

**JAN ROGALA**

(Warsaw)

**Compound verbs and verbal word groups in Modern Mongolian**  
**– compositions as an other method of Mongolian verb formation**

**Abstract**

So far Mongolian linguistic studies concerning Modern Mongolian word formation have focused mainly on the derivation method as the most popular and most common way to form new words. Only a few Mongolists emphasize other methods used in new words' formation process such as compounds and words' groups (particularly compound verbs and verbal word groups). Therefore, beside derivation, other methods of word formation, especially verb formation, exist unstudied not only in Modern but also in Classical Mongolian. While these methods were not so common in Classical Mongolian there are now many examples of compound verbs and verbal word groups in Modern Mongolian. These compound verbs and verbal word groups are examined in this paper.

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The term 'Modern Mongolian', repeatedly used in this paper, means the official language, often called Khalkha-Mongolian, for over 2.5 million Mongols, who live in Mongolia.

So far Mongolian linguistic studies concerning Modern Mongolian word formation have been mainly focused on the derivation method as the most popular and most common way to form new words. Obviously the agglutinative languages, such as Mongolian, mainly form new word by adding a simple or compound suffix to the invariable nominal or verbal stems.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In Mongolian there exist four types of derivation suffices: denominal forming nouns, denominal forming verbs, deverbal forming nouns and deverbal forming verbs. Each existing Mongolian derivation suffices is monofunctional. The way how and what kind of a new word, verb or noun, they form is precisely specified. See: S. Godziński, *Współczesny język mongolski*, pp. 24–68, N. Poppe, *Grammar of written Mongolian*, pp. 39–67.

This method of forming new words was widely described with many examples by outstanding Mongolists all over the world.<sup>2</sup>

Few Mongolists emphasize the other methods used in new words' formation process such as compounds and words' groups, particularly compound verbs and verbal word groups.

In most research works papers and other scientific dissertations there are few descriptions and examples concerning other methods of word formation in the Mongolian language. Of course there are attempts at describing and giving examples of compound nouns such as Nicholas Poppe's *Grammar of Written Mongolian*<sup>3</sup> and other scholarly books. However compound verbs and verbal word groups are seldom considered when, word formation in Modern Mongolian is analyzed.

Therefore, the most important fact is that beside derivation, other methods of word formation, especially verb formation, exist unseen not only in Modern but also in Classical Mongolian. Even if these methods were not so common in Classical Mongolian, there are now many examples of compound verbs and verbal word groups,<sup>4</sup> in Modern Mongolian which is very rich in such newly formed verbs.

The term 'compound verb' should be meant as a verb consisting of two verbal stems or a verbal stem and other part of speech. In case of Modern Mongolian there exist four compositions, which may form compound verbs.

1. converb + finite verb *элэн авах* 'to occupy; to take over', *авчух* 'to bring'.
2. verbal noun + finite verb *идсэн байх* 'to ate already'.
3. noun + finite verb *нас барах* 'to die', *дугарах* 'to make a sound; to speak'.
4. particle + finite verb *хуу татах* 'to pull off, to tear off', *бутлуургах* 'to break up'.

All four to a greater or lesser extent appear in spoken and written Modern Mongolian. The meaning they express is mostly a descriptive one but some examples of compound verbs get a completely new meaning.

If the construction's type, the method of verbs' conjunction, is studied, Mongolian compound verbs may be divided into two general kinds; 'concrecence' and 'juxtaposition'.

### Concrecence

Characteristic for the *concrecence* is only one accent, which always falls upon the first part. Two verbs, noun and verb or particle and verb may occur as the elements of *concrecence*. In most cases we observe the forming of such compound verbs changes the individual stems, mostly by simplification of the stem's form and its phonetic. In *concrecence*

<sup>2</sup> See: S. Kałużyński, *Klasyczny język mongolski*, N. Poppe, op. cit., G.J. Ramstedt, *Zur Verbstamm-bildungslehre der mongolisch-türkischen Sprachen*, Б.Х. Тодаева, *Грамматика современного монгольского языка. Фонетика и морфология*, S. Godziński, op. cit.

<sup>3</sup> See: N. Poppe, op. cit., pp. 118–123.

<sup>4</sup> In Classical Mongolian compound verbs and verbal words' groups are represented in large numbers by the onomatopoeic and illustrative verbs.

consisting of two verbs only the final consonant of the first may be dropped while the second verb may drop the whole syllable.

*авчиргах* 'to bring' < *авч* 'taking' + *ирэх* 'to come'

*аваачих* 'to take away, to carry off' < *аваад* 'after having taken' + *очих* 'to go to a place'

*буцаажгэх* 'to give back' < *буцааж* 'returning' + *өгөх* 'to give'

*хэлжэйх*<sup>5</sup> 'to speak continuously' < *хэлж* 'saying' + *байх* 'to be; to exist'

Although it is observed that some of the above *concrecences* are not noted in dictionaries and appear only in spoken modern Mongolian it may be supposed that they soon will be.

In *concrecences* formed of noun and verb neither phonetic nor graphic changes are observed.

*бодолхийлэх* 'to reflect; to be pensive' < *бодол* 'thought, idea' + *хийлэх* 'to do incessantly'

*дүүзаргах* 'to make a sound; to speak' < *дүү* 'sound; voice; song' + *заргах* 'to go out; to come out'

*сулбайх* 'to feel weak; to flag' < *сул* 'weak; loose;' + *байх* 'to be; to exist'

Among such *concrecences* there exists a group of verbs formed by deverbal nouns with final -м, -д and verb *хийх* 'to do; to perform'.

*нярдхийх* 'to crack' < *нярд* 'crack' + *хийх* 'to do; to perform'

*хяламхийх* 'to glance at' < *хялам* 'glance' + *хийх* 'to do; to perform'

It is correct to presume that in the near future the *concrecences* above might form new suffixes; -*дохий*- and -*мхий*-.<sup>6</sup>

Similar mentioned above are the *concrecences* formed of particle and verb. There are not observed any phonetic or graphic changes in either element. Almost all compound verbs formed in this way are represented by so called *verba status* – illustrative verbs. The most popular are *concrecences* formed by using particle and verb *хийх* 'to do; to perform'. *Concrecences*, where a verb other than *хийх* 'to do; to perform' has occurred are rare.

*булхийх* 'stick out' < \**бул*<sup>7</sup> + *хийх* 'to do; to perform'

*салхийх* 'to grow weak or tried' < \**сал* + *хийх* 'to do; to perform'

*бутниргэх* 'to break up' < *бут* 'up' + *ниргэх* 'to destroy; to strike; to smash'

*хаачих* 'to go where?' < *хаа* 'where?' + *очих* 'to go to'

Soon *concrecences* consisting of particle and verb *хийх* 'to do; to perform', might evolve into a verb derived by the means of the suffix. *-ай*-.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Most of such *concrecences*, consisting of *converbum imperfecti* and auxiliary verb *байх* 'to be; to exist', appear in 'present-future' tense and express present progressive; *иржина* 'is/are coming' (conf.) *ирж байна* 'is/are coming' < *ирж* 'coming' + *байна* 'is, are'. In some Mongolian dialects those of *concrecences* have already formed a suffix -*жай*-, -*жой*-, -*жээ*-. See: III. Лүвсанвандан, *Орчин цагийн монгол хэлний бүтэц*, p. 158.

<sup>6</sup> Similar situation was observed with the already independent Mongolian suffixes -*ахий*- and -*схий*-.

<sup>7</sup> Often it is very hard or even impossible to find independently existing illustrative element of such *verba status*. It can be artificially reconstructed.

<sup>8</sup> This suffix is considered to originate from the verb *хийх* 'to do; to perform'. See: S. Godziński, op. cit., p. 68.

## Juxtaposition

The construction of the second type of compound verbs, called *juxtaposition*, is 'dispersed' when compare to *concrecence*. Researches on the morphology and semantic of Mongolian juxtaposition particularly verbal ones conclude that such compound verbs may have two meaning: 'total' (developing new meaning) and 'separate' (keeping the meanings of all elements). The construction elements exist separately in and beyond the *juxtaposition*. Mongolian compound verbs characterized as *juxtaposition* may consist of some converbal forms<sup>9</sup> and verb, some verbal nouns<sup>10</sup> and verb, noun and verb or particle and verb.

The most common and often used Mongolian *juxtapositions* consist of converbal form and any verb.

*авч хэрэглэх* 'to take (steps, measures), to take over, to adopt' < *авч* 'taking' + *хэрэглэх* 'to use, to make use'.

*аваад ирэх* 'to bring' < *аваад* 'after having taken' + *ирэх* 'to come'

*зохион байгуулах* 'to organize; to establish' < *зохион* 'organizing' + *байгуулах* 'to build; to set up; to organize'.

Among the Mongolian compound verbs described there exists a group of *juxtapositions* which elements have identical or similar meaning.

*авиран мацах* 'to climb' < *авиран* 'climbing' + *мацах* 'to climb'

*хөгжин цэцэглэх* 'to develop; to flourish' < *хөгжин* 'developing; flourishing' + *цэцэглэх* 'to develop; to flourish'.

Such compounds are characteristic for Mongolian language and frequently appear in stylistics. A very similar process is also observed in the formation of compound nouns.<sup>11</sup>

The second most common juxtapositions consist of acceptable verbal noun and verb. Some of such compound verbs exist only as a juxtaposition of verbal noun, in some cases with the negative particle *.гүй* and auxiliary verb *байх* 'to be; to exist' (sometimes only in past tense) or *болох* 'to be; to become'. Semantically newly formed verbs may express or emphasize an aspect of the act.

*идсэн байх* 'to have eaten' < *идсэн* 'after having eaten' + *байх* 'to be; to exist'.

*аваагүй байх* 'not to take yet' < *аваагүй* 'did not take and still is not taking' + *байх* 'to be; to exist'.

*идээгүй ирэх* 'to come without having eaten' < *идээгүй* 'did not eat and still is not eating' + *ирэх* 'to come'.

*зогсохгүй байх* 'not to stop' < *зогсохгүй* 'process of not stopping' + *байх* 'to be; to exist'.

*нүүхгүй амьдрах* 'settle down' < *нүүхгүй* 'process of not migrating' + *амьдрах* 'to live'.

<sup>9</sup> There are only three converbal forms, *converbum imperfecti*, *converbum perfecti*, *converbum modale*, which may occur in *juxtaposition* forming a compound verb.

<sup>10</sup> Only *nomen perfecti*, *nomen imperfecti*, *nomen futuri*, *nomen usus* form may occur in *juxtaposition* forming a compound verb.

<sup>11</sup> See: III. Лүвсанвандан, op. cit., pp. 150–153.

*боддог болох* 'to start thinking continuously' < *боддог* 'the continuous act of thinking' + *болох* 'to be; to become'.

*Nomen usus* juxtaposed with auxiliary verb *байх* 'to be; to exist', occurred only in the past tense and can form a verb which may be translated as, English construction, 'to be used to doing something'.

*ажилладаг байв* 'was/were used to working' < *ажилладаг* 'the usual act of working' + *байв* 'was/were; existed'.

*явдаг байлаа* 'was/were used to going' < *явдаг* 'the usual act of going' + *байлаа* 'was/were; existed'.

Substantial numbers of *juxtapositions* are those composed of noun and verb, when verb impose the grammatical form of the noun.

*ам өгөх* 'to promise; to give one's word' < *ам* 'mouth' + *өгөх* 'to give'.

*гар нийлэх* 'to cooperate' < *гар* 'hand' + *нийлэх* 'to join; to unite'.

*нас барах* 'to die' < *нас* 'age' + *барax* 'to use up; to exhaust'.

*ус гарах* 'to leak' < *ус* 'water' + *гарах* 'to go out of/from; to come out'.

It is necessary to mention here the *juxtapositions* of deverbal nouns ending with -с, -в, -д, -м and verb *хийх* 'to do; to perform'. Thanks to them the suffixes -*ехий*- and -*схий*- have appeared in Mongolian.

*гялав хийх* 'to flash; to gleam' < *гялав* 'flash; gleam' + *хийх* 'to do; to perform'.

*яравс хийх* 'to pull a face' < *яравс* 'grimace' + *хийх* 'to do; to perform'.

Peculiar meaning, 'to want to do; to be worth doing something' express the *juxtaposition* of occurring in *Instrumentalis* deverbal noun ending with -м (forming suffix -*мААр*<sub>4</sub>) and auxiliary verb *байх* 'to be; to exist'.

*авмаар байх* 'to want to take; to be worth taking' < *авмаар* 'worth taking' + *байх* 'to be; to exist'.

*идмээр байх* 'to want to eat; to be worth eating' < *идмээр* 'worth eating' + *байх* 'to be; to exist'.

The *juxtapositions* of particle and verb might be divided into three kinds: those consisting of particle expressing circumstances (manner, direction or place) and verb, this of illustrative particle and verb or those of onomatopoeic particle and verb. In these *juxtapositions* the particle determines the meaning of the compound verb.

*нэвт хамгах* 'to pierce; to go right through; to stick through' < *нэвт* 'through, right through' + *хамгах* 'to pierce; to stick in'.

*яз татах* 'to crack into bits' < *яз* 'to bits' + *татах* 'to pull'.

*хуу барах* 'to finish definitely' < *хуу* 'all; fully' + *барax* 'to use up; to exhaust'.

In *juxtapositions* being onomatopoeic compound verbs the particle that occurs imitates a voice and is mostly juxtaposed with verb *хийх* 'to do; to perform'.

*нур хийх* 'to crack; to roar' < *нур* (cracking sound; roaring sound) + *хийх* 'to do; to perform'.

*над хийх* 'to crackle; to rattle' < *над* 'bang!; thump!' + *хийх* 'to do; to perform'.

Very rare are the onomatopoeic compound verbs formed from particle and verb other than *хийх* 'to do; to perform'.

*лаг цуух* 'to slump; to go down heavily' < *лаг* (heavily going down sound) + *цуух* 'to sit'.

The illustrative compound verbs formed of juxtaposition of illustrative particle and verb (mostly *хийх* 'to do; to perform'), occur in modern Mongolian in small number. This is because most Mongolian illustrative verbs are formed by means of suffix *.ай-* ~ *.ой-* ~ *.ий-*.

*цэрт хийх* 'to jump up' < *цэрт* (something sticking out; protruding) + *хийх* 'to do; to perform'.

*хонх цохих* 'to dent' < *хонх* (the hollow after hitting; striking) + *цохих* 'to hit; to strike'.

There is a special group of Mongolian verbs, which occur in *juxtapositions* forming compound verbs. These are auxiliary, descriptive, demonstrative and interrogative verbs. The auxiliary verbs; *байх* 'to be; to exist', *болох* 'to be; to become' and defective *\*бу-* 'to be', *\*а-* 'to be', and their occurrences, are well known but there are few descriptions of the occurrence of the other verbs mentioned.

The most common are *juxtaposition* of *converbum imperfecti* and descriptive, demonstrative and interrogative verbs. Such compositions gain a new meaning connected with the meaning of their elements. The converb that expresses main the act is supplemented by the descriptive, demonstrative or interrogative verb.

*худалдаж* 'to buy' < *худалдаж* 'selling' + *авах* 'to take'.

*эргүүлж өгөх* 'to give back; to return' < *эргүүлж* 'turning; returning' + *өгөх* 'to give'.

*хийж үзэх* 'to try to do' < *хийж* 'doing' + *үзэх* 'to see; to study'.

*очиж үзэх* 'to visit' < *очиж* 'going to a place' + *үзэх* 'to see; to study'.

*гүйж гарах* 'to run out' < *гүйж* 'running' + *гарах* 'to go out; to start; to cross'.

*бичиж гарах* 'to start writing' < *бичиж* 'writing' + *гарах* 'to go out; to start; to cross'.

*хэлж орхих* 'to finish speaking' < *хэлж* 'to speak' + *орхих* 'to leave; to give up'.

*ингээж явах* 'to go in this manner' < *ингээж* 'doing in this manner' + *явах* 'to go'.

*тэгээж авах* 'to take in that manner' < *тэгээж* 'doing in that manner' + *авах* 'to take'.

*яаж бичих* 'to write how?' < *яаж* 'doing how?' + *бичих* 'to write'.

As was said at the beginning of this paper, in Mongolian, besides derivation there exist two other methods of verb formation; one is compound, generally described above and other is verbal word group. The characteristic for verbal word groups is composition of more than three different parts of speech and fact that such composition may occur as a predicate in a sentence. The common known verbal word groups are those consisting of nouns or reduplication of onomatopoeic or illustrative particle and verb. Rare are those that consist of few verbal forms and final verb. Due to a lack of a general description of Mongolian verbal word group formation's the phenomenon below described might be considered as an attempt at emphasizing their occurrence and the meaning they express in Modern Mongolian. Verbal word groups that occur in Mongolian may be divided into:

– those formed of two nouns and final verb

*хар тамхи хэрэглэх* 'to take drugs'.

*хэл аманд орох* 'to be criticized'.

*хялав хялав хийх* 'to look askance'.

- those formed of reduplication of onomatopoeic or illustrative particle and final verb  
*тас тас хийх* 'to crackle'.  
*улбас улбас хийх* 'to flash; to flicker'.  
*хайв яйв хөдлөх* 'to wobble'.  
*хангир жингэр хийх* 'to ring'.
- those formed of reduplication of verbal forms and final verb  
*гүйж гүйж ирэх* 'to come running'.  
*авч иржээгэх* 'to bring'.  
*хийж хийж дүсгэх* 'to do and at last finish'.
- those formed of mixed verbal forms (mostly converbal one) and final verb  
*зовон асуугаад сураглах* 'to ask with care'.  
*манлайлан удирдаад нисч очиж ирэх* 'to arrive under the command (air force)'.  
*яран гүйж яваад бүдэрж унан гээмтэх* 'to get hurt running while being in hurry'.  
*орж ирсэн байх* 'to enter, to come in'.

So far there is limited research into either method of Mongolian verb formation. This paper is an attempt at initiating such research and it is hoped to trigger a surge in discussion on the problems described. More detailed descriptions are attached in the author's doctoral dissertation this article is an integral part.

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