used independently as an answer to a question, cannot be used as an independent constituent of the sentence by themselves, or (ii) cannot be inflected — are named ‘weak words’ in the tradition of Mongolian linguistics.

Bjamdaborž (2006: 192) (The translation, supplemental explanation in brackets, underlines, and numbers before the underlines are mine. The numbers before the underlines will be referred to in the discussions in Section 3.)

Among the dependent words which are classified as ‘particles’ in the literature, those listed in Table 2 appear after the predicate (hence ‘sentence-final particles’).³ See below the table for the abbreviations

³ Some studies deal with combinations of two particles in the same way as unanalyzable particles. For example, Hashimoto and Tani (1993: 103) consider *jumsan*, the combination of *jum* and *san*, as one particle. We exclude these particles which can be analyzed into more than one particle (from the synchronic viewpoint) from Table 2.

In addition, some preceding works (e.g., Önörbajan 2004: 331) consider such words as *xereg-tej* and *jos-toj* as sentence-final particles. (The example below is mine.)

and symbols used in the table. ('Approximate meanings' of No. 13 *až* and No. 21 *aa* are not provided in Table 2 because they express various kinds of nuances, and their meanings are difficult to translate.)

Table 2. Sentence-final particles listed in the literature

	Particle	Approximate meaning	T	Be	V	L	P	Bi	G	H ⁴	K	ÖB	BD
1	<i>mön</i>	'certain'			+			+	+	(+)	+	+	
2	<i>alga</i>	'absent'						(+)	+	+	+		
3	<i>üguj</i>	'not, absent'	+		+				+		+	+	+
4	<i>biš</i>	'not'	+	+	+		+	(+)	+	+	+	+	+
5	<i>bij</i>	'to be'						+		+			
6	<i>jum</i>	certainty		+				+		+	+	+	
7	<i>bajx</i>	inference								+			
8	<i>bolov</i>	inference								+			
9	<i>ve</i>	question	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
10	<i>bilee</i>	question		+	+			+		+	+		
11	<i>biliüü</i>	question			+								
12	<i>vij</i>	conviction			+				+		+	+	+
13	<i>až</i>			+									
14	<i>bol</i>	question		+						+	+		
15	<i>šiv</i>	assumption		+		+			+		+	+	+
16	<i>biz</i>	confirmation	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+	+	+
17	<i>dag</i>	assumption		+	+				+		+	+	+
18	<i>san</i>	subjunctive		+	+					+	+	+	
19	<i>uu</i>	question	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
20	<i>šüü</i>	affirmation	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
21	<i>aa</i>			+					+		+		
22	<i>daa</i>	affirmation	+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+	+

(i) Abbreviations for the authors of the preceding studies provided on the first line of Table 2 (in chronological order, the same order on the first line):

T: Todaeva (1951), Be: Bertagaev (1964), V: Vanduj (1966), L: Luvsanvandan (1968), P:

Či *Dulmaa-d tust-a-x xereg-tej.*
2SGNOM PN-DAT help-EP-VN.NP necessity-PROP

'It is necessary for you to help Dulmaa.' (Literal translation: 'You are with necessity to help Dulmaa.')

These words are derivatives from substantives (*xereg* 'necessity' and *jos* 'rule') by the attachment of the proprietive suffix *-taj/-toj/-tej* 'with, having, possessing'. In contrast, the particles listed in Table 2 are not derivatives or morphologically analyzable at least from the synchronic viewpoint. We exclude 'particles' such as *xereg-tej* and *jos-toj* from the scope of our discussions.

⁴ Hashimoto and Tani (1993: 75-76) recognize two kinds of sentence-final particles: *shuujoshi* (*bunmatsu joshi*) 'final particles' and *jutsugo joshi* 'predicate particles'. This distinction is not reflected in Table 2, because it has no direct connection with our discussions.

Poppe (1970), Bi: Binnick (1979), G: Gantogtox (1987), H: Hashimoto & Tani (1993), K: Kullmann and Tserenpil (1996), ÖB: Önbörcü (2004), BD: Bjambadorž (2006).

(ii) Symbols:

+: sentence-final particles listed in the relevant studies

(+): words which are referred to in the explanations of (sentence-final) particles, but not explicitly labeled (sentence-final) particles in the relevant studies

There are two words which can often be used in place of *biš* ‘not’ (No. 4 in Table 2) and *bij* ‘to be’ (No. 5): *bus* ‘not’ and *buj* ‘to be’, respectively. However, the former two words (*biš* and *bij*) differ from the latter (*bus* and *buj*) in that the former can be used irrespective of style, while the latter can seldom be observed in colloquial language. The latter can be seen principally in literal or archaic style. We exclude the latter words (*bus* and *buj*) from the scope of our discussions.

2.2 Ordering of sentence-final particles

In some instances, only one sentence-final particle appears after the predicate (e.g., (1) and (9)). In other examples, however, more than one sentence-final particle can be present after the predicate (e.g., (10)).

(9) *Ter ünen üü?*
 that.NOM real MP.Q
 ‘[Is] that real?’

(10) *Ter ünen jum⁽ⁱ⁾ uu⁽ⁱⁱ⁾ daa⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾.*
 that.NOM real MP MP.Q MP
 ‘I wonder to myself⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾ if⁽ⁱⁱ⁾ that [is] real, in fact⁽ⁱ⁾.’

For detailed descriptions of the ordering of sentence-final particles, see Jingang (2009) among others. It will suffice for the purpose of the present article to mention that sentence-final particles are arranged roughly according to the order shown in Table 2. (The smaller the number of a particle is, the closer to the predicate it tends to appear. It should be noted that not all the possible combinations of more than 20 particles in Table 2 are acceptable.)

2.3 Kinds of predicates which precede sentence-final particles

Sentence-final particles differ as to which kinds of predicate they can appear after. Some sentence-final particles can appear after any predicate i.e., after the substantive predicate without a copula, after the substantive predicate with a copula in any conjugational form, and after the verb predicate in any conjugational form. (See Section 1.6 for kinds of predicates in Mongolian.) However, other particles can be present only after limited kinds of predicates. Because the kinds of predicate after which a particle can appear do not directly concern our discussion, we will not provide more detailed explanations. For more elaborate descriptions, see Kullmann and Tserenpil (1996: 326- 344) among others.

3. Characteristics of *mön*, *alga*, *ügüj*, *biš*, and *bij*

As mentioned in the underlined portion (ii) in (8), most of the previous studies claim that particles (including the sentence-final particles) generally do not inflect (Vanduj 1966: 224, Poppe 1970: 84, Gantogtox 1987: 130, Kullmann & Tserenpil 1996: 326, Önröbajan 2004: 326, Bjambadorž 2006: 192). Furthermore, as stated in (i) in (8), some works point out that particles cannot stand alone to compose a sentence (Gantogtox 1987: 130, Önröbajan 2004: 326, Bjambadorž 2006: 192). This section points out that some sentence-final ‘particles’ can, in fact, constitute a sentence by themselves, and can be inflected.

3.1 Autonomy of a word

Most particles cannot stand alone to compose a sentence. See the example below, where *jum*, a sentence-final particle expressing certainty, cannot be used independently.

- (11) A: *Či ene nom-yg Japon-oos avčir-san jum uul?*
 2SGNOM this book-ACC Japan-ABL bring-VN.PST MP MP.Q
 ‘Did you really bring this book from Japan?’
 B: **Jum.*
 MP
 (Intended meaning: ‘Definitely.’)

In some studies, however, the following three sentence-final ‘particles’ are reported to have the ability to compose a sentence by themselves.⁵

- (12)
mön ‘certain’ (Pürev-Očir 1997: 207-212)
ügüj ‘not, absent’ (Pürev-Očir 1997: 207-212, Bjambadorž 2006: 198)⁶
biš ‘not’ (Kullmann and Tserenpil 1996: 328, Pürev-Očir 1997: 207-212)

In addition to these three ‘particles’, *alga* ‘absent’ and *bij* ‘to be’ can also compose a sentence by themselves. See (13)-(17) for examples. (The examples are mine.)

- (13) A: *Ene Dorž-ijn nom mön üü?*
 this.NOM PN-GEN book.NOM certain MP.Q
 ‘Is this certainly Dorj’s book?’

⁵ Some studies give examples where a sentence-final particle appears in isolation to compose a sentence although they do not explicitly mention the ability of the relevant particle to stand alone. For instance, Hashimoto & Tani (1993: 16, 98) give examples where *bij* and *mön* appear in isolation, and Kullmann & Tserenpil (1996: 332) cite an example where *ügüj* appears alone to compose a sentence.

⁶ According to Bjambadorž (2006: 198), Luvsanvandan (1956: 54) also mentions the ability of *ügüj* and *biš* to stand alone to compose a sentence. However, this study is not available to us.

- B: *Mön.*
 certain
 ‘Definitely.’
- (14) A: *Dorž ir-sen üü?*
 PN.NOM come-VN.PST MP.Q
 ‘Did Dorj come?’
 B: *Ügüj.*
 not/absent
 ‘No.’
- (15) A: *Ene tanyx biš üü?*⁷
 this.NOM yours.NOM not MP.Q
 ‘Isn’t this yours?’
 B: *Biš.*
 not
 ‘No.’
- (16) A: *Čamd gal baj-na uu?*
 2SG.DAT fire.NOM be-TV.NP MP.Q
 ‘Do you have a light?’ (Literal translation: ‘Is fire at you?’)
 B: *Alga.*
 absent
 ‘[No,] I don’t.’ (Literal translation: ‘[Fire is] absent.’)
- (17) A: *Ene asuudl-yg šijd-e-x arga+zam bij jüü?*
 this problem-ACC solve-EP-VN.NP measure.NOM be MP.Q
 ‘Are there any measures to solve this problem?’

⁷ According to our consultants, *bus* ‘not’, which can be observed mainly in formal or archaic style, sounds awkward when used alone to compose a sentence.

- (i) A: *Ene tanyx bus üü?*
 this.NOM yours.NOM not MP.Q
 ‘Isn’t this yours?’

B: ? *Bus.*
 not
 (Intended meaning: ‘No.’)

The same applies to *buj* ‘to be’. See the following example, where *bij* in (17) is replaced by ‘*buj*’. Here again, *buj* sounds unnatural when used alone.

- (ii) A: *Ene asuudl-yg šijd-e-x arga+zam buj juu?*
 this problem-ACC solve-EP-VN.NP measure.NOM be MP.Q
 ‘Are there any measures to solve this problem?’

B: ? *Buj.*
 be
 Intended meaning: ‘([Yes,] there are.)’

- B: *Bij.*
 be
 ‘[Yes,] there are.’

3.2 Inflection

As mentioned in (8-ii), most sentence-final particles do not inflect. On the other hand, Kullmann and Tserenpil (1996: 328, 331) point out that a case suffix can be attached to *ügiij* ‘not, absent’ and *biš* ‘not’.⁸ (In the following examples, subordinate clauses are enclosed in braces for the sake of comprehension of the sentence structure.)

- (18) *Minij ügiij-d olon xün manaj-d oč-son.*
 1SG.GEN not/absent-DAT many person.NOM our.home-DAT go-VN.PST
 ‘Many people came to my house in my absence.’ (Kullmann and Tserenpil 1996: 331;
 The transliteration of the Cyrillic alphabet and glosses are mine.)
- (19) {*Tüün-ij čixer-t durtaj biš-ijg bid nar*
 3SG.GEN candy-DAT fond.of not-ACC we PL.NOM
med-e-x-güj baj-san.
 know-EP-VN.NP-NEG be-VN.PST
 ‘We didn’t know {[that] he doesn’t like candies}.’ (Kullmann and Tserenpil 1996: 329;
 The transliteration of the Cyrillic alphabet and glosses are mine.)

In addition to *ügiij* and *biš* above, inflected forms of *mön*, *alga*, and *bij* are attested. (Note, however, that examples of *mön*, *alga*, and *bij* with a case suffix can be observed only with low frequency. We shall return to this point in Section 4.3.) These five ‘particles’ which can take a case suffix are identical with those which can compose a sentence by themselves (see Section 3.1).

- (20) *mongol irgen mön-ijg batl-a-x barimt+bičig*
 Mongolian citizen.NOM certain-ACC certify-EP-VN.NP document
 ‘documents [which] certify [that you are] a Mongolian citizen with no doubt’
- (21) {*Tus nam-d ard+tümn-ij-xee tölöö zütge-deg*
 that party-DAT people-GEN-REFL for.the.sake.of strive-VN.HAB
xün negeexen=č alg-yg ene javdal
 person.NOM only.one=even.FP absent-ACC this occurrence.NOM

⁸ Kullmann and Tserenpil (1996: 330) also mention that *bus* ‘not’, which is used mainly in formal and archaic styles, can be inflected. See below. (The example is mine.)

{*Öör-ijn-xöö mönx bus-yg uxaar-a-x xeregtej.*
 onself-GEN-REFL eternal not-ACC understand-EP-VN.NP it.is.necessary
 ‘[We] should understand {[that] we are not immortal}.’ (Literal translation: ‘[We] should understand {our own not being immortal}.’)

xaruul-ž *baj-na.*
 show-CVB.IPFV be-TV.NP

‘This occurrence shows {[that] there isn’t even one person in that party [who] strives for the sake of the people}.’

- (22) {*Manaj* *uls-a-d* *olon* *asuudal* *bij*}-*g*⁹ *bid*
 our country-EP-DAT many problem.NOM be-ACC we.NOM
 med-e-ž *baj-g-aa.*
 know-EP-CVB.IPFV be-EP-VN.IPFV

‘We know [that] there are a lot of problems in our country.’

4. Lexical categories of *mön*, *alga*, *ügüj*, *biš*, and *bij*

From the descriptions in Sections 3, it has become obvious that *mön*, *alga*, *ügüj*, *biš*, and *bij* are different from the other sentence-final particles, from the viewpoints of autonomy as a word and of the possibility to take a case suffix.¹⁰ These five words are not particles in the sense of the definition provided in (8). Rather, they should be considered independent words. In Section 4 below, we will identify which lexical categories these five words belong to.

4.1 Status of *bij* as a verb or a substantive

Although many preceding studies classify *bij* ‘to be’ as a particle, there are a few works which consider it a defective verb (Bjambasan and Žančivdorž 1987: 184, Kullmann and Tserenpil 1996: 200).¹¹ Defective verbs are remnants of conjugational forms of the (auxiliary) verbs *a-* ‘to be’ and *bü-* ‘to be’ in pre-classical period. As mentioned by Kullmann and Tserenpil (1996: 200), ‘[a]t that time, they could be fully conjugated as any other verb. But today, only leftovers of these verb conjugations are left and they are mainly used in literary language.’ However, Kullmann and Tserenpil do not explain on what basis *bij* is synchronically considered a (defective) verb in Modern Mongolian. In this section, we will clarify

⁹ Examples are also attested where *buj* ‘to be’, which is observed chiefly in formal and archaic styles, takes a case suffix. See the following example, where *bij* in (22) is replaced by ‘*buj*’.

{*Manaj* *uls-a-d* *olon* *asuudal* *buj*}-*g* *bid* *med-e-ž* *baj-g-aa.*
 our country-EP-DAT many problem.NOM be-ACC we.NOM know-EP-CVB.IPFV be-EP-VN.IPFV

‘We know [that] there are a lot of problems in our country.’

¹⁰ Note that these five words appear nearer to the predicate than the other sentence-final particles. Furthermore, the five words express more lexical meanings than the other particles. The latter point is stated in the preceding studies as well. For example, Kullmann and Tserenpil (1996: 330-332) point out that *ügüj* ‘not, absent’, and *alga* ‘absent’ (and also *bus* ‘not’) have lexical meanings. According to Kullmann and Tserenpil, *ügüj* and *alga* are ‘no true particles’. This description by Kullmann and Tserenpil (partially) agrees with our observation that the five sentence-final ‘particles’ are not particles but are independent words.

¹¹ On one hand, Kullmann and Tserenpil (1996) classify as defective verbs only those that exhibit verbal behaviors in Modern Mongolian. On the other hand, Bjambasan and Žančivdorž (1987) include in defective verbs whatever is a remnant of the verbs *a-* and *bü-* in the pre-classical period. For example, Bjambasan and Žančivdorž (1987: 184) consider *bögööd* ‘and’ a defective verb. *Bögööd* is analogous to *bij* in that *bögööd* is a conjugational form of the verb *bü-* in pre-classical period. However, *bögööd* differs from *bij* in that *bögööd* is a conjunction and exhibits no verbal behavior in Modern Mongolian, while *bij* possesses verbal characteristics, though very defectively, even in Modern language, as will be discussed in this section.

In addition to the two studies mentioned above, Jingang (2009: 131) states that *bij* retains characteristics of the ‘auxiliary verb’ although it is grammaticalized as a sentence-final particle in Modern Mongolian. However, he does not explicitly explain what its ‘retained’ verbal characteristics are like.

what verbal characteristics *bij* possesses.

To put the conclusion first, only one verbal behavior is confirmed. Examples are attested where *bij* is preceded by a negative particle, which appears only before verbs. (For explanations on the negation of the verb, see Section 1.5.) However, note that examples where *bij* is preceded by a negative particle (e.g., (23)) are judged grammatical only by one of our two consultants.

- (23) *Ijnxüü jos Mongolia-oos öör uls+oron-d ül bij.*¹²
 like.this custom.NOM Mongolia-ABL other country-DAT NEG be
 ‘A custom like this cannot be seen in countries other than Mongolia.’

Bij does not exhibit the other behaviors which are typical of verbs. For example, it cannot follow a verb in a converb form to compose the predicate. (The ability to combine with a verb in a converb form is characteristic of the verb.) Compare (24a), where the verb *baj-* ‘to be’ appears after the converb form *sur-č*, to (24b).¹³

- (24a) *Ted Solongos-t sur-č baj-g-aa.*
 3PL.NOM Korea-DAT study-CVB.IPFV be-EP-VN.IPFV
 ‘They are studying in Korea.’
- (24b) **Ted Solongos-t sur-č bij.*
 3PL.NOM Korea-DAT study-CVB.IPFV be
 (Intended meaning: ‘They are studying in Korea.’)

On one hand, if we take into account the fact that there is a native speaker who accepts Example (23), *bij* is considered a verb (although it has lost the other verbal characteristics). If we adopt this analysis, the next step is to explore which of the three kinds of conjugational forms *bij* is classified as. As shown in (17), *bij* can conclude a sentence. In addition, they can compose an adnominal clause (i.e., they can modify a substantive). See (25), where an adnominal clause including *bij* (*dajsan bij*) modifies the subsequent substantive *gazar* ‘place’.¹⁴

¹² Examples are also attested, though very rarely, where *buj* ‘to be’, which is used mainly in formal and archaic styles, is preceded by a negative particle.

Najran deer nulims melter-ne, nadad juu buj, juu es buj?
 celebration on tear.NOM ripple-TV.NP 1SG.DAT what.NOM be what.NOM NEG be
 ‘At the celebration, [my] tears glisten. What do I have, what don’t I have?’ (Literal translation: ‘What is at me, what is not at me?’; From the poem ‘Mön čanar buj avaas’ written by O. Dašbalbar)

¹³ In contrast, *buj* can follow a converb form.

Ted Solongos-t sur-č buj.
 3PL.NOM Korea-DAT study-CVB.IPFV be
 ‘They are studying in Korea.’

¹⁴ *Buj* ‘to be’ can also modify a substantive.

Solongos-t sur-č buj Mongol ojuutn-uid
 Korea-DAT study-CVB.IPFV be Mongolian student-PL
 ‘Mongolian students studying in Korea’

- (25) *Dajsan bij gazar baatar baj-dag.*
 enemy.NOM be place hero.NOM be-VN.HAB
 ‘Wherever there are enemies, there are heroes.’ (Literal translation: ‘[At] places [where] enemies exist, heroes exist.’)

Furthermore, *bij* can take a case suffix (e.g., (22)). These functions and characteristics of *bij* mentioned above (the abilities to conclude a sentence, to modify a substantive, and to take a case suffix) are identical to those of verbal-nominal forms. (For functions and characteristics of verbal-nominal forms, see Section 1.5.) Therefore, as a possible analysis, we can classify *bij* as a verbal-nominal form,¹⁵ where the stem and a verbal-nominal suffix are fused.¹⁶

On the other hand, *bij* is not considered a verb if we take account of the fact that one of our consultants rejected (23). In this case, *bij* is classified as a substantive (in particular, an adjective-like substantive). (An adjective-like substantive can appear in the substantive predicate to conclude a sentence. In addition, an adjective-like substantive can modify a substantive, can take a case suffix, but cannot be combined with a converb form.)

4.2 Status of *ügüj* and *biš* as substantives

Ügüj is classified not as a particle, but as a substantive by Poppe (1970: 77).¹⁷ However, he does not explain on what basis *ügüj* is considered a substantive. As can be observed in (26), *ügüj* can modify a substantive.

- (26) *juu=č ügüj xün*
 what.NOM=even.FP not/absent person
 ‘a person [who] has nothing’ (Literal translation: ‘a person [at whom] whatsoever is absent’)

This behavior is exhibited by *biš* as well.¹⁸

¹⁵ As explained in Section 1.5, the negative suffix *-güj* can be attached to a verbal-nominal form. However, *bij* lacks the negative form obtained by the attachment of *-güj*.

* *ljrxüü jos mongol-oos öör uls+oron-d bij-güj.*
 like.this custom.NOM Mongolia-ABL other country-DAT not-NEG

(Intended meaning: ‘A custom like this cannot be seen in countries other than Mongolia.’)

In passing, it is worth noting that the sentence remains ungrammatical if *bij-güj* in the sentence above is replaced by *buj-güj*.

¹⁶ From the semantic viewpoint, the ‘fused’ stem of *bij* would be a verb which is similar to *baj-* ‘to be’. Compare (24a) to (24b). On the other hand, the ‘fused’ verbal-nominal suffix of *bij* would be something like the imperfective verbal nominal suffix *-aa*. (See the last word *baj-g-aa* in (24a).) However, we will remain undecided about which verbal-nominal suffix is fused in *bij* because we need further investigation before drawing a conclusion.

¹⁷ To be accurate, Poppe (1970: 77) classifies *ügüj* not as a substantive but as a noun. (Poppe does not adopt the umbrella term *substantive*.)

¹⁸ Examples are also attested where *bus* ‘not’ modifies a substantive.

diplomat ažiłtan bus xün
 diplomatic worker.NOM not person
 ‘a person [who is] not a diplomatic agent’

- (27) *ojuutan* *biš* *xün*
 student.NOM not person
 ‘a person [who is] not a student’

Furthermore, as pointed out in Section 3.2, *ügiij* and *biš* can take a case suffix. These behaviors (the abilities to modify a substantive and to take a case suffix) are characteristic of either substantives (in particular, adjective-like substantives) or verbal-nominal forms of the verb. *Ügiij* and *biš*, in contrast to *bij*, do not exhibit any verbal characteristics discussed in Section 4.1. From these pieces of evidence, *ügiij* and *biš* are considered adjective-like substantives.

4.3 *Mön* and *alga*

To start with the conclusion, it is not obvious which lexical categories *mön* and *alga* belong to. On one hand, they can be categorized as substantives, as a possible classification. They exhibit no behaviors characteristic of verbs mentioned in Section 4.1, and they can take a case suffix. Taking into account these characteristics of *mön* and *alga*, it seems possible to consider them substantives. In case we adopt this analysis, *mön* and *alga* are subcategorized, in particular, as noun-like substantives because *mön* or *alga* cannot modify a substantive (e.g., (28b), (29b)) or a predicate. (This behavior is characteristic of noun-like substantives. See Section 1.3.)

- (28a) *Ene xün* *ojuutan* *mön*.
 this person.NOM student.NOM certain
 ‘This person is certainly a student.’
- (28b) **ojuutan* *mön* *xün*
 student.NOM certain person
 (Intended meaning: ‘a person [who is] certainly a student’)
- (29a) *Ene xün-d* *juu=č* *alga*.
 this person-DAT what.NOM=even.FP absent
 ‘(S)he has nothing.’ (Literal translation: ‘At this person, whatsoever is absent.’)
- (29b) **juu=č* *alga* *xün*
 what.NOM=even.FP absent person
 (Intended meaning: ‘a person who has nothing’; Literal translation: ‘a person [at whom] whatsoever is absent’)

On the other hand, however, this idea (i.e., to classify *mön* and *alga* as noun-like substantives) cannot explain why *mön* and *alga* are used without a case suffix (e.g., (13), (16), (28a), (29a)) much more often than with a case suffix (e.g., (20), (21)). (Recall that examples of *mön* and *alga* with a case suffix can be observed only with low frequency. See Section 3.2 for this point.) This behavior is unusual for the other noun-like substantives. (In many cases, noun-like substantives appear with a case suffix. See Section 1.3.) Now, another possible analysis is to establish for *mön* and *alga* a subcategory which is

neither the noun-like, adjective-like, nor adverb-like substantive, or to set up for them a category which is neither the substantive nor the verb.

At this point of our investigation, we will not go further than to suggest the two possibilities (i.e., to consider *mön* and *alga* noun-like substantives on one hand, and to establish a new (sub)category for them on the other) because we need more detailed investigation, including comprehensive discussions on how to classify lexical items in Mongolian properly. (As mentioned in Section 1.3, opinions vary among researchers as to the classification of lexical items in Mongolian.)

Finally, it would be useful to summarize the characteristics and (possible) classifications of *mön*, *alga*, *ügüj*, *biš*, and *bij* discussed in this section. See Table 3. The plus or minus symbol indicates whether the relevant word has the characteristic or ability shown in the leftmost column. The plus and minus symbols set apart by a slash denote that the acceptability judgment differs from speaker to speaker. ‘Adj’, ‘N’, and ‘VN’ on the last line are the abbreviations for ‘adjective-like substantive’, ‘noun-like substantive’, and ‘verbal-nominal form’, respectively. The question mark indicates that the classification shown in the relevant cell is uncertain.

Table 3. Characteristics and (possible) classifications of *mön*, *alga*, *ügüj*, *biš*, and *bij*

Word	<i>mön</i> ‘certain’	<i>alga</i> ‘absent’	<i>ügüj</i> ‘not, absent’	<i>biš</i> ‘not’	<i>bij</i> ‘to be’
Relevant section	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.2	4.1
Characteristics of a verb	–	–	–	–	+ (defectively)/–
Ability to modify a substantive	–	–	+	+	+
Ability to take a case suffix	+ (rarely)	+ (rarely)	+	+	+ (rarely)
(Possible) classification	?N	?N	Adj	Adj	VN or Adj

5. Conclusion

Among the dependent words which are classified as sentence-final ‘particles’ in the literature, *mön*, *alga*, *ügüj*, *biš*, and *bij* exhibit different behaviors from the others in the following two respects. First, these five words can appear alone to compose a sentence. Second, a case suffix can be attached to them. From these aspects, they are considered independent words rather than particles. Of these five independent words, *bij* is considered either a verbal-nominal form or a noun-like substantive. *Bij* can modify a substantive and can take a case suffix. However, the judgment of acceptability differs from speaker to speaker as to whether *bij* can be negated by a negative particle. *Ügüj* and *biš* are classified as adjective-like substantives because they can modify a substantive and can take a case suffix (and because they do not exhibit verbal behaviors.) The affiliations of *mön* and *alga* are not obvious yet. They resemble noun-like substantives in that they can take a case suffix and in that they cannot modify a substantive or a predicate. However, *mön* and *alga* differ from noun-like substantives because *mön* and *alga* are used without a case suffix much more often than with a case suffix.

Abbreviations

1:	first person	HAB:	habitual	Q:	question
2:	second person	IPFV:	imperfective	REFL:	reflexive-possessive
3:	third person	MP:	sentence-final	SG:	singular
ABL:	ablative		modal particle	TV:	terminating verbal
ACC:	accusative	NEG:	negative	VN:	verbal nominal
COND:	conditional	NOM:	nominative	-	affix boundary
CVB:	converb	NP:	non-past	=	clitic boundary
DAT:	dative-locative	PST:	past	+	boundary in a compound word
EP:	epenthesis	PL:	plural		
FP:	focus particle	PN:	personal name		
GEN:	genitive	PROP:	proprietary		

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モンゴル語ハルハ方言のいくつかの文末助詞の分類

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要旨

モンゴル語の「助詞」は、単独では文を構成できず、また屈折により形を変えることがないものとして定義される。本稿では助詞の中でも特に、述語の後に現れてモーダルな意味を表す助詞（文末助詞）を取り上げる。文末助詞として先行研究で分類されているものの中には、先に述べた「助詞」の定義とは異なり、単独で文を構成したり、格接辞を取ることができるものが存在する。本稿ではまず、こうした「助詞」の定義から外れる文末助詞が、5つある事を指摘する。その後、その5つの「文末助詞」を「動詞」や「実詞」といった、「助詞」以外の語彙範疇に分類することを試みる。

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