

How Can We Define The “Participles” in Mongolic Languages: Two Problems In Shinekhen Buryat

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Abstract

This paper aims to examine the function of “participles (or also called as “verbal nouns”)” in Shinekhen Buryat (SB; one of the Mongolic languages) and to suggest the following two points: 1) It seems to be difficult to define the prototypical participles in SB as inflectional verb > adjective transposition; 2) we should recategorize the participles in SB. In SB, Some of the participles are more verbal and more inflectional. These are “participles” of the inflectional paradigm of verbs. On the other hand, the other forms are less verbal and less inflectional, i.e., more derivational. We should categorize those suffixes into syntactic derivational suffix.

We can find the same problem about participles on the other Altaic languages. Participles in Altaic languages are different from those in Indo-European languages on their verbal properties. It would be important for not only linguistic description, but also for language-teaching to examine the function of each “participle” found on previous grammar.

Keywords: participles, verbal nouns, inflection, derivation, Mongolic languages.

This paper aims to examine the function of participles in Shinekhen Buryat, which is one of the Mongolic languages spoken in Manchuria, and suggests the following two points: first, we cannot define the prototypical participles in Shinekhen Buryat as inflectional verb to adjective transposition, since they contain certain features that differ from adjectives; second, we recommend a recategorization of the participles in Shinekhen Buryat as they differ with respect to the degree of deverbalization.

Linguistic outline of Shinekhen Buryat

Shinekhen Buryat is spoken by the Buryat and the Khamnigan peoples around the basin of the Shinekhen River in Manchuria. The ancestors of speakers were in Russian territory; however, they immigrated to China from 1917 until 1932.

Shinekhen Buryat is a Mongolic language, and as such its grammatical features share many similarities with other Mongolic languages. Such features include agglutination, suffix-dominant morphology, head-final structure, SOV word order, and subordinate clauses preceding main clause. It has rich allomorphs due to vowel harmony. Adjectives are classified into the nominals, which comprise substantives, adjectives, numerals, and so on, as adjectives are able to tolerate every case suffix. For example, the word “*hain*” in (1) functions as an adjective. On the other hand, “*hain*” in (2) takes an accusative case suffix, i.e., the word “*hain*” functions as a noun in (2).

- | | | | | | |
|-----|---------------|---------------------------|-----|--------------------------|------------------|
| (1) | <i>hain</i> | <i>xun</i> . ¹ | (2) | <i>hain-ii=n</i> | <i>ab-ii=s</i> . |
| | good(A) | person | | good(A)-ACC=3POS | take-IMP=2sg |
| | “good person” | | | “Choose the better one.” | |

¹ All examples of Shinekhen Buryat has been examined by native Shinekhen Buryat speakers. Examples without any sources such as (1) are collected through elicitation.

Furthermore, adjectives also function as adverbs when they appear without any derivational suffixes. For example, the word “*hain*” in (3) modifies the verb “*jab-aarai* (to go later)” directly, acting like an adverb.

- (3) *hain jab-aarai=t.*
 good(A) go-IMP.FUT=2pl
 “Good-bye (lit. go well.)”

In the main clause, the person and number of the subject are indicated by enclitical personal predicative particles. Example (4) shows a verbal predicate. The particle “=*b*” agrees with the subject “*bii*.” In (5), this sentence has a nominal predicate. In this sentence “=*b*” also agrees with the subject “*bii*,” as in (4).

- (4) *bii jab-na=b.* (5) *bii Dɔndɔg=b.*
 I go-PRS(V)=1sg I PSN(N)=1sg
 “I go.” “I am Dondog.”

In the subordinate clause, subject-agreement is indicated by enclitical personal possessive particles. In (6), in the subordinate clause “*jabxada=mni* (when I went there),” =*mni* agrees with the subject of the clause. In this position, personal predicative particles are never used.

- (6) *jab-xa-da=mni xen=sje ugui=hen.*
 go-P.FUT-DAT=1sgPOS who=also no=PFV
 “When I went (there), I couldn’t find anyone.”

Next, we examine the verbal morphology of Shinekhen Buryat (see Figure 1). The verb stem is comprised of a root and some derivational suffix, which relates to voice and aspect. The stem takes inflectional suffixes such as finite suffixes, participle (or also called as verbal noun) suffixes, and converb suffixes. Finite and participles can also take the negative suffix “-*gui*” when needed.

Figure 1. Verbal Morphology of Shinekhen Buryat

V STEM-					
Root-	(-derivational-)		-inflectional	(-negation)	(=person/NB)
	VOICE	Asp			
	-CAUS- -PSS- -RCP- etc.	-PRG- -PFV-	-FIN -P -CV	-NEG (attached to FIN and P)	=PRED =POS

The inflection of verbs consists of three categories: *finite forms*, *participles*, and *converbs*. Finite forms are only used for the predicate of the main clause. Converbs are only used for the predicate of the adverbial clause. Participles, on the other hand, are multi-functional. They are used for the predicate of the adjectival, nominal, main clause, and the adverbial clause.

(7)-(10) provide examples of participles used in various clauses. In (7), the participle “*jab-aa* (going)” modifies noun, “*zon-ood* (people).”

- (7) *tende jab-aa zon-ood xed=be.*
 there go-P.IPFV people-PL who(PL)=Q
 “Who went there? (lit. Who is the people who went there?)”

In (8), a participle is used as the predicate of the nominal clause.

- (8) *tamɨʃa tat-xa=sni bijen-de=sj moo.*
 cigarette pull-P.FUT=2sgPOS body-DAT=2sgPOS bad
 “Smoking is bad for your body.” [Yamakoshi 2006: 156]

In (9), a participle is serving as the predicate of the main clause.

- (9) *bii* *axai-d-aa* *zaxidal* *bisi-ee=bi*.
 I elder.brother-DAT-REFL letter write-P.IPFV=1sg
 “I wrote a letter to my brother.” [Yamakoshi 2006: 165]

Furthermore, participles can function as the predicate of the adverbial clause (e.g. (10)). In such a case, however, a personal possessive particle should be attached to the participle.

- (10) *tereen-ii=n* *s'ax-aad* *garga-ha=mn* *onta-z'a* *bai-na*.
 that-ACC=3POS push-CV.PFV put.out-P.PFV=1sgPOS sleep-CV.IPFV be-PRS
 “Although I pushed out that, (he) was sleeping.” [Yamakoshi 2014: 192]

Are participles “the inflectional V > A transposition?”

As previously demonstrated, such multi-functionality of participles is similar to that of adjective we have seen above. Adjectives also have four uses, *i.e.*, the predicative, adnominal, nominal, and adverbial. Haspelmath & Sims (2010) propose that participles are the inflectional Verb-to-Adjective transposition. This definition seems to be correct in Shinekhen Buryat due to the syntactic multi-functionality of participles, similar to that of adjectives.

However, the syntactic behavior of participles is not equal to that of adjectives. Firstly, participles must take any particles, e.g., a personal possessive particle as in the sentence (10) when participles appear in the predicate of adverbial clauses. On the other hand, adjectives never take any particles as seen in (3).

Secondly, participles can take the negative suffix, “-*gui*,” one of the modal suffix. However, adjectives cannot take the negative suffix.

- (11) *idj-xe-gui* / *idj-ee-gui*. (12) **hain-gui*
 eat-P.FUT-NEG / eat-P.IPFV-NEG good(A)-NEG
 “Not eating / Not having eaten”

We can account for these differences by proposing that participles maintain verbal properties whereas adjectives lack these features. These differences are the reason why participles are not equal to adjectives.

Participles as the deverbal nominalization

Next, we identify the participles in the Buryat inventory. Table 1 shows forms used to classify Buryat participles in previous studies.² We can see that the participles contained in each description differ between the various studies. This demonstrates lack of agreement concerning the definition of participles. In order to resolve this discrepancy, we must examine the ways in which each form differs from the others.

² The small number at each end of morpheme (e.g. 3 in *-han₃*) indicates the number of allomorphs due to vowel harmony. For example, *-han₃* has three allomorphs such as *-han*, *-hen*, *-hɔn*.

Table 1. Classification of participles in previous researches.

	term	participial suffixes
Poppe (1960)	Verbal Noun	<i>-han</i> ₃ PFV; <i>-aa</i> ₄ IPFV; <i>-xa</i> ₃ FUT; <i>-dag</i> ₃ HAB; <i>-gsja</i> ₃ AGT; <i>-aasja</i> ₄ AGT; <i>-aŋxai</i> ₃ RSL; <i>-aatai</i> ₄ PSS
Kuribayashi (1992)	<i>Jap. Keidoushi</i> (Adjectival-verb)	<i>-han</i> ₃ ; <i>-aa</i> ₄ ; <i>-xa</i> ₃ ; <i>-dag</i> ₃ ; <i>-gsja</i> ₃ or <i>-aasja</i> ₄ ; <i>-aŋxai</i> ₃
Darbeeveva (1997)	<i>Rus. Prichastie</i> (Participle)	<i>-han</i> ₃ ; <i>-aa</i> ₃ ; <i>-xa</i> ₃ ; <i>-dag</i> ₃ ; <i>-gsja</i> ₃ ; <i>-aasja</i> ₄ ; <i>-aŋxai</i> ₃ ; <i>-aatai</i> ₄ ; <i>-maar</i> ₄
Skribnik (2003)	Participle	<i>-han</i> ₃ ; <i>-aa</i> ₄ ; <i>-xa</i> ₃ ; <i>-dag</i> ₃ ; <i>-gsja</i> ₃ ; <i>-aasja</i> ₄ ; <i>-aŋxai</i> ₃ ; <i>-aatai</i> ₄ ; <i>-xaar</i> ₄ ; <i>-maar</i> ₄

In order to analyze the differences in the various forms, I apply Malchukov's proposal of hierarchy constraints on transcategorial operations. Malchukov (2006) points out that when verbs are nominalized, both deverbalization and nominalization occur independently along the hierarchy. When a verb is nominalized in various ways, verbal properties contained within the verb will be lost, such as illocutionary force, agreement, mood, tense, aspect, voice, and valency. Simultaneously, the word will first acquire "case" property, then receiving the determiner feature, possessive marker, number and classifier in this order.

To better illustrate this process, let us examine both the deverbalization and nominalization of deverbal nouns. *id'emxei* appeared in sentence (13), is a noun derived from the verb *id-* meaning "eat." This *id'emxei* can take case suffixes such as accusative, possessive markers, and a plural suffix.

- (13) *id-emxei-nuud-ii id'eel-uul-xe-gui. (+NB)*
eat-ADJV-PL-ACC eat-CAUS-P.FUT-NEG
“(S/He) doesn't feed greedy eaters.”

Degree of both the deverbalization and nominalization of deverbal nouns is indicated as in (14)

- (14) Deverbalization
-Valency >> -Voice >> -Aspect (>> -Tense) >> -Mood >> -AGR >> -IF
No properties!
Nominalization
-Case (>> -Det) >> -Pos >> -NB (>> -CL)³
----->

Thus, we can say this word is highly nominalized. On the other hand, this "*id'emxei*" cannot take any verbal suffixes which indicate Mood, Voice, Aspects and cannot take any argument (subject or object), *i.e.*, this form lacks all verbal properties, from illocutionary force to valency. Deverbal nouns maintain their lexical meanings, however, they lose their verbal properties.

Verbal Properties of Prototypical Participles

Prototypical participles, including "future," "imperfective," "perfective," and "habitual," are not so "deverbalized," compared to derivational nouns. These participles only lack the illocutionary force in the cline of verbal properties. They maintain many properties such as, Valency (they take subject and/or object arguments), Voice (they can attach voice suffixes), Aspect (they also attach aspectual suffixes), Mood (they can take negative suffix "*-gui*"), Agreement (they indicate person and number by personal particles). Additionally, these participles also have rich nominal properties, with the exclusion of number. They can take case suffixes and possessive markers.

³ I parenthesized Tense, Det(eterminer), and Cl(assifier) since those properties are not indicated by participles in Shinekhen Buryat.

- (15) *id'eel-uul-deg-gui=sj moo. (+Voice, +Mood, +AGR)*
 eat-CAUS-P.HBT-NEG=2sgPOS bad
 “It is bad that you don’t feed someone. (*lit.* Not your feeding (someone) is bad)”
- (16) *ab-xa-jii=mni tere med-ne. (+Case, +Poss)*
 take-P.FUT-ACC=1sgPOS s/he know-PRS
 “S/He knows what I will buy.”

Degree of both the deverbalization and nominalization of the four prototypical participles is indicated as in (17).

- (17) Deverbalization
 -Valency >> -Voice >> -Aspect (>> -Tense) >> -Mood >> -AGR >> -IF
 ----->
- Nominalization
 -Case (>> -Det) >> -Pos >> -NB (>> -CL)
 ----->

Verbal Properties of Agentive Participle *V-gs'a₃*

However, we cannot say that all participles in previous descriptions maintain such rich verbal properties. The agentive participle *V-gs'a₃* lacks many verbal properties, such as Illocutionary force, Agreement, Mood, and Aspect. However, this form can take a plural suffix, so we can say that it is nominalized higher than the prototypical participles.

- (18) *ɔrci onta-gs'a=sjni juu g-ees'e=b. (-AGR, +Case, +pos)*
 late sleep-P.AGT=2sgPOS what say.that-P.AGT=Q
 “Why is it that you sleep so late? (*lit.* Thy late sleeping is what?)” [from Poppe 1960: 67]
- (19) **tere basgan sora-gs'a-gui. (OK: sora-gs'a bis') (-Mood)*
 that girl:NOM study-P.AGT-NEG study-P.AGT NOT
 “That girl is not a student”

Degree of both the deverbalization and nominalization of the agentive participle *V-gs'a₃* is indicated as in (20).

- (20) Deverbalization
 -Valency >> -Voice >> -Aspect (>> -Tense) >> -Mood >> -AGR >> -IF
 ----->
- Nominalization
 -Case (>> -Det) >> -Pos >> -NB (>> -CL)
 ----->

Verbal Properties of Agentive Participle *V-aas'a₄*

Another example, *-aas'a₄*, preserves the verbal properties of Mood and Aspect. It can take the negative suffix just like the prototypical participles.

- (21) *tam-da ona-z'ai-g-aas'a=haa, (+Valency, +Aspect)*
 hell-DAT fall-PROG-E-P.AGT=COND
 “If s/he were in the hell, (*lit.* If (s/he) is the person being in the hell,)”
- (22) *jab-aas'a-gui-de. (+Mood, +Case)*
 go-P.AGT-NEG-DAT
 “To someone who does not go.”

Degree of both the deverbilization and nominalization of the agentive participle V-aasja₄ is indicated as in (23).

- (23) Deverbilization
 -Valency >> -Voice >> -Aspect (>> -Tense) >> -Mood >> -AGR >> -IF
 ----->
 Nominalization
 -Case (>> -Det) >> -Pos >> -NB (>> -CL)
 ----->

Verbal Properties of Agentive Participle V-*anxai*₃

Example (24) shows the example of resultative participle *-anxai*₃. This form can take neither the negative suffix (–Mood) nor the plural suffix (–NB). This form lacks more verbal properties than the prototypical participles.

- (24) *jaa-han* *es-enxai* *s'aaxai-tai=s'* (+Valency, +Aspect)
 do.what-P.PFV be.tired-P.RSL shoe-PROP=2sg
 “What wear-out shoes you put on!”

Degree of both the deverbilization and nominalization of the resultative participle V-*anxai*₃ is indicated as in (25).

- (25) Deverbilization
 -Valency >> -Voice >> -Aspect (>> -Tense) >> -Mood >> -AGR >> -IF
 ----->
 Nominalization
 -Case (>> -Det) >> -Pos >> -NB (>> -CL)
 ----->

Verbal Properties of Agentive Participle V-*aatai*₄

(26)(27) are examples of passive participle *-aatai*₄. I propose that this form is analyzed as the imperfective participle with a proprietive suffix *-tai*₃ since the negative form of V-*aatai*₄ is realized V-*aa-gui*₄, not V-*aatai-gui*₄.

- (26) *saarhan* *deer* *bisi-eetei* *bisjeg* (+Valency, +Aspect)
 paper on write-P.PSS letter
 “a letter / letters written on a paper.”
- (27) **bisi-eetei-gui./* *bisi-ee-gui.* (–Mood)
 write-P.PSS-NEG/ write-P.IPFV-NEG
 “Not being written”

Degree of both the deverbilization and nominalization of the passive participle V-*aatai*₄ is indicated as in (28).

- (28) Deverbilization
 -Valency >> -Voice >> -Aspect (>> -Tense) >> -Mood >> -AGR >> -IF
 ----->
 Nominalization
 -Case (>> -Det) >> -Pos >> -NB (>> -CL)
 ----->

Difference among those “participles”

Let us observe the degree of both verbal and nominal properties of each participle outlined in the previous description. (29) shows the verbal properties contained within each participle. From this cline, we can say that three participles *V-gsʹa₃*, *V-aŋxai₃* and *V-aatai₄* are more deverbalized than the prototypical participles, as they cannot take some verbal suffixes, i.e., they lack certain properties. On the other hand, the nominal properties (30) that each form has are not so different from those contained in derivational nouns.

(29) How much is each form deverbalized?

	-Valency >> -Voice >> -Aspect (>> -Tense) >> -Mood >> -AGR >> -IF
Prototype	----->
<i>V-aasʹa₄</i>	----->
<i>V-gsʹa₃</i>	----->
<i>V-aŋxai₃</i>	----->
<i>V-aatai₄</i>	----->
V-NMLZ	No properties!

(30) How much is each form nominalized?

	-Case (>> -Det) >> -Pos >> -NB (>> -CL)
Prototype	----->
<i>V-aasʹa₄</i>	----->
<i>V-gsʹa₃</i>	----->
<i>V-aŋxai₃</i>	----->
<i>V-aatai₄</i>	----->
V-NMLZ	----->

Furthermore, the productivity of each participle is different. All verb-stems can take the four prototypical participles. Additionally, almost all verbs can take the agentive *-aasʹa₄*. However, certain verbs cannot tolerate the agentive *-gsʹa₃*, the resultative *-aŋxai₃* and the passive *-aatai₄*. It is important to note that derivational suffixes are less productive than inflectional suffixes, a pattern observed cross-linguistically.

(31) What kind of verbs can take suffixes:

Prototype	ALL verbs	<- Highly productive
<i>-aasʹa₄</i>	Almost all verbs	<- Highly productive
<i>-gsʹa₃</i>	Verbs without some state verbs	<- Less productive
<i>-aŋxai₃</i>	Verbs without some state verbs	<- Less productive
<i>-aatai₄</i>	Verbs without intransitive verbs	<- Less Productive

What are “participles” in Shinekhen Buryat?

Then, what are the participles in Shinekhen Buryat? Regarding Altaic languages, Kazama (2003) mentions that “verbal nouns or participles in European languages lack more verbal properties than those in Altaic languages.” From this perspective, we may also define *-gsʹa₃*, *-aŋxai₃* and *-aatai₄* suffixes as participles. However, these suffixes are less verbal.

Participles in Altaic languages are more verbal than those in Indo-European languages. If we include participles as well as finite and converbs into the inflectional paradigm⁴, we should recognize only the four prototypical participles (*V-han₃*; *V-aa₄*; *V-xa₃*; *V-dag₃*) and the agentive participle *V-aasʹa₄* as participles. On the other hand, the other suffixes are less inflectional (i.e., less productive and less verbal). However, they preserve the verbal property, Valency. Therefore, I propose that we recategorize these incomplete-inflectional suffixes as syntactic derivational suffixes that Vinokurova (2005) proposed in Sakha.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I suggest two points. First, participles in Shinekhen Buryat are not accurately captured through the inflectional Verb to Adjective transposition. Second, previous research varies with respect to participle classification, and a recategorization is demanded.

In Shinekhen Buryat, Some of the participles (V-*han*₃ PFV; V-*aa*₄ IPFV; V-*xa*₃ FUT; V-*dag*₃ HAB; V-*aas/a*₄ AGT) are more verbal and more inflectional. These are “participles,” the inflectional paradigm of verbs. On the other hand, other forms (such as: V-*gs/a*₃ AGT; V-*anxai*₃ RSL ; V-*aatai*₄ PSS) are less verbal and less inflectional, *i.e.*, more derivational. These suffixes should be categorized as syntactic derivational suffixes.

We observe the same problem concerning participles in other Altaic languages, which differ from Indo-European languages with respect to their verbal properties. It is important for not only linguistic description, but also for language instruction, to examine the function of each “participle” found in previous grammar.

Abbreviations

-: morpheme boundary, =: clitic boundary, 1,2,3: person, A: adjective, ACC: accusative, ADJV: adjective-derivational suffix, AGR: agreement, AGT: agentive, CAUS: causative, CL: classifier, CV: converb, DAT: dative, Det: determiner, FIN: finite, FUT: future, HAB: habitual, IF: illocutionary force, IMP: imperative, IPFV: imperfective, N: noun, NB: number, NEG: negative, NMLZ: noun-derivational suffix, NOM: nominative, P: participle, PFV: perfective, pl/PL: plural, POS: possessive, PRED: predicative personal particle, PRG: progressive, PROP: proprietive, PRS: present, PSN: person name, PSS: passive, Q: interrogative particle, RCP: reciprocal, REFL: reflexive possessive, RSL: resultative, sg: singular, V: verb.

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