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Origin, Development, and Tendency of Grammatical Case Suffixes of Mongolic Languages and Dialects

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Abstract: In this article, we present the results of a comparative study on inflexional suffixes involved in the grammatical construction of nouns and verbs in nine Mongolic languages: Mongolian, Oirat, Buryat, Monguor, Mogul, Dagur, Dongxiang, Bonan, and East Yugur, as well as in some dialects. To understand any lingustic phenomenon, it is essential to study it at both synchronic and sequential levels. That said, the fundamental issue remains the dialectic unity of analysis. Accordingly, in our study, we have collected linguistic materials relating to Mongolian languages and dialects and examined them both synchronically and sequentially, that is, by comparing and analyzing them from a historical perspective, in order to determine future trends in their development. Although eight grammatical cases have traditionally been defined and described, a comprehensive analysis of Mongolian languages and dialects identifies 12 cases in active use. Suffixes are derived from independent words and root syllables or from word-forming suffixes. As they evolved, particularly during the Middle Mongolian period, they lost their status as authentic words and, in modern times, have become morphemes. Quantitatively, grammatical case suffixes have increased in number through a process of ramification. At the same time, in their meanings have become more clearly defined and precise. In terms of form, suffixes have followed the linguistic principle of abbreviation, and have often been reduced to a single phoneme (usually a consonant) carrying grammatical meaning. On the other hand, the meaning and function of each suffix have expanded. New suffixes, formed from independent words, came to share some of the functions and meanings of older ones. In this way, the twofold process of language development has continued to the present day, in accordance with General Systems Theory.

Keywords: Mongolic languages; Mongolian dialects; grammatical case; exclusion principle; general systems theory (dual); grammaticalization

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1 Introduction

The dialectology of Mongolian languages has developed over the past 200 years through the dedicated efforts of researcher and scholars. During this period, substantial work has been carried out to record and classify the Mongolic languages and dialects spoken by scattered populations across Mongolia, in order to describe and characterize the many local dialects considered. However, relatively little work has been conducted to study modern Mongolic languages and their dialects from a global perspective, aiming to analyze them at all linguistic levels in order to identify both shared and distinctive features, and thereby construct a comprehensive overview of the Mongolic language. Arkadew remarks: "Two thirds of the world's languages present grammatical cases. Not surprisingly, several hundred books and thousands of scientific articles have been devoted to this extremely important issue over the last half-century. Nevertheless, some blind spots remain, and questions may well arise about which nothing has yet been formulated" (Arkadew 2009, 59–71). In this article, we aim to document the different forms marking grammatical case suffixes in modern Mongolic languages and dialects from both synchronic and diachronic approaches. Our objectives are to compare these forms, account for their origins and principles, and outline trends in the ongoing development.

2 Research Theory and Methodology

The conclusions drawn in this article adhere to the framework of General Systems Theory, a conceptual model focusing on the dialectic of conflict and unity that has attracted increasing interest among researchers worldwide. Some of its core principles were originally proposed by Von Bertalanffy, who coined the term (Drack and Schwarz 2010), and prove useful when addressing questions related to the evolution of grammatical cases of Mongolic languages and dialects from a comparative standpount.

The objective of General Systems Theory is to develop models for solving common to all domains of any "intellectual endeavour" (Korn 2014, n.p.). It facilitates dialogue across disciplines by providing a universal "scheme for empirical research" (Korn 2014, n.p.), enabling its concrete application in any domain of study. In a 2014 article, Korn pointed out several steps that inform our research. First, we present linguistic data collected over many years through field expeditions across Southern Mongolia.[1] This data is available to any researcher interested in the comparative

1 We refer here to Mongolians who live in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region of China. "Southern" is a word indicating the location of the country, situated at the south of Mongolia.

linguistics of Mongolic languages, provided it is systematically recorded and organized. Second, we propose interpretive principles to "bring intellectual order" (Korn 2014, n.p.) to this data by analyzing the relationships and interactions among the languages and dialects[2] studied, from both synchronic and diachronic perspectives.

Mongolic languages and dialects share certain features that justify grouping them as a single linguistic class (or domain). However, they also exhibit variations that make a comparative study both necessary and interesting. Therefore, the first step of our analysis involves description of the system in its static state. To understand its temporal evolution and predict future developments, we then (as a third step) introduce the dynamic state: considering the origin, development, and current trajectory of grammatical cases in Mongolian languages and dialects.

The theoretical framework that primarily guides our research is grammaticalization theory. Although this concept dates back to the nineteenth century, the term "grammaticalization" was coined in the early twentieth century by the French linguist Antoine Meillet in his 1912 article *L'évolution des formes grammaticales* (The Evolution of Grammatical Forms) (Meillet 1912, 384–400). As Heine and Narrog explain in their *Oxford Book of Linguistic Analysis (2012)*, the aim of grammaticalization theory is to offer "an explanatory account of how and why grammatical categories arise and develop, and why they are structured the way they are" (Heine and Narrog 2009, 401). The forms used to mark grammatical cases in Mongolic languages are products of such evolutionary processes. Accordingly, the methodology, concepts, and principles developed by grammaticalization theorists are instrumental in explaining the numerous variations observed in suffix forms across languages and dialects.

Grammaticalization theory holds that such changes "are not random but take[n] along [a] certain path" (Heine and Narrog 2009, 402), usually following relatively predictable paths.[3]

Four key parameters serve as analytical tools for studying grammaticalization: (1) extension; (2) desemantization; (3) decategorization; and (4) abbreviation. To elaborate on these slightly: (1) Extension occurs when existing forms are applied to new grammatical contexts; (2) desemantization involves a reduction in semantic content; (3) decategorization refers to the loss of original morphosyntactic

2 We will present in detail the languages and dialects considered in the following part, when clarifying the methodology followed to collect the data and compare them with existing databases established by Mongolists over the past.

3 Some counter-examples have been pointed out and the validity of the hypothesis that grammaticalization processes are unidirectional has been discussed, yet it has not been refuted so far.

properties; and (4) abbreviation represents phonetic reduction (though this is not a necessary part of grammaticalization).

One of the main challenges in analyzing the evolution of grammatical categories lies in identifying forms that represent different stages of change, particularly when earlier forms have disappeared, thus complicating the reconstruction of their hsitorical trajectories. Through empirical research conducted over the past three decades across Mongolic-speaking regions, we aim to contribute to a broader understanding of the emergence and development of grammatical forms.

According to General Systemic Theory, any phenomenon occurring in the universe abides by a principle of duality. This is addressed by an approach that emphasizes the dialectic of unification and differentiation. These two poles correspond to the four parameters of grammaticalization: extension reflects the acquisition of new properties, while the three other parameters reflect the loss of properties. In the phonetic evolution of case-marking suffixes in Mongolic languages, there is a clear long-term abbreviation phenomenon, traceable from their early formation to present-day usage. But along with the loss in form and function, and the disappearance of older suffixes, new forms have emerged, often as independent words or new suffixes, to assume grammatical functions, reflecting a general principle of language change.

The objective of our work is to offer the most exhaustive comparative study to date of the numerous languages derived from Mongolian, as listed and studied by specialists in this field:

1. Mongol language
   - 1.1. Khalkha dialect: Central khalkha, Western khalkha, East khalkha, Uwurkhangai khalkha, Govi khalkha, etc.
   - 1.2. Oirat dialect: Dörbet, Bayat, Uriankhai, Öölet, Zakhchin, Myangat, Torguut, etc.
   - 1.3. Buryat dialect: Khori-aga, Barga, Tsongool, Khongoodor, etc.
2. South Mongol language[4]

4 Taking into account the findings of numerous researchers, the opinions of informants, the common dialect, and approximate phonetics influenced by the literary language and the written language, and the notes in the *Atlas of the World's Languages*, we consider that the languages spoken by the Buryats and Kalmyks, and by people dispersed throughout the Russian Federation, have been considerably influenced by the Russian language and have become independent Buryat and Oryat languages with mixed characteristics. By contrast, the language spoken by the descendants of the Buryats and Oirates scattered across Mongolia, Inner Mongolia, the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, and certain provinces of China is of the Mongolian dialect. This is because the oral conversations of the Buryats and Oirats preserve the specific features of each language but are subordinate to the written languages Khalkha and Chahar, which are based on the dialect respectively. In this way, their oral language is assimilated to a certain extent.

   2.1. South Mongolia: Chahar, Uzemchin, Ordos, Alasha, Baarin, Khorchin, Kharchin, etc.
   2.2. Oirat dialect: Dörbet, Torguut.
   2.3. Buryat dialect: Buryat, Barga.
3. Kalmyck language[4]
   3.1. Dörbet dialect
   3.2. Torguut dialect
4. Buryat language[4]
   4.1. Khori-aga dialect
   4.2. Ekhirit dialect
   4.3. Bulagat dialect
   4.4. Khongodor dialect
   4.5. Tsongool-sartuul dialect
5. Monguor language
   5.1. Minkhe dialect
   5.2. Huzu dialect
6. Dagur language
   6.1. Chichigar dialect
   6.2. Khailar dialect
   6.3. Shinjian dialect
   6.4. Amur dialect
7. Dongxian language
   7.1. Sunonba dialect
   7.2. Vinjiaji dialect
   7.3. Shijiaji dialect
8. Bonan language
   8.1. Tunrwa dialect
   8.2. Jishishan dialect
9. East Yugur language
   9.1. Chinlun dialect
   9.2. Khenle dialect

Oirat and Buryat are spoken by populations of the Russian Federation, whereas Monguor, Dagur, Dongxiang, Bonan and East Yugur are spoken by communities in the Republic of China. Another Mongol ethnic group used to live in Afghanistan; however, they are not included in this study as their language has fallen out of use.

Among the four dialects that make up the Mongolian language (Khalha, the South Mongolia dialect, Oirat, and Buryat), we consider the most important subdialects to be the central Khalkh subdialect derived from Khalkh, the Chahar subdialect derived from the Southern Mongolia dialect, the Dörbet subdialect derived

from Oirat, and the Khori-aga Buryat dialect derived from Buryat. Furthermore, where possible, we include notable examples from other subdialects that can contribute to our research.

Methodology: This research into the grammatical cases of the Mongolian languages follows the general framework, methodology, and principles of comparative linguistics and structural linguistics. When appropriate, beyond linguistic methods, we apply analytical tools commonly used the broader scientific domain, such as field observation, experimentation, induction, deduction, analysis, and synthesis.

Terrain research, collection and recording of data: The findings presented in this document are based on three types of sources: firstly, data collected during fieldwork aimed at recording natural spoken language in everyday context used by speakers of the relevant languages and dialects; secondly, established grammatical accounts of the languages studied; and thirdly, data collected in the written sources. More specifically:

1. Since we started our work as linguists 30 years ago, we have conducted extensive and regular scientific expeditions in Mongolia, Russia, and China, in urban and rural settings, to collect data on all the dialects under study. These expeditions took place once or twice a year, lasting from seven to 20 days. In these expeditions we recorded samples of oral discourse from more than 1,000 speakers of Mongolic languages, including Mongol, Buryat, and Kalmyk.
   The data was collected via audio recordings of non-formal conversations among representative population samples, with the aim of compiling a large corpus of lingustic forms, focused specifically on the use grammatical cases and their marker suffixes. The audio recordings were subsequently transcribed using the international phonetic alphabet.
2. The following grammar books served as the main sources for the study of Mongolian, Oirat, Buryat, and Southern Mongolian: Unurbayan et al., *Modern Mongolian language*; Chingeltei, *Contemporary Mongol language*; Ubushaev, *Dialect system of the Kalmyk language*; and Dorzhiev, *Contemporary Buryat language.*
3. As for written sources about the languages being studied, we selected material from the following works: Enkhbat et al., *Dagur Language Vocabulary Material*; Bökh et al., *Dongxiang Language Vocabulary Material*; Chen Nai Shiun et al., *Bonan Language Vocabulary Material*; Bulchuluu et al., *Eastern Yugur Language Vocabulary Material*; Chingeltei et al., *Mongour Language Vocabulary Material.*

3 Research and Research Results

3.1 Grammatical Case Connecting Noun to Noun

3.1.1 Genitive Case

The *Zürhen Tolt*, written in the thirteenth century by Sazha Bandida Gungaazhaltsan, is usually referred to as the first documented source of Mongolian grammar. Unfortunately, the manuscript has not survived. However, the *Zürkhen toltyn tailbar – Ogtorgüin maani*, a critical commentary of this work, written by Molomravzhamba Danzandagva in the eighteenth century, has been preserved. In his work, Danzandagva referred to this grammatical case as "The sixth case connecting the meaning." Later, the academician Sh. Luvsanvandan renamed it the "genitive case in modern Mongolian grammar." In the Khalkha dialect of modern Mongolian, this case is expressed with the suffix [-ɪːŋ/-iːŋ], [(n)-ɪː/-iː] or as a zero alternant, connecting one noun to another and to the following word. For example (1):

(1) *Манай эрх чөлөө(**zero**)*$^{genitive\ case}$*, тусгаар тогтнол**ын***$^{genitive\ case}$ *үнэ цэн их юм.*
[manæː erx ʧʰөɬөː(**zero**), tʰʊsʁaːr tʰɔxtʰənɬ**ɪːŋ** un tsʰeŋ ix jʊm]
The value of our freedom and independence is great.
Lit.[5] Our freedom and independence-**of** the value is great.

For the other languages and dialects see Table 1:

The suffix [-æː] in the Khalkha dialect has become a standard genitive case marker for plural pronouns. Since ancient times, this suffix has appeared in forms such as [man**æ**ː], our (Lit. we-s) and [tʰan**æ**ː], yours (Lit. you-s). It is the only case connecting one noun to another. Over time, its functional load use has increased significantly, while the suffix [-ŋ/-n] has shifted in function to the attributive case.

In the three suffixes of the Oirat dialect, two [-aːŋ/-æːŋ, [-aː/-æː] are the main suffixes of the Kalmyk language, while the other [-ɪːŋ/-iːŋ] has been influenced by the Khalkha dialect. The Alasha subdialect, which originated with the Alasha people of South Mongolia, is spoken by the Uulds and Torguuts, who moved to the Alasha area over 300 years ago. Today's version of the Alasha subdialect uses forms such as [-aːn/-ɘː], [-naː/-nɘː], while other subdialects of Southern Mongolian use the suffixes [-ɪːŋ/-iːŋ] and [-æː/-eː/-œː].

In Khalkha, the suffix [-ŋ] is attached to words with long vowel endings, while South Mongolian dialects use a consonant [ɣ] in the suffix, which is transcribed as

5 Literal translation.

Table 1: Genitive case of Mongolic languages and dialects.

Languages and dialects	Forms of the suffix	Examples
South Mongolia dialect	[-ɪːŋ/-iːŋ]	[qar**ɪːŋ**], hand (Lit. hand-s);
	[-æː/-eː/-œː]	[tælæː**ɣiːŋ**], of sea (Lit. sea-of);
Alasha subdialect	[-aːn/-ɘː],	[pɔrɔːn**œ**ː], of rain (Lit. rain-of);
	[-naː/-nɘː]	[arəwn**æ**ː], tenths (Lit. ten-s)
Kalmyk language and dialect	[-aːŋ/-æːŋ]	[ʧʰɔn**aː**n kʰiʧʰik], wolf's paw (Lit. wolf-s paw);
	[-aː/-æː]	[øɣɬəɣ**æː**n etsən], charity's owner (Lit. charity-s owner);
	[-ɪːŋ/-iːŋ]	[qʊrn**a**ː arsn], deer skin (Lit. deer-s skin);
		[kʰiːsn**æ**ː eːʧ], midwife (Lit. umbilicus-s mother);
		[χarχ**ɪː**n møræːs], desire to meet (Lit. to meet-s desire);
		[teːt**iː**n tsajaːn], nice fortune (Lit. nice-s fortune)
Buryat language and dialect	[-æː/-eː/-œː]	[ʊːl**æ**ː ɔrœː], mountain top (Lit. mountain-s top);
	[-ɪːŋ/-iːŋ]	[χɔl**ɪː**ŋ ɢæːχamʃag], wonder of future (Lit. future-of wonder);
		[tʰeŋger**iː**n ʃenʒe], heavenly sign (Lit. heaven-s sign)
Dagur language	[-i/-ji]	[æːl**i** kər], family house (Lit. family-s house);
		[pi æːl**i**ː ɘməl pəjt aːʧəw], I was in front of the house (Lit. I house-of/genitive case/ front-in was)
Eastern Yugur language	[-in/-ɘ]	[taːn**ɘ** kər], your house (Lit. you-r house);
		[rɣam**ɘ** pʊtʊk], ark's color (Lit. ark-s color)
Monguor language	[-ni/-ne]	Minkhe. [ker**ni** parʁase];
		Huzu. [ker**ne** palʁase], house's wall (Lit. house-s wall);
		[tiel**ne** jɔːtəl səna], the stitching of the coat is good (Lit. the coat-of stitching is good)
Dongxiang language	[-ni]	[pidʑien**ni** kiete],[a] our house (Lit. we-s house);
		[mi**ni** dʑaʊ**ni** tɕiaʊrʊŋ], my sister's head (Lit. Me-of sister-s head)
Bonan language	[-nɘː]	[tan**ɘ** kər], your house (Lit. you-s house);
		[mən**ɘ** adu]; my brother (Lit. Me-of brother)

[a]Languages spoken by Mongolic language owners residing in the territory of China explicitly show that they are affected by Chinese even at the phoneme level, and they have the consonants *dʑ*, *tɕ* which are equivalents of consonants *t~ʦ~ʧ*, *tʰ~ʦʰ~ʧʰ*, and are pronounced by tongue-twisting.

[-iːŋ], for example, Khalkha [teɬxiː**n** tʊɬaːrəɬ], Chahar. [telxiː**ɣiːŋ** tʊlaːrəl], Global warming (Lit. Global-s warming) etc.

In Dagur language, the genitive suffix is significantly shortened when used with the personal pronoun.

Regarding meaning, this case expresses the subject responsible for the action, designation, time, quantity, part-whole relationships, and possession.

The genitive case suffixes in modern Mongolic langauges have variation in vowel quality, reflecting vowel harmony and historical development. Noteworthy diphthongs such as [œː] formed from the earlier [æː] which has two vowel forms, [i/ɪ] and

[a/æ]. Further, the vowel form [e/ɘ] developed before [a]. Vowel versions [ʊ/u] existed only in written language. *All Explanatory Notes of Mongolian Letters*, which was published in the early nineteenth century, explains that the letters *u/ü* were written but were not necessarily pronounced. If the letters *u/ü* are pronounced they would transform into *nai*, *nei*, which can be pronounced as egüden-ü (egüdenei, of the door), or modun-u (modnai, of wood). This suggests that the genitive suffix form derives from the stem **in/*an* which was associated with the third person pronouns of primitive Mongolian that developed in subdialects without the influence of written language. In middle Mongolian, after *i/a* stopped being used to distinguish singular or plural forms, the vowel version *i* was transcribed with the consonant *j*. The vowel *a* lost function also, and the version *an* was left out, with *n* the only remaining consonant. The later *-un/-ün* form emerged due to the addition of connecting vowels. In Buryat, Kalmyk, and other southern dialects, the original vowel root forms *i/a* remain, and in the Khalkha dialect the vowel version *i* was preserved. In Mongolic languages, the final consonant was often removed completely, and the openness of the vowel *a* was reduced. All of this shows that the genitive suffix developed primarily around the vowel [i], while in other Mongolic languages vowel [i/a] forms remain. Figure 1 shows this further:

3.1.2 Attributive Case

In the systematic grammar of modern Mongolian, the genitive case suffix [-ŋ] is usually attached to words ending with long vowels and diphthongs. However, in colloquial Khalkha, this rule is no longer strictly followed, and has been already lost in one syllable word. Examples include [xuːɣ**iːŋ**], son's (Lit. son-s), [tuːɣ**iːŋ**], sister's (Lit. sister-s), [tʊːn**ɪ**ː], song's (Lit. song-s) etc. Thus, attachment of the suffix [-ŋ] to words ending with consonants such as [uːɬə**n** ʧʰɵɬɵː],[6] distance between the clouds (Lit. cloud-s between-distance), [mœrʲə**n** tʰɵwərɣɵːŋ], sound of galloping horses (Lit.

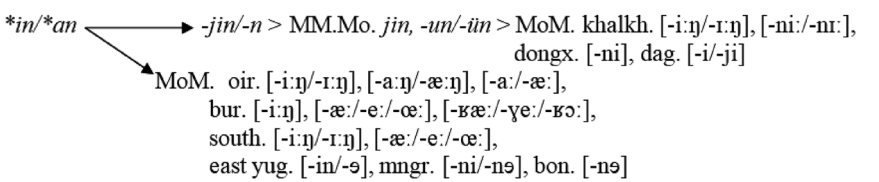

Figure 1: Genitive case of Mongolic languages and dialects.

6 In terms of phonology, the [ŋ] consonant is assimilated with the following consonant, and becomes [n], [m].

horse-s galloping-sound), [narə**n** tʰʊjaː], sun shine (Lit. sun-s shine), [iɬʧʏə**n** ʧʰix], and donkey's ears (Lit. donkey-s ears) distinguishes and clarifies the meaning, seen with examples such as [narə**n**tʰʊjaː], sun shine (Lit. sun-s shine, person's name), [narn**ɪ**ː tʰʊjaː], sun shine (Lit. sun-s shine), [iɬʧʏə**n** ʧʰix], donkey's ears (Lit. donkey-s ears – fruit), [iɬʧiʏn**i**ː ʧʰix] donkey's ears (Lit. donkey-s ears). The reason for this is that it contrasts with other suffixes of the genitive case, as seen in example (2a):

(2a) *Би илжгэ**н***$^{attributive\ case}$ *чих идсэн.*
[pi iɬʧʏən ʧʰix itsəŋ]
I ate the fruit.
Lit. I donkey'**s** ears ate.

The consonant [ŋ/n], which was shortened from the genitive case suffix and expressed the core meaning of the case, originates from the suffix *-n* which created the stems **min*man, *tin/*tan, *fiŋn/*fan* > **in/*an* in primitive Mongolian from the personal pronoun root **mi-/*ma-, *ti-/*ta-, *fi-/*fa-* > **i-/*a-.*

Further, this suffix has the same form as the morpheme [-ŋ] which modifies one noun with another like [mɔtə**m** pæːʃiŋ], wooden house (Lit. wood-by house), [mœrən ʃɔrʁɔːɬʧ], big ant (Lit. horse-like ant) etc. For example (2b):

(2b) *Манайх хашаандаа модо**н***$^{attributive\ case}$ *байшинтай.*
[manæːχ χaʃaːntaː mɔtəm pæːʃənt^{h}æː]
We have a wooden house in our yard.
Lit. We yard-in-our a wooden house have.

In this way, the attributive case, a newly evolving grammatical feature in Mongolian, is found across Khalkha and South Mongolia dialects, as well as in the Buryat, Oirat, Dagur languages, and their dialects.

This case is marked by a single-consonant suffix and because of phonemic characteristics of modern Mongolian languages, it is sometimes known as a dental fricative [n] and sometimes as a velar fricative [ŋ]. This suffix derives, first, from the noun stem ending in the *n/ŋ* consonant which is referred to as an unstable "n," and a movable "n." Second, it derives from the [n/ŋ] consonant that appears in spoken language when connecting nouns without the *n/ŋ* consonant in their stem to another noun. Third, it derives from the *n/ŋ* consonant which retains the core function or a shortened form of genitive case.

Some scholars refer to this *n* consonant as the "unstable n," particularly in genitive, dative, and ablative cases (модны, of wood, /Lit. wood-of/, моднооc, from wood /Lit. wood-from/, модонд, in wood /Lit. wood-in/). However, scholars from South Mongolia refer to this stem as the "movable stem." In modern Dongxiang, Bonan, Eastern Yugur, Buryat, and Kalmyk, this movable stem ending with the *n*

consonant has been well preserved. However, in the Dagur language it has been almost completely lost, and is diminishing in the Mongolian and Monguor languages.

In addition, when connecting a noun whose stem has no *n* consonant to another noun through modification, it assimilates into the word with the movable stem, causing a new [n] consonant in spoken language. For example (2c):

(2c) *Шилэ**н***$^{attributive\ case}$ *лонхонд ус байна.*
[ʃiɬən ɬɔŋχənt ʊs pæːn]
There is water in a glass bottle.
Lit. A glass (attributive case) bottle-in water is there.

And [tsʰeːmənt^{h}ə**n** ʃaɬ] – “cement floor” (Lit. cement-by floor), [waːrə**ŋ** χɔːɬœː] – “ceramic pipe” (Lit. ceramic-by pipe), [ʃirə**ŋ** nuːr] – “person who is not ashamed” (Lit. cowhide-by face /idiom/), [santɬə**n** teːr] – “on the chair” (Lit. the chair-s on), etc.

As for the other languages and dialects see Table 2 below:

In this way, the attributive case in modern Mongolian functions by connecting nouns to other nouns, to express key grammatical relationships. Because this suffix doesn’t conflict with written and spoken languages, it stabilizes and reaches the level of basic cases in Mongolian languages. This can be seen in Figure 2:

Table 2: Attributive case of Mongolic languages and dialects.

Languages and dialects	Forms of the suffix	Examples
South Mongolia dialect	[-ŋ]	[χœnə**m** maχ], mutton (Lit. sheep-s meat); [ʊːlə**ŋ** altʰæː], Mountain Altai – country (Lit. mountain-s Altai); [χɔːlə**ŋ** kər], restaurant (Lit. food-s house)
Kalmyk language and dialect	[-n]	[χaraːdaː**n** ʧiwir], swallow’s wings (Lit. swallow-s wings); [təræː**n** sʊr], redal strap (Lit. redal-s strap)
Buryat language and dialect	[-ŋ]	[dʊɣɪː**n** durəː], bicycle redals (Lit. bicycle-s redals); [xiː**n** zʊːχa], gas stove (Lit. gas-s stove)
Dagur, Bonan, East Yugur languages	[-ŋ/-n]	Dagur. *[miŋ ɘkʰɘːmiŋ]*, my sister (Lit. I-of sister); [ʃi**ŋ** uʧɣut], when you think (Lit. you-s when think)

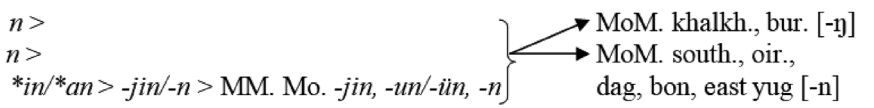

Figure 2: Attributive case of Mongolic languages and dialects.

3.1.3 Quantitative Case

There is no quantitative or limiting case in the Khalkha dialect. Instead, in the Alasha and Ordos subdialects of South Mongolia, the following forms exist: [-ʧʰɘ:]. For example (3):

(3) *Бүслүүр**цээ***$^{quantitative\ case}$ *тариа ургажээ.*
[puslu:rʧʰɘ: tʰara:ŋ ʊrʁəʧ]
Waist-high crops grew.
Lit. Waist-**high** crops grew.

See Table 3 below for other languages and dialects:

But these forms only appear in a small groups of words, which are used to quantify the thickness and depth of body parts such as шагай (ankle), *өвдөг* (knee), *бүсэлхий* (waist), *өвдөг* (elbow), *суга* (armpit), and *хүзүү* (neck). These are used when comparing the human body and cattle. In medieval inscriptions, this suffix appeared in the *čege* form, making it a narrow-range case that only appears in a limited set of words.

In other Mongolic languages, except Dagur, this did not develop into a full case suffix, but its meaning is expressed using postpositions. In Khalkha, this meaning is expressed through disintegration [-n ʧʰine:], for example, [-n ʧʰine:], meaning ankle size (Lit. ankle-size).

Table 3: Quantitative case of Mongolic languages and dialects.

Languages and dialects	Forms of the suffix	Examples
South Mongolia dialect: Kharchin Baarin subdialect	[-ʧʰɘ'ɘr~ʧʰɘ:]	[puslu:rʧʰɘ'ɘr tʰara:], [puslu:rʧʰɘɣɘ: tʰara:]: waist-high crops (Lit. waist-quantitative case crops)
Kalmyk language and dialect	[-ʦʰa:/-ʦʰæ:]	[mørnæ: tʰaʃa:ʦʰa: ʊsn]: deep water drawn by horse's hip (Lit. horse's hip-by drawn water); [yrtsʰæ:ʧʰin iнʁa:ɣɔa]: no different with your child (Lit. child-with your different-no)
Buryat and Barga dialects in South Mongolia	[-sæ:/-se:/-sɔ:].	[ʃaʁsæ: ʊhʊ]: ankle-deep water (Lit. ankle-by drawn water)
Dagur language	[-ʧʰa:r/-ʧʰɘ:r]	[keri: xuaramʧʰa:r]: size of the roof of Mongolian ger (Lit. Mongolian ger's size)
Eastern Yugur	[ʧʰak]	[kɘrin ʧʰak]: ger size (Lit. ger size)
Monguor	[tʰiɣi:]	[kerni tʰiɣi:]: ger size (Lit. ger size)
Dongxiang	[tʂiɣie]	[kieni tʂiɣie]: ger size (Lit. ger size)

mngr. *-tigī*, khalkh. *činege*, east yug. *-tšag*, dongx. *-tʂigiə* > MM. *čege* > Mo. *-ča/-če* >
⟶ MoM. oir. [-ʦʰa:/- ʦʰæ:]
alsh., орд. [-ʧʰe:]
kharch. [-ʧʰe'er ~ -ʧʰə:]
baar. [-ʧʰəɣə: ~ ʧʰiɣə:]
dag. [-ʧʰa:r/-ʧʰe:r]
barga. [-sa:/-sə:/-sɔ:]

Figure 3: Quantitative case of Mongolic languages and dialects.

Thus, this case suffix originating from the word *činege* still exists, in the southern dialects of modern Mongolian, as well as in Barga and Buryat subdialects, and in Dagur and Kalmyk languages and their dialects. As for meaning and function, it connects nouns to other nouns and clarifies size, which can be expressed with genitive and attributive cases. When observing its evolution and development, in the Baarin subdialect, there are no long vowels evolved through consonant weaking or removal; in the Kharchin dialect, long vowels were starting to develop; and in the Ordos subdialect, long vowels had evolved. In Kalmuk and Dagur languages, and in Barga and Buryat subdialects, long vowels had not only evolved but also had vowel-harmonic variants with the preceding stem. In the Kharchin subdialect, and in Dagur language, a consonant [r] was added, but in Buryat language, the first consonant weakened. Thus, it is the morpheme which concretely shows the process of suffix formation from independent words in Mongolian. Figure 3 shows this further:

3.2 Suffix Connecting Nouns to Actions

3.2.1 Nominative Case

The nominative case in Mongolian marks a noun's basic function, to name something, and plays an important role in forming the deep structure of the sentence. Danzandagva named it "the first case showing only the quality," and later researchers named it "the case only indicating the names," "unclear case," "nominative case," etc. The nominative case has no suffixes. Scholars have explained this condition from different perspectives.

In Khalkha and southern Mongolian dialects, "n" forms of the words with an "unstable n" are not shaped by the nominative case. However, this is different in Buryat and Kalmyk languages and dialects. An example, khalkh (4), can be seen below:

(4) *Хэл*$^{nominative\ case}$ *бол тэмцлийн зэвсэг.*
[xeɬ pɔɬ tʰemtsʰɬiːn tsɐɸsək]
Language is a weapon of struggle.
Lit. Language (nominative case) is struggle-of a weapon.

For the other languages and dialects see Table 4 below:

From the above, the meaning and function of this case remains the same as first explained in the study of the *Zürkhen Tolt* by Danzandagva: "The first among seven cases existing burqan (God), bodisun (substance) and mör (life course), also ür (result) and tegri (heaven) and kümün (human)… if there is the name among the mentioned, it is the first case. Why the first is it shows only the quality." However, it is worth noting that in this definition, the case is exemplified by nouns, and not by sentences, thus, determining that the role this case plays is not possible in sentences. Figure 4 shows this further:

Table 4: Nominative case of Mongolic languages and dialects.

Languages and dialects	Forms of the suffix	Examples
South Mongolia dialect	(zero morpheme)	[**qʊrw**ən jawsəŋ]: Three people left (Lit. Three are/nominative case/ left)
Kalmyk language and dialect	(zero morpheme)	[**en** ʧʰin kʰem pɔɬʧæːnæː jʊːn kintʰ]: Who is/nominative case/ this, what did you say? (Lit. This is who, what say-did you)
Buryat language and dialect	(zero morpheme)	[**ɢɔl** nɔmɔʁχɔŋ zəːlexeŋ ʊrdaŋχæː]: The river-nominative case flows gently (Lit. The river is gently flows)
Dagur language	(zero morpheme)	[**pi** æːliː ɘməl pəjt aːʧəw]: I was in front of the house (Lit. I-/nominative case/ house-of front-in was)
Eastern Yugur language	(zero morpheme)	[kərtə ʊlɔːn **kʰyn** pə]: There are seven people in the house (Lit. House-in seven person-/nominative case/ are)
Monguor language	(zero morpheme)	[tielne **jɔːtəl** sənaˈ]: The stitching of the coat is good (Lit. the coat-of stitching is/nominative case/ good)
Dongxiang language	(zero morpheme)	[**tɕiauruŋ** ɔtudʑi wə]: I have a headache (Lit. head-/nominative case/ ache have.)
Bonan language	(zero morpheme)	[kətə **atu** wi]: There is a brother at home (Lit. Home-at brother-/nominative case/ is.)

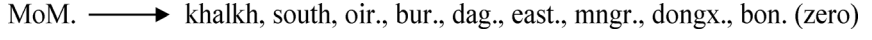

Figure 4: Nominative case of Mongolic languages and dialects.

3.2.2 Accusative Case

In his critical study of the *Zürkhen Tolt* Danzandagva did not include the suffixes *-i* and *-yi* under the case, instead naming them the "final form." Researchers explains the reason for this in the following way: first, there is no accusative case in Tibetan; second, accusative and genitive cases in Mongolian have the same origin. In contrast, in the systematic grammar of modern Mongolian, Luvsanvandan introduced the "accusative case," which connects nouns to transitive verbs and indicates the relations between them. In Khalkha dialect, it is expressed with the suffix [-ɪːk/-iːk], [-k]. For example (5):

(5) *Миний гутлыг*$^{accusative\ case}$ *аваад ир.*
[mini: qʊtʰɬɪː**k** awaːt ir]
Bring my shoes.
Lit. My shoes-(accusative case) bring.

Further, [-ɪːk/-iːk], [-k] morpheme's zero alternant, is related to the distinguishing and indistinguishing system. In this system, the following are explicitly shaped: proper names as direct objects (for example, [tʰəmr**i**ː**k** tʊːtəχ], call Tumur/Lit. Tumur-accusative case call); pronouns (for example, [tsærm**ɪ**ː**ɣ**ən~tsærm**ɪ**ːn awəχ], get some/Lit. some-accusative case get); adjectives (for example, [ʊɬaːn**ɪ**ː**ɣ**ən~ʊɬaːn**ɪ**ːn sɔŋqəχ], choose the red/Lit. the red-accusative case choose); numerals (for example, [qʊrw**ɪ**ː**k** ɵɣəx], to give three of something/Lit. three-accusative case give); proper nouns with possessive suffixes (for example, [tur**i**ː**ɣ**ən~tur**i**ːn martʰəχɣyː], do not forget the appearance/Lit. the appearance-accusative case forget-not). In contrast, there are zero variants regarding the indistinguishing direct object ([tʰuɬeː(zero) tʰuːx], collect fuel/Lit. fuel-accusative case collect/, and a non-final member in the parallel structure ([tʊɬmaː(**zero**), patʰ(zero), tsœrik nar**ɪ**ː**k** ʃaɣnəχ], reward Dulmaa, Bat, Zorig/Lit. Dulmaa-(zero), Bat-(zero), Zorig-(zero) s-accusative case reward/).

As for the other languages and dialects see Table 5 below:

In Khalkha, the proper noun modified by pronouns takes the explicit suffix of this case: [mini: qʊtʰɬɪː**k** awaːt ir]. In Buryat spoken language, it has a zero alternant: [mini: ɢʊtʰal(zero) awaːd ir].

In Ordos, the consonant [k/ɣ] is not pronounced, for example, [namaː], me (Lit. I-accusative case), [ʧʰamaː], you (Lit. you-accusative case) etc. In inner and Khalkha dialects, the last consonant of the genitive and accusative cases precedes the possessive suffix, as in [aχɪːʧʰin nɔm], your brother's book (Lit. brother-s-you're the book) and [aχɪːʧʰin tʊːtəj], let's call your brother (Lit. brother-your-accusative call let's).

In Dagur, Eastern Yugur, Monguor, Dongxian, and Bonan languages, the genitive and accusative case suffixes are similar but distinguished by meaning in the

Table 5: Quantitative case of Mongolic languages and dialects.

Languages and dialects	Forms of the suffix	Examples
South Mongolia dialect: Chahar Khorchin and Baarin	[-ɪːk/-iːk], [-k] [-iːk], [-iː]	[nɔm**i**ː], the book (Lit. the book-accusative case); [tʰʊjaː**ɣi**ː], Tuya (Lit. Tuya-accusative case – person name); [namaː**ɣi**ː], me (Lit. I-accusative case); [pirʊː**ɣi**ː], two-year-old cow (Lit. two-year-old cow-accusative case) etc.
Oirat dialect Kalmyk's Kalmyk language	[-ɪːk/-iːk], [-k] [-aːʁɪ/-iːɣe]	[mekʰ**iːk** mekʰæːr], trick by trick (Lit. trick-accusative case trick-by/idiom); [atsʰaː**k** tiɣɬix], to organize the cargo (Lit. the cargo-accusative case organize-to); Kalmyk [χœːraːʁɪ], the two things (Lit. two-accusative case); [møŋk**iːɣe**], money (Lit. money-accusative case)
Buryat language and dialect	[-ɪːje/-iːje], [-ʁɪːje], [-je]	[hæːn**iːje** urjeːxe], bless the good (Lit. the good-accusative case bless); [ʃereː(zero) tʰæbiʒa sæː(zero) ajaʁlaχa], set the table and make a cup of tea (Lit. the table-0 to set, tea-0 a cup-in to make)
Dagur language	[-iː/-jiː]	[tʰer kersuːl**iː** χɔː ən χarbən χɔːnt pæːlʁaːsən], those houses were all built in the last decade (Lit. those houses-accusative case all this decade built)
Eastern Yugur language	[-iːn/-əː]	[taːps**ə**ː nanda ək], give me the salt (Lit. the salt-accusative case me give)
Monguor language	[-ne/-ni]	[tiel**ne** mɔseʁana], put the coat on him (Lit. the coat-accusative case put)
Dongxiang language	[-ni]	[taŋsʊŋ**ni** namatə ɔɣi], give me the salt (Lit. the salt-accusative case me give)
Bonan language	[-nə]	[kerla haninə jartɕ], all the houses have been repaired (Lit. houses-all-accusative case repaired)

sentence. They are also distinguished by the personal pronoun root, for example, Dagur [min**i**ː maʁəlmin], my hat (Lit. my/genitive case/hat-my), [nam**i**ː taʊtitʃaːpe], calling me (Lit. me-accusative case calling), Eastern Yugur [tʃʰənəː atʃaː], your father (Lit. you-genitive case father), [tʃʰam**iːn** jimar qatʃərtʰə ɔːlsːm pə?], where did your mother give birth to you? (Lit. you-accusative case what area birth-give-did), etc.

This case has a core meaning in modern Mongolian, which is to address someone or something directly. However, the object meaning of intransitive action, which was inherited from the Middle Ages, still exists in the southern dialect, for example: South. [næmæː**k** tʰʊslaːtʃʰ], please help me (Lit. me-accusative case help-pleese) and Khalkha. [natə**t** tʰʊsɬaːtʃʰ], please help me (Lit. me-dative case help-pleese).

Additionally, the meaning of instruments and tools is expressed in Dongxiang and Monguor languages, and the meaning of place in Dagur and Monguor languages. This shows that the process of narrowing down the meaning to be expressed with this case has continued from the Middle Ages to the present and continues.

There is disagreement among scholars studying Mongolian grammatical cases about whether genitive and accusative cases share one origin. Based on the work of scholars and conclusions about the above languages, it can be assumed how strong the relations between these two cases and other cases were, whether they were once the same, during which period this occurred, and which of the morphemes expressing genitive and accusative case meaning appeared first. An interesting phenomenon exists in Turkic and Uyghur languages, where the form with *n-* has developed as the genitive case and the form without *n-* became the accusative case. In an eighth century monument inscription in Turkic, the suffix *-in* was used for both genitive meaning (*ноёны үг*, King's words) and accusative meaning (*бид ганцыг алав*, we killed one person).

If considering the suffix form since classic Mongolian scripts, the middle period form was inherited in Buryat language and dialect. In the south dialect of Mongolian, the consonant *g* > [k/ɣ] appeared before the vowel *i*, while in Khalkha dialect and Kalmyk language, this consonant appeared after the vowel *i*. Elsewhere, in Buryat language and dialect, when the suffix [-ɪ:je] was attached to the word ending with the retrolingual [ŋ], the variant with the consonant [-ʁɪ:je] appeared. No variant with consonant [k/ɣ] exists in any of the Mongolic languages.

To sum up, it is a coincidence that genitive and accusative cases, which have expressed grammar relations since the early development of Mongolian, and which connect nouns to other nouns and nouns to actions, have a strong connection. However, there is no concrete evidence that this related to the other cases, or that these two separated very early. For more on this see Figure 5:

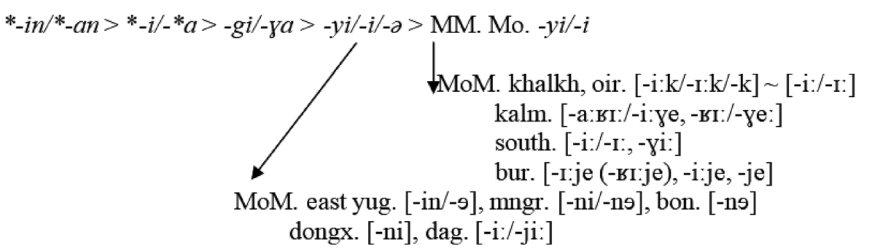

Figure 5: Quantitative case of Mongolic languages and dialects.

3.2.3 Dative Case

As stated in the ancient grammar of Mongolian, “The second case shows the actions of going and arriving like dorun-a odču and örün-e ǰüg tür oduɣsan (go to the east and went to the west)… The fourth case shows the actions like burqan-dur mörgümü, ebedčin-e em ög (to worship the Gods, give the medicine to the patient). The seventh case shows the places like burqan-a ayiladqui, burqan-dur nökür bui, dalai-dur čindamuni bui (to pray to God, God has friend, there is treasure in the sea).” Fom this, the meaning of the first case is “to direct,” of the second is “to give,” and of the last is “to locate.” However, in modern Mongolian grammar, Luvsanvandan named it the “locative case.” In Khalkha dialect, this case has the suffix [-t/-t^{h}] and a zero alternant. For example (6a):

(6a) *Эцэг(zero)*$^{dative\ case}$*, эх(zero)* $^{dative\ case}$*, үр хүүхдэ**д*** $^{dative\ case}$*-ээ хайртай.*
[ets^{h}ək(zero), ex(zero), ur xuːxət**t**eː χæːrt^{h}æː]
I love my father, mother and children.
Lit. Father-(accusative case-zero), mother-(accusative case-zero), children-(accusative case-**my**) love.

Also, there is the suffix [-aː/-eː/-ɔː/-ɵː] expressing the meaning of honor. For example (6b):

(6b) *Ерөнхий захирал тан**аа***$^{dative\ case}$
[jɵrəŋxiː tsæxrəɬ t^{h}anaː]
Director General to you.
Lit. General director you-**to**.

For the other languages and dialects see Table 6:

The suffix *-a/-e* > [-aːŋ/-əːŋ/-ɔːŋ/-ɵːŋ] is more widely used in South Mongolian dialect than in Khalkha. The meaning, which is mostly expressed by the directive case in the Khalkha dialect of Mongolian, as in [pæːr**ɬu**ːʁaː jawəχ], go to the house (Lit. house-to-the go) and [χɔt^{h}**ru**ː jawəχ], go to the city (Lit. city-to go) etc., is expressed with the dative case in South Mongolian dialects, though the directive case is sometimes used.

It can be observed that the suffixes of this case express the meanings of the accusative, ablative, and instrumental cases in Bonan and Eastern Yugur languages, of the comitative case in Dagur and Eastern Yugur languages, and of the nominative case in Eastern Yugur language.

In contrast, in Monguor language, the dative case has the suffix [-te/-tʊ], and the locative case has the suffix [-re/-ra]. There is also the locative case suffix [-a]. Dongxiang language uses the dative case suffix [-tə] and the locative case suffixes [-rə], [-ə].

Table 6: Dative case of Mongolic languages and dialects.

Languages and dialects	Forms of the suffix	Examples
South Mongolia dialect: Chahar etc. Khorchin and Kharchin subdialects	[-t/-tʰ], [-aːŋ/-əːŋ/ -ɔːŋ/-əːŋ] [-tʰɛː].	[pɛːr**t**ʰaːŋ jawəɣ]: go to the house (Lit. house-in-the go); [xɔtʰə**t** jawəɣ]: go to city (Lit. city-in go); Ordos [tʰery**e**:**n** tʰʊːʁaːt jawɪː]: let's get in the car (Lit. car-in-the get let's) etc. Khorchin and Kharchin. [paɣʃnɛː**t**ʰ**ɛ**: ək]: give to his teacher (Lit. teacher-his-to give); [mɛnɛː**t**ʰ**ɛ**: irʧ], came to our house (Lit. our-house-to came)
Oirat dialect	[-t/-tʰ]	[aɣ**tɪ**], in oil (Lit. oil-in);
Kalmyk language	[-tɪ/-te], [-tʰɪ/-tʰe]	[kerl**te**], in light (Lit. light-in); [χawr**t**ʰ**ɪ**], in the spring (Lit. the spring-in); [tʰørm**t**ʰ**e**], in iron (Lit. iron-in)
Buryat language and dialect	[-da/-de/-dɔ], [-tʰa/-tʰe/-tʰɔ]	[kʰɔlχɔːz**dɔ** ɔrɔχɔ], enter into partnership (Lit. partnership-into enter)
Dagur language	[-t/-tʰ], [-ə]	[kər**t**ʰ aːʧəw], I was at home (Lit. home-at was)
Eastern Yugur language	[-ta/-te], [-tʰa/-tʰe], [-a]	[nan**ta** øk], give me (Lit. me-dative case give)
Bonan language	[-ta/-tə], [-tʰa/-tʰə]	[kə**tə** wi], he is at home (Lit. home-at is)
Monguor language	[-te/-tʊ]	[tʰe kœlɔ**te** pʊliːŋke ireʧa], they had a child (Lit. they-two-dative case a child had).
Dongxiang language	[-tə]	[taŋsʊŋni nama**tə** ɔɣi], give me the salt (Lit. the salt-accusative case me give)

This suffix expresses the meanings of the instrumental and ablative cases in Monguor language, and the meanings of the accusative, ablative, and instrumental cases in Dongxiang language.

Besides indicating the recipient as the main meaning, this case expresses meaning such as inclusion, belonging, affectation, and eligibility, as well as conjunction with place of action, time, reason, and direction. During the Middle Ages, this case indicated size, the subject responsible for collaborative action, the place to go out, direct object, possession, and instruments; however, all of these meanings have been transferred to other cases. Another point of note is that the meaning of the directive case has been expressed less and less by this case, with this meaning transferring to a newly emerged case. As mentioned above, the meanings expresed by this case during the Middle Ages have been preserved in Mongolic languages and some Mongolian.

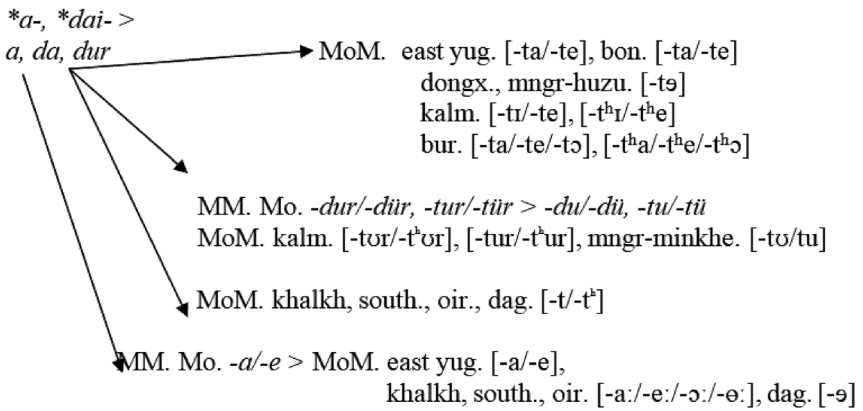

Figure 6: Dative case of Mongolic languages and dialects.

At the beginning of the Middle Ages, three suffixes emerged from the forms of ancient Mongolian: -a, -da/-ta, -dur/-tur. These included the form *-a/-e* and the forms *-dur/-dür*, *-tur/-tür* with the consonant *r* and forms without the consonant, *-du/-dü*, *-tu/-tü.* The form *-da/-ta* no longer exists. Instead, in Mongolian subdialects, all the forms were preserved to some extent and inherited in various ways. The separate development of the dative and locative cases in Monguor and Dongxiang languages proves the origin, evolution, and development path of this case. The other suffix *-a/-e* had been preserved in Khalkha and southern dialects, as well as in eastern Yugur and Dagur languages. The process of narrowing down the meanings in Mongolian languages continues at varying speeds and is still occurring. See Figure 6 for more:

3.2.4 Locative Case

The central Khalkha dialect of Mongolian language is shown in the following example (7):

(7) *Дэлгүүр* ***дээр*** *locative case* *уулзъя.*
[telɣuːr **teːr** ʊːltsəj]
See you at the store.
Lit. The store-**at** see you.

Although this form is often criticized as incorrect in school grammar, more careful consideration shows that in all the mentioned Mongolian languages and dialects, the dative and locative cases can develop separately. For example, it is very common for the Khalkha of Uvurkhangai to use the morpheme [-taːr/-teːr/-toːr/-təːr]. This suffix derived from the word *deger-e* > [teːr], expressing a meaning related to place.

Table 7: Locative case of Mongolic languages and dialects.

Languages and dialects	Forms of the suffix	Examples
South Mongolia: Chahar, Ordos sub-dialects Chahar, Baarin subdialects	[-ta:r/-te:r/-to:r] [-tʰər]	[mʊtʊn**ta:r** sʊ:]: sit on a tree (Lit. a tree-on sit) [ʧawsər**tʰər** ɔrəχ]: to enter the gap (Lit. gap-locative case enter-to)
Oirat dialect	[-ta:r/-te:r/-to:r/-tɵ:r]	[awtər**ta:r**]: on the chest (Lit. the chest-on); [ɔrən**tɔ:r**]: on the bed (Lit. the bed-on)
Buryat language and dialect Barga Buryat subdialect	[-sɔ:] [-sa:/-sə:/-sɔ:]	[gɔl**sɔ**: zaʁahaŋ ɔlɔŋ]: many fish in the river (Lit. the river-in fish many)
Dagur language	[-a:tʰən/-ə:tʰən/ -ɔ:tʰən]	[kər**ə:tʰən**]: at home (Lit. home-at)
Monguor language	[-re/-ra]	[pʊliŋqʊla mɔlse**re** χamtarina]: children are skating on ice (Lit. children are ice-on skating)
Dongxiang language	[-rə], [-ə]	[kierə wi]: in ger (Lit. ger-in)

Table 7 shows details of other languages and dialects:

The suffix [-tʰər] of the Chahar and Baarin subdialects of South Mongolia derived from the word [tɔtʰər], meaning "in." In the Buryat language and dialect, the suffix [-sɔ:] is derived from the word [dɔsɔ:], also meaning "in." In the Dagur language, the suffix -all conveys the meaning of being located inside something.

In addition, there is the suffix [-sa:/-sə:/-sɔ:], which harmonizes with the stem vowel in the Barga dialect, while in other Buryat dialects only the suffix [-sɔ:] is used regardless of the vowel stem present. There are variants [-ta:r/-te:r/-tɔ:r/-tɵ:r] in Uvurkhangai Khalkha and Uvs dörbet, but only the suffix [te:r] exists in central Khalkha. This shows that the development of these suffixes from independent words differs depending on the language, dialect, and subdialect. The meaning of the suffix traditionally referred to as "dative case" was widespread until the Middle Ages, but in modern Mongolian, it has developed into three distinct cases, each of which expresses further meanings. As mentioned earlier, in the Monguor and Dongxiang languages, the dative and locative cases have been developing separately since ancient times (see Figure 7).

3.2.5 Directive Case

The directive case was not recognised as a grammatical case in the systematic grammar of the Mongolian language until 1990. It is derived from the words *урүү*

*r > MoM. mngr. [-ra], dongx. [-rə], dag. [-aːtʰən/-əːtʰən/-ɔːtʰən/-eːtʰən]
MM. *dotur-a, (čoγu)* > MoM. chah.,baar.,kharch. [-tʰər]
bur. [-sɔː], barga. [-saː/-səː/-sɔː]
MM. *deger-e* > MoM. khalkh. [-teːr]
khalkh, ord., oir. [-taːr/-teːr/-tɔːr/-təːr]

Figure 7: Locative case of Mongolic languages and dialects.

(down) *and өөд* (up). The term "directive case" was established in modern Mongolian grammar when Sh. Luvsanvandan introduced this name. In Khalkha dialects, it is expressed through two suffixes [-rʊː/-ruː/-ɬʊː/-ɬuː], [-aːt/-eːt/-ɔːt/-əːt]. For example (8a, 8b, 8c):

(8a) *хот**руу*** *directive case* *явах*
[χɔtʰrʊː jawəχ]
Go to the city
Lit. the city-**to** go

(8b) *гэрээ**д*** *directive case*-*ээ харих*
[kereːteː χærəχ]
To go home
Lit. home-**to** go

(8c) *хөдөө(zero)*directive case *гарах*
[xətəː qarəχ]
Go to the countryside
Lit. The countryside-**to** go

As for the other languages and dialects, see the Table 8 below:

Buryat language and dialect do not have the directive case. In other words, in the Khalkha dialect, the directive case has not developed with the function to indicate the action of the direction, as there is in the dative case.

In the Kalmyk language and dialect, there are place and time nouns which indicate the motion of direction like [χɔːr], meaning to the north, and [ømæːr], meaning to the south. In other Mongolian languages, this motion of direction is marked by the suffix [-ʃ/-ɣʃ], but in Oirat, it is tightly connected to the root [-r], which creates the stem. More recently, the suffix of the directive case evolved from an independent word in the Khalkha dialect, but the Kalmyk language and dialect preserved the ancient morpheme *-r* indicating the direction.

The morphemes [-rʊː/-ruː], [-lʊː/-luː] of the Chahar and the Ordos subdialects of South Mongolia were not introduced into written language, and at present they are

Table 8: Directive case of Mongolian languages and dialects.

Languages and dialects	Forms of the suffix	Examples
South Mongolia dialect: Chahar, Ordos subdialects Alasha subdialect Uzemchin subdialect Eastern subdialects	[-rʊ:/-ru:], [-lʊ:/-lu:] [-a:t/-æ:t] [-ʧʊ:/-ʧu:] does not have the directive case	[kərʧu: χærəχ]: go home (Lit. home-to go); [sʊrʁʏ:lʧʊ: irəx]: come to the school (Lit. the school-to come); [ɜmləɣtʰ jawəχ]: go to the hospital (Lit. the hospital-to go).
Kalmyk language and dialect	[-ʊ:r/-y:r] [-a:t/-æ:t]	[ʊsnʊ:r tʃʰɔɬʊ: tsʰø:ɬtəχ]: throw stones into the river (Lit. the river-into stones throw);
Torghut subdialect Uuld and Myangad subdialects	[-ɬʊ:/-ɬy:]	[nytyːrni tsʰø: χæɬæ:χ]: staring into his eyes (Lit. eyes-into-his stare); [ʊ:ɬa:t̲]: to the mountain (Lit. the mountain-to); [mana:ɬʊ:̲]: to my home (Lit. my home-to)
Buryat language and dialect	does not have the directive case	Instead, it is spoken as [hʊrʁʊ:lida: jawχa]: go to the school (Lit. the school-to go); [gertʰe: χærχa]: to go home (Lit. home-to go)
Monguor language	[-dʑə]	[nta:dʑə]: to me (Lit. me-to)
Dongxiang language	[-rʊn/-lʊn]	
Eastern Yugur language	[-pi:t], [-i:t], [-ʊ:r/-u:r]	[tʰəmə:n qʊsʊnpi:t japʧila nɔɣɔ hɣur tʂəna tʰʊɣlaʧɔrʧʊæ]: A camel was going near a river and came across a pack of wolves (Lit. a camel a river-to near going-was, a pack wolves came across)

written as *uruyu,* and referred to as a case in spoken language. In eastern subdialects, this meaning is expressed using the dative case. In Khalkha, although only a few words indicate direction in the dative case, such as [sʊrʁʏ:ɬt jawəχ], meaning go to the school (Lit. the school-to go), and [kertʰe: χærəχ], meaning go home (Lit. home-to go), where the directive case is actively used.

The morpheme [-dʑə] in the Monguor language resembles the form [-ʧʊ:/-ʧu:] found in the Uzemchin subdialect.

The directive case is actively used in Eastern Yugur language, but its suffixes differ from that in Mongolian. [-pi:t] indicates an uncertain direction, [-i:t] indicates upward direction, and [-ʊ:r/-u:r] indicates downward direction. [-pi:t] is derived from the word bi (body) + də > bide (around) meaning vicinity.

Besides showing the direction of an action, the directive case also expresses the meaning of an object. Tracing the evolution and development of the suffix morpheme over time reveals how grammatical suffixes derived from independent words lost stress (see Figure 8).

*-r ⟶ MoM. oir., east yug. [-ʊːr/-yːr], dongx. [-rʊn/-lʊn]
MM. *uruγu>uru'u* ⟶ MoM. khalkh. [-rʊː/-ruː], [-lʊ/-luː]
MM. *ögede>ö'ede* ⟶ MoM. khalkh. [-aːt/-eːt/-ɔːt/-əːt], torg., alsh. [-aːt/-æːt]
MM. *ǰüg* ⟶ MoM. uzm. [-ʧʊː/-ʧuː], mngr. [-dʑə]
MM. *bide* ⟶ MoM. east yug. [-piːt]

Figure 8: Directive case of Mongolian languages and dialects.

3.2.6 Ablative Case

In eighteenth century grammar, Danzandagva detailed the "fifth case showing the movement out of something," which was named the ablative case. In Khalkha dialect, it is expressed using the suffix [-aːs/-eːs/-ɔːs/-əːs]. For example (9):

(9) *Хүүхдүүд энд(zero) тэндээс* *Ablative case* *цугларчээ.*
[xuːxtuːt ent tʰent**e**ː**s** tsʰʊɣɬərʧʰeː]
Children gathered here and there.
Lit. Children here-(Ablative case zero), there gathered.

As for the other languages and dialects, see Table 9 below:

The morpheme [-aːsɪ/-eːse] of the Kalmyk language inherited the Vowel + Consonant + Vowel structure of the Middle Mongolian language.

The morphemes of the Dagur language have the same function. The variant beginning with j- attaches to the word ending with a long vowel and a diphthong.

In terms of meaning, it indicates the starting point of any action in terms of time and space in Mongolian languages. The meanings it expresses include part of the whole, accentuation through comparison, reason, separation, assemblage, and subject. In the Middle Ages, it also indicated the object and instruments, with the latter still present in Dongxiang, eastern Yugur, and Bonan languages.

Scholars have discovered many instances of overlapping dative and ablative cases, such as *-dača*, *-tača* from *The Secret History of Mongols*. At present, such combinations exist in the Baarin subdialect. For example, [miniː malʁɪː kərtʰ**ə**ː**s** aːt jir] means "bring my hat from home" (Lit. my hat home-from bring). This shows that the origin of this case is a coalescence of *-a/-da+ča*, with *ča* being the core element expressing movement out of a place. Until the seventeenth century, two forms of the suffix *-ča/-če* > *-ača/-eče, -dača/-deče* ~ *-tača/-teče* existed in writen Mongolian, while *-sa/-se* was the spoken variant of *-ča/-če*. South Mongolian scholars later discovered from written memorials that *-asa/-ese* was the spoken form of *-ača/-eče*. The initial vowel *a* in *-asa/-ese* gradually became a long vowel, while the form without an ending vowel became standard in Mongolian, Buryat, Kalmyk languages and dialects. Meanwhile, *-dača/-deče* ~ *-tača/-teče* fell out of use. Eventually, it developed in modern Mongolian languages in three different lines of phonemic evolution, as seen in Figure 9:

Table 9: Ablative case of Mongolian languages and dialects.

Languages and dialects	Forms of the suffix	Examples
South Mongolia dialect:	[-aːs/-əːs/-ɔːs/-eːs]	[nɵxt**ɵːs**]: from friends (Lit. friend-from); [paxʃa**ːs**]: from teacher (Lit. teacher-from);
Chahar and etc. Khorchin subdialect	[-aːs/-əːs/-ɔːs]	[ɘxtʲʰ**əːs**]: from sister (Lit. sister-from); [mœrn**ɔːs**]: from horse (Lit. horse-from) etc.
Oirat dialect	[-aːs/-æːs]	[qar**aːs** atʰχəχ]: hold hands (Lit. hand-from hold); [nykʰn**æːs**
Kalmyk language	[-aːsɪ/-eːse]	pʊltʰæːχ]: protruding from the hole (Lit. the hole-from protruding); [χɔtʰn**aːsɪ**]: from city (Lit. city-from); [ker**eːse**]: from home (Lit. home-from)
Buryat language and dialect	[-haː/-heː/-hɔː/-həː]	[uneŋ zurxeŋ**hə**: xusexe]: desire from the heart (Lit. the indeed heart-from desire)
Dagur language	[-aːs/-əːs/-ɔːs/-eːs/ -jaːs/-jeːs] [-aːr/-əːr/-ɔːr/-eːr /-jaːr/-jeːr]	[aʁa**ːs**ʃin awja ~ aʁa**ːr**ʃin awja]: let's get it from your brother (Lit. brother-from-your let's get)
Eastern Yugur language	[-sa/-se/-sɔ/-si]	[ene qatʃar**sa** sala]: go from here (Lit. this area-from go)
Monguor language	[-sa]	[mœri**sa**]: from horse (Lit. horse-from); [kʊn**sa**]: from person (Lit. person-from)
Dongxiang language	[-sə]	[maʁa**sə** kʊŋʐɔ kiənə]: I will do work from tomorrow (Lit. tomorrow-from work do-will)
Bonan language	[-sa]	[en**sa** ɵt kərsan wu, tʰan**sa** ɵt kərsan wu]: go from here or there? (Lit. here-from go, there-from go)?

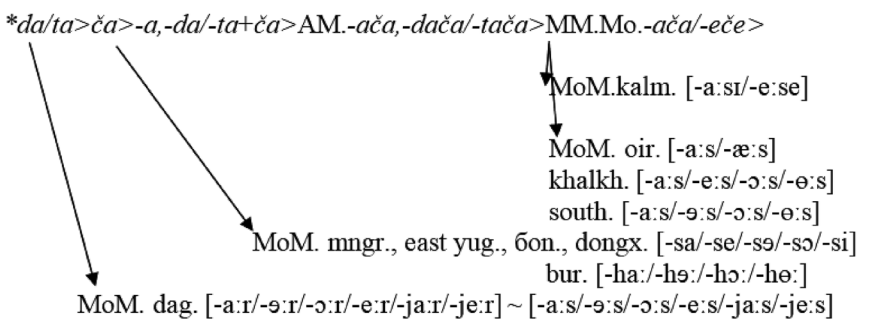

Figure 9: Ablative case of Mongolian languages and dialects.

3.2.7 Instrumental Case

In the ancient grammar of Mongolian language, the instrumental case was referred to as “the third case showing the subject,” while in modern Mongolian grammar, it came to be known as the “instrumental case.” This case indicates the relationship of nouns to verbs and adjectives within a sentence. In Khalkha, the southern dialects, and in the Buryat language and dialect, the instrumental case is marked by the suffix [-aːr/-eːr/-əːr/-ɔːr/-өːr]. For example (10):

(10) *Хүн хэлээр*$^{instrumental\ case}$*-ээ /яръдаг/, мал хөлөөр*$^{instrumental\ case}$*-өө /өшиглөдөг/.* (Хэлц үг)
[xuŋ xeɬ**e**:**r**eː maɬ xөɬ**ө**:**r**өː]
People /speak/ with their tongues, animals /kick/ with their feet. (Idiom)
Lit. People tongues-**with**-their, animals feet-**with**-their.

As for the other languages and dialects, see Table 10 below:

The morpheme [-ra~-la] of Eastern Mongolia, Monguor, and Donxiang switches with the form [-ɣɔlɔ~-ɣala], which is similar to the morphemes for plural nouns, *-ɣula*, and for plural numbers, *-la.* This common form found in the three languages derives from the plural number [ʁʊala] (both-together).

Table 10: Instrumental case of Mongolian languages and dialects.

Languages and dialects	Forms of the suffix	Examples
South Mongolia dialect:	[-aːr/-əːr/-ɔːr/-өːr]	[nəxt**ө**:**r**]: by friends (Lit. friend- by);
		[paxʃ**a**:**r**]: by teacher (Lit. teacher- by);
Chahar and etc. Khorchin subdialect	[-aːr/-əːr/-ɔːr]	[əxtʃʰ**ə**:**r**]: by sister (Lit. sister- by);
		[mœr**ɔ**:**r**]: with/by horse (Lit. horse- with/by)
Kalmyk language and dialect	[-aːr/-æːr]	[aːʁ**a**:**r** ʃamʃiχ]: eat from a cup (Lit. a cup-by eat); [tsʰar(zero) tʰemæːɣ**æ**:**r** nyːx]: moving by oxen and camels (Lit. oxen-instrumental case(zero), camel-by moving)
Buryat language and dialect	[-aːr/-əːr/-ɔːr/-өːr]	[χara xulh**ө**:**r**өː ɔbhɔŋ jʊm]: earned by hard work (Lit. a lot of sweat-by earned)
Dagur language	[-aːr/-əːr/-ɔːr/-eːr/ -jaːr/-jeːr]	[pʊtaːjaːr puː naːt]: don’t play with food (Lit. food-with don’t play)
Eastern Yugur language	[-aːr/-eːr]	[kuːrɣeɣeːr qar]: cross the bridge (Lit. the bridge-instrumental case cross)
Monguor language	[-ra~-la] [-ɣɔlɔ~-ɣala]	[tʰaʃla]: with stone (Lit. stone-with)
Dongxiang language	[-ra~-la] [-ɣɔlɔ~-ɣala]	dongx. [tʰaʃekʰala]: with stone (Lit. stone-with)
Bonan language	[-ra~-la] [-ɣɔlɔ~-ɣala]	bon. [tʰaʃekʰala]: with stone (Lit. stone-with)

Besides indicating the meaning of instruments and tools used in an action, it expressess the meaning of quantity (some, many), space, time, manner, material, purpose, reason, and size. In the Middle Ages, the case expressed the meaning of an object, but this use is no longer present today. If the meaning of this case is considered superficially, the key interpretation highlighted in the ancient grammar of Mongolian, "The third case is like burqan nigülesküi-ber amitan-i üǰebei (God looked at all creatures with comprassion) and merged bilig-iyer ilγaγsan (wise men discerned the difference by wise) and süke-ber modu-yi oγtuluγsan (chopped wood with an axe) also baγsi-bar nomlaγsan (taught by the teacher) along with sabi-bar sonusuγsan (the student hard). Why the third case is it shows the subject," is no longer as common, and has been replaced by a focus on meaning of instruments and tools. However, instruments and tools can also be seen as coagents with the main agents of the action.

In addition, the morpheme ber, as seen in expressions like "tegüber (with it), qamuγ burqan-ber ögede boluγad (all Gods went up)…" was referred to as the "summarizing word," the function of which was to express the reason or cause. Scholars consider it differently, as part of the instrumental case, a nominative case suffix, or a subject indicator. However, if considering the meaning, epsecially when it follows the subject, it is closely connected to the instrumental case. For example, in bayši ber nomlaqu > [paxʃ peːr nɔmɬəχ] (to teach by the teacher), süke ber modu-yi oγtulqu > [suxeːr mɔt ɔxt^{h}ɬəχ] (chop wood with an axe), the nouns багш (teacher) and сүх (axe), which appear before the morpheme ber, are the agents performing the actions, номлосон (taught) and огтолсон (chopped). However, the morpheme *ber* in *bayši ber nomlaqu* expands its function and follows all the morphemes except for the subject, and thus functions by highlighting and intensifying.

The suffix developed smoothly across most Mongolian languages. However, in Monguor, Bonan, and Dongxiang, it became the suffix [-ra~-la] with consonant alternation, and it switches with [ʁala~ʁɔlɔ]. Consonants *b, g* > *y* often drop due to weakening, and the Buryat and Dagur languages preserved a variant with the consonant *y* following the velar consonant (see Figure 10.).

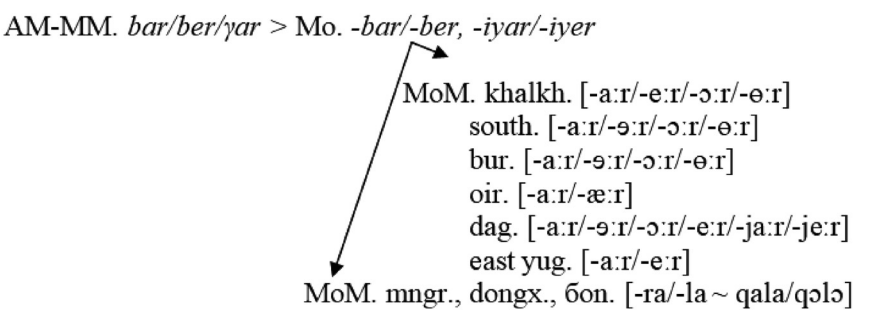

Figure 10: Instrumental case of Mongolian languages and dialects.

3.2.8 Connective Case

In the ancient grammatical work, the connective case was referred to as the "summarizing word," which scholars later replaced with its current name. In modern Khalkha dialect and Buryat this case no longer exists. However, in Kalmyk language and dialect, it is present adn marked with the suffix [-ła:/-łæ:]. For example (11):

(11) *Биднийамьдрал ус(zero)*$^{connective\ case}$*, уул* ***лаа***$^{connective\ case}$ *холбоотой.*
[manʊ:sɪ:n æmtrəɬ ʊs(zero) ʊ:ɬ**ła**: χɔɬwa:tʰa:]
Our life is connected with rivers and mountains.
Lit. Our life is rivers-(connective case zero), mountains-**with** connected.

As for the other languages and dialects, see Table 11 below:

The suffix of South Mongolian language remains in active use, expressing the meanings such as joining, cooperating, and time. When indicating cooperating and joining, it overlaps with the comitative case, but it does not when expressing time. The form [-la:r/-lo:r/-lə:r/-lö:r] in the Ordos subdialect overlaps with the instrumental case.

In Eastern Yugur, Monguor, and Dongxian languages, the connective case suffix is similar to the plural suffix. There is no connective case in the Bonan language Tunrwa dialect and this case instead expresses meaning with the plural [ʁʊala]

Table 11: Connective case of Mongolic languages and dialects.

Languages and dialects	Forms of the suffix	Examples
South Mongolia dialects Ordos subdialect	[-la:/-lə:/-lɛ:] [-la:r/-lɔ:r/ -lə:r/-lə:r]	Chahar, Ordos. [nat**la**: ʧʰʊk], Baarin, Khorchin. [nat**lɛ**: ʧʰʊk ~ nad**tɛ**: ʧʰug]: together with me (Lit. me-with together); Chahar, Ordos. [narən**la**: mɔrtəj], Baarin, Khorchin. [narən**lɛ**: mɔrtəj]: let's go while it's sunny (Lit. sun-with let's go) etc. Ordos. [narəmpatʰʊla:r irəw]: I came with Naranbat (Lit. Naranbat-with came).
Eastern Yugur language	[-la/-le]	[nanta**la** na:t]: play with me (Lit. me-with play); [kʰen**le** ʧieleʧ wa:]: who are you married to (Lit. who-with married)?
Monguor language	[-la]	[tʰe**la** niɣʧ wa]: same as him (Lit. him-as same).
Dongxiang language	[-lə~-rə]	[tɔsila**lə**nə lajidʐi wə]: talking with friends (Lit. friends-with talking).
Bonan language Tunrwa dialect Dakhejia dialect	[ʁʊala] *Гuala* > [ʁalə]	[tɕi kʰaŋ **ʁʊala** kʰʊar naŋta ərwa]: who did you come to town with? (Lit. you who-with town-to come-did)?

(both-together). In the Dakhejia dialect, it becomes *yuala* > [ʁalə] and expresses both instrumental and connective case meanings. In Dagur, the connective meaning is conveyed through the instrumental case suffix.

This connective case suffix expressed meanings such as co-ownership or reciprocal ownership, analogous comparison, and time during the Middle Ages, and these meanings persist in the languages that inherited it. Since the eighteenth century, the newly developed instrumental case has largely replaced this connective case in Khalkha and Buryats. However, it remains in use in Oirat, southern dialects, some subdialects of South Mongolia, Dongxiang, eastern Yugur, and Monguor languages.

From this evidence it can be concluded that the origins of these two cases are connected. In Mongolic languages, and in Turkic, Manchu, and Tungus languages, there is an instrumental-connective compond case.

Currently, all Mongolian languages that inherited this grammatical case possess suffixes [-la~-ra~-ʁala]. How, then, did the form *-luγa/-lüge* of classic Mongolian written language emerge? It may be traced to the obsolete Mongolian word *luɣ* (together), which still exists in the language of Huhnuur Mongolians, or may result from phoneme alternation, as in *yuala – luγa.* Both independent words have double meanings which support the explanation about the connected origins of the instrumental and connective cases (see Figure 11).

3.2.9 Comitative Case

Academician Sh. Luvsanvandan named the grammatical relationship expression regarding a noun's connection to an action in a sentence the comitative case. In Khalkha and south dialects, this case is marked by the suffix [-t^{h}æ:/-t^{h}œ:/-t^{h}e:] and its zero alternant. For example (12):

(12) *Ах дүү(zero)*$^{comitative\ case}$*, найз нөхөд****мэй*** $^{comitative\ case}$*-гөө уулзав.*
[aχ tu:, næ:ts nөxət**t^{h}e**:ʏe: ʊ:ɬtsəw]
I met my brothers and friends.
Lit. Brothers-(connective case – zero), friends-(connective case) met.

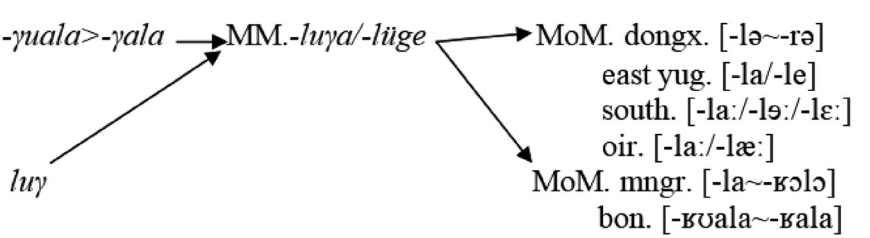

Figure 11: Connective case of Mongolic languages and dialects.

Table 12: Comitative case of Mongolic languages and dialects.

Languages and dialects	Forms of the suffix	Examples
South Mongolia dialect: Chahar and etc.	[-tʰæ:/-tʰœ:/-tʰe:]	[ʊχa:n**tʰæ**: pæ:], [ʊχa:n**tʰi**: pæ:]: be smart
Baarin and Khorchin subdialects	[-tʰi:]	(Lit. smart-connective case be)
Buryat language and dialect	[-tʰa:/-tʰæ:]	[a:w**tʰa**: χamtʰ ɔtɬa:w]: I will go together with my father (Lit. father-with together go-will-I); [y:**tʰæ**: irtək]: I came with him (Lit. him-with came)
Buryat language and dialect	[-tʰæ:/-tʰœ:/-tʰe:]	[bi neɣe jume xelexe hana:**tʰæ**: bæ:nab]: I have an idea to say something (Lit. I something say-to an idea-have)
Barga Buryat	[-tʰi:]	
Dagur language	[-ti:]	[tʰer χœn ʧilt**ʰi**:]: He was born in the year of the “Sheep” (Lit. he sheep-year-have)
Bonan language	[-tʰə]	[kʰaŋnə maʁa amtʰə**tʰə** wisaŋ]: Whose meat was delicious? (Lit. whose meat taste-have was).
Eastern Yugur language		For example, [pʊ ɔrʧu apqə kʰereɣtʰi pai]: I need to get something. (Lit. I something get-to need); [ʧʰe kʰe:t neɣe nas**tʰa**ba?]: How old are you? (Lit. you how many age-have)
Monguor language: Minkhe dialect Huzu dialect	[-tʰæ:] [-te:]	Minkhe [pesetʰæ:], Huzu. [wesete:]: with grass (Lit. grass-with); Minkhe [pʊletʰæ:], Huzu. [pele:te:]: with children (Lit. children-with)

As for the other languages and dialects, see Table 12 below:

In South Mongolian dialects, the comitative case overlaps with the connective case. In Baarin and the Khorchin and Barga Buryat dialects, vowels are palatalized, and only the form [-tʰi:] exists.

In Dongxiang language, there is no conjuctive case separate from the connective case. Similar to Mongolian, the comitative case suffix in Monguor, eastern Yugur, and Dagur languages is identical to the suffix used to form adjectives. In Eastern Yugur, the auxiliary verb following the suffix is shortened, causing the suffix to attach to the noun in the comitative case.

This suffix originated from the form *-tai* which indicated the feminine gender of the suffix *-tu* which creates adjectives from nouns. By the seventeenth century, it had evolved into the grammatical case morpheme, functioning as the connective case.

Besides indicating the coagent for an action, it also expresses comparison and contrast. The development of these suffix forms is shown in Figure 12:

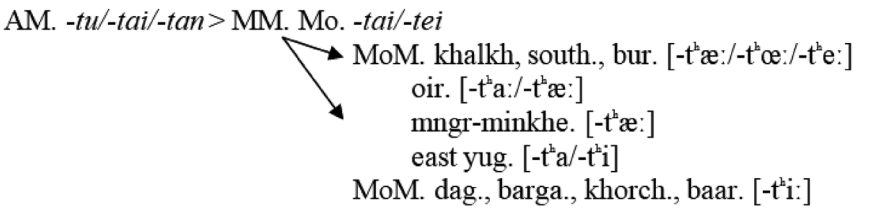

Figure 12: Comitative case of Mongolic languages and dialects.

4 Research Discussion

The term *tiin yalgal* (case) was first mentioned in the eighteenth century by Danzandagva in his critical study of the *Zürkhen Tolt*. He used it to describe the morphemes* of these grammatical cases, including both the apparent markers and the zero-suffix.

Since then, Mongolian researchers and linguists worldwide have investigated these grammatical cases in detail and have identified between seven and sixteen cases. Scholars such as I. J. Shmidt (1902) and G. D. Sanjeev (1941) are those whose works laid the foundation for this research.

However, some scholars dispute the use of the expression *tiin yalgal*, arguing that it was modelled on Tibetan grammar (and is therefore unsuitable for analyzing Mongolian grammar). M. Ishdorzh proposed *neriin nugalbar* (name inflector) in 1930 and Ch. Luvsanzhav proposed *üg nairuulakh dagavar* (word modifier suffix) in 1972. T. Shagdarsüren later took a comparative approach and pointed out the need to clarify how these "suffixes linking words in a sentence" in Mongolic languages differ from grammatical cases in Indo-European languages (2017). Yet the term *tiin yalgal* has not been abandoned, and scholars of Mongolian linguistics continue their work on these cases.

The names given to the different grammatical cases intend to express their primary meaning, but there are many associated variants for each case. The example of the "nominative case" in particular draws a great deal of attention.

Most researchers agree that there is a nominative case associated with the noun, the function of which is to express the primary essence of the noun, which acts as grammatical subject, and thus determines the relationship between the agent of the action and the action itself. However, some researchers have put forward competing hypotheses, such as that the nominative case can be attached to the predicate (Sanjeev 1953; Luvsanvandan 1968; Unurbayan 2004), or to any noun in the sentence that has no apparent suffix (Zorigt et al., 2001), and even that there is no nominative case (Shonkhor 1996).

Russian researcher Kasiyanenko, for example, has asserted that "in the declension system of nouns in modern Mongolian, there is no nominative case. It would therefore be more appropriate to change the name of the grammatical case from "nominative case" to "indefinite case," for the case which in Mongolian linguistics is used to designate the form of the noun equivalent to the root of the word. In the sentence, it has a syntactic role and can fulfil the function of subject, direct object complement, adverb of time or place, a member of a sequence of words of the same nature except for the last, or the grammatical form of the nominal part of a compound predicate" (1964, 8). But although the idea had already been put forward by Poppe and Luvsanvandan (1939), most researchers dispute this argument as being too superficial.

According to research carried out by Zorigt and Elsentsetseg on the basis of written records found in the main archaeological remains covering a period from the Middle Ages to the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, grammatical cases may have had between five and 10 different meanings at the time. Some of these cases have retained all of their meanings, while some of the meanings of others have been transferred to another case, while others have evolved in the direction of greater structure. This analysis is in line with the hypothesis advocated by theorists of grammaticalisation: that of a unidirectional evolution from one case to another. Over the period considered, the subject, predicate, object complement, predicate and adverb were not marked by any suffixes these theorists observed and according to them, "In Ancient-Mongol, the nominative case expressed a whole range of meanings and actions, some of which have now been transferred to other cases, but many of which have been passed on to the modern Mongolian language." Their conclusions are entirely in line with the unidirectional principle put forward by grammaticalisation theorists: "In the history of humanity, when articulate language first appeared, there were virtually no forms to make the grammatical function explicit. As language evolved and concrete words took on more abstract meanings, forms appeared to indicate the grammatical function of words, so as to express people's thoughts more accurately. The evolution of the Mongolian language abides by this law" (Zorigt et al., 2001, 190–207).

According to Bertagaev (1964, 44) and Tumurtogoo (2011, 50), the suffix marking the genitive derives from the third personal pronoun.

On the other hand, the controversy is sharp between linguists who have studied the grammatical cases of Mongolian languages and who support the hypothesis that the genitive and accusative suffixes have a common origin (Sanjeev 1953; Khasbaatar 1982) and those who consider, on the contrary, that they have always been independent (Poppe 1955; Zorigt et al., 2001; Saruul-Erdene 2002; Shonkhor 1996). Sandzheev, for example, has put forward a stimulating idea, arguing that the genitive, accusative, and dative-locative each derive from an undetectable vowel, the *u*

for the genitive, the *i* for the accusative, and the *a* for the dative-locative. Bazarragchaa theorizes, "The genitive and accusative have the same origin. While the -n in the genitive expresses the idea of unification, the -g in the accusative is the result of a mutation intended to express difference, particularisation" (2017, 70–90). The linguist Shonkhor disputes the idea of a common origin for the suffixes of the two grammatical cases in question. Instead, he considers that "the suffix marking the accusative could come from the third-person singular personal pronoun 'hi', which would have evolved towards greater abstraction" (1996, 224), a hypothesis also defended by T. A. Bertagaev and D. Tumurtogoo.

The linguist Khasbaatar notes: "If we consider the general evolution of the grammatical cases of Mongolic languages, we see a general trend towards an increase in number, combined with a movement towards greater accuracy, precision on the semantic level… From the very outset, when Mongolic languages were still unified, a common form for the genitive and accusative expressed any idea of possession and marked the object" (Khasbaatar 1982, 189). According to him, the suffix *-ï/i* observed on eighth century Turkish monuments marked the instrumental and connnective cases: "the fact that the instrumental and connective cases were originally expressed by a single form is a reflection of their conceptual unity from the point of view of human thought, a fact that is not restricted to the case of a particular language. In Altaic languages, instrumental and connective cases were expressed by the -ïn/-in form. Ramstedt also observed that in Old Mongolian the instrumental was also marked by an -n suffix. Generally speaking, the evolution and enrichment of communication is not ensured by the creation of new morphemes but by phonetic mutations, the appearance of new phonemes in morphemes already present in the language that mark new grammatical functions" (1982, 224–225).

As for the attributive, which in modern Mongolian languages has broken away from the genitive, the *Dictionary of Mongolian Word Roots* states: "It is generally considered that the attributive is an inheritance from the Ancient-Mongolic that is included within the genitive case. Taking into account its function, we have estimated (for our part?) that it was an independent case and that the suffix -n appeared under the influence of oral speech, reviving the final -n of Ancient-Mongolic."

In *Modern Mongolian Language*, published in 2005 by the University of Inner Mongolia, which covers a wider field of investigation, it is stated that "this grammatical case, which has only recently appeared, has not reached the same scale of use as the other seven cases. In the written language, it cannot always be positively distinguished from the genitive. Generally speaking, it links a noun to a quantitative adjective. In writing, it is sometimes expressed by the suffix -n, sometimes by the un/ün of the genitive, and in the oral language always by an -n. For example: writ. sil-ün longqu – oral. šilən loŋx, writ. üker-ün arasun – oral. uxrən ars, writ. siregen deger-

e – oral. širə:n də:r, writ. tabun ǰing – oral. tawan džin, writ. kedün kümün – oral. xədən xun etc." (2005, 386–387).

On this premise, and taking into account the time factor, the linguist G. Zorigt et al., has suggested that "the final consonant -n in Old Mongolian may have first disappeared, only to be revived in the long term at the end of the 17th century to mark the attributive case."

A number of hypotheses have been put forward regarding the origin of the dative-locative suffix. For example, G. J. Ramstedt considered it to be derived from the Altai word *dai* (place) and noted that this word currently exists in Korean (1957, 31–56). According to Bazarragchaa, the suffix marking the dative-locative case splintered from a suffix that fulfilled multiple functions (2017, 70–90). The Inner Mongolian linguist Gardi (2001) agrees with Sh. Ozawa, according to whom the widespread forms in Altaic languages *-da/-de* and *-dur/-tur* gave respectively the suffix *-da/-de* of the dative and the *-dur/-tur* of the locative. Saruul-Erdene, for his part, supports N. Poppe's view that the initial form *-da/-ta* had a dative meaning, that the form *-du/-tu* had a locative meaning, and that the r of the form *-dur/-tur*, which existed only in the language, gave rise to the directional case (2002, 35–36). As for Setsentsogt, he defends the view that "like the genitive, the dative-locative appeared very early in the grammatical case system in ancient times and, in addition to its dative meaning, it also expressed the meanings of the other cases except for the nominative and genitive" (1988, 2873).

In Danzandagva's *Ogtorguin maani*, the suffixes of the dative-locative case are recorded as the second, fourth, and seventh, indicating the act, the event, and the agent. The linguist of Inner Mongolia, Purev, comments: "If we look at these denominations and at the examples provided, for each one we can see that emphasis was not laid on their function as suffix neither on the meaning of the word modifying the verb but rather on the direction in which the action and event described by the predicate takes place. Thus, for the term "action marker" the examples provided relate to words which indicate the direction in which the action is performed (go, come, reach, etc.), for "event marker" to those that indicate how it is performed (give, bow), and for "place marker" on those that refer to the place, person, or state it affects" (2019, 416). We have noted above that in modern Mongolian languages, the dative case has split into three distinct cases: dative, locative, and directive. In his article "The 8th Fundamental Case" (1954), Luvsandendev called it "the directive case indicating the direction" and wrote: "Урүү /down/ is a good illustration in Mongolic languages of the process of grammaticalization highlighted by scholars through which an independent word evolves to become a suffix before gradually undergoing phonetic alterations" (2017, 136–140).

Regarding the origin of the suffix for the ablative case, Ramstedt (1957) first saw it as the following grammatical combination: *-a* (locative) + *-ča* (ablative). Khasbaatar

made an interesting suggestion based on the theory of consonant formation and the variants existing in Mongolian and Altaic languages: the dative and ablative cases were originally a single case and separated during the development process. According to him, the dative and ablative were originally one and the same case, which split during the process of grammaticalization, with the *-da/-ta* form remaining unchanged and becoming the dative case, and the *-da/-ta>-ča(-ʧa)>-s* evolving and weakening to mark the ablative, with both then following their paths as individual cases (1982, 210–214).

As for the origin of the suffix of the instrumental case, Bertagaev (1964) thinks it comes from *bari-* (to hold), *γar* (hand). This is an opinion shared by Bazarragchaa, who highlights the fact that *γar* (hand) refers to the limb of the body that connects the person to the thing (2017, 70–90). Khasbaatar, on the other hand, considers that the instrumental and collective cases derive from a common origin, *γuala* (two), which would have evolved according to the scheme: γuala > γala > -γar > [-a:r], with a phonetic shift to the consonant -r.

Researchers also believe that the morpheme occurring in examples such as *nomlaγsan ber* and *naran-u mandul delekey-yi geyigülbesü ber*, recorded by Danzandagva in his critical study of the Zürkhen Tolt, provides evidence of the link between the instrumental and nominative cases.

As for the origin of the suffix marking the connective, Choizhinjav considers that it derives from the independent word луг (together, all, jointly) (1989, 205). His in-depth analysis of Mongolic and Altaic languages, however, leads Khasbaatar to see it as a derivative of the collective numeral *γuala~γolo~γala* (two) and he points out that the instrumental and comitative (connective) cases are also expressed in English by the same morpheme (I write a letter with a pen. She will do it with me): “the fact that we observe an identical phenomenon in languages which are not related,” he writes, “is due to a problem concerning the similar characteristics of different family languages which is a question of general linguistic theory” (1982, 215–251).

Our work on the origin, the interelation, and the evoutionary trends of Mongolic languages allows us to discuss the hypotheses advanced by these researchers and their conclusions. The result of our study of linguistic materials collected from an extensive range of languages and dialects corroborates the assumptions below.

5 Conclusions

The analysis of the 12 grammatical case suffixes currently found in Mongolian languages and dialects reveals around 190 variants in frequent use. Most of these originated from independent words which, as the language evolved, particularly during the Middle Mongolian period, gradually lost their essence and stablized into

suffixes. The noun-bound case suffixes of Ancient and Middle Mongolian, each of which is used to express more than 10 ccases of meaning, underwent numerous permutations over the course of time. As a result, their range of meanings has significatively narrowed in modern times. While the case system has become more structured, many of the original functions have been incorporated into newly emerged grammatical cases.

To illustrate this, the suffix marking the directive case is derived from independent words found in various Mongolian languages and dialects. Due to the different functions it fulfilled, some of these suffixes were rapidly transferred to the dative-locative. However, independent words were also used to express the locative, which later separated from the dative.

The attributive case was formed from the contracted form of the genitive suffix, the final consonant of the words, and the constitutive suffix of the stem. It fulfils the same function as the genitive. Some of these cases have evolved to a stage equivalent to that of the basic cases of Mongolian languages and dialects, being incorporated into the written language, while others have remained confined to oral use. The instrumental and connective, the dative and locative, as well as the genitive and the accusative, all split in Ancient and Middle Mongolian.

To conclude, it was the emergence of a distinction between suffixed and non-suffixed nouns that initiated the process of grammaticalization in Mongolic languages. The absence of a suffix has been preserved to the present day through the nominative case.

The first stage in the appearance of suffixes was the creation of the suffix attached to nouns designating a person or thing, derived from the third-person pronoun (*in/an*). Meanwhile the suffix attached to nouns designating place was formed from the ancient locative (*a-*) root meaning “to be,” “to be situated,” and the word expressing place (*dai-*). These first two cases gave rise to the genitive and dative cases in contemporary Mongolic languages. The suffix attached to the noun that designates a person or thing remained the marker of the genitive, that is, the one used to link the person to the thing, but it also gave rise to another suffix that links the person or thing to the action, which evolved into the accusative. At the same time, the dative-locative remained, but the ablative was separated from it to express the idea of movement in a specific direction.

The next step was the emergence of a new morpheme derived from an independent word, intended to express the idea of a relationship between person and thing, thus fulfilling part of the function of the genitive. This later branched into two distinct forms: the instrumental, which relates the person to the thing, and the comitative-connective, which relates the person to another person. In addition, the quantitative case, derived from the word *činege*, borrowed one of its functions from the genitive. The suffix *-tai*, which is used today in the construction of certain words,

gave rise to the conjonctive, which in some Mongolian languages and dialects inherited the function of the connective case. Meanwhile, the attributive, derived from *činege*, evolved by borrowing its meaning of attribution from the genitive. The dative-locative evolved further, giving rise to the locative (expressing presence in a place) and the dative (expressing movement towards a place or giving something to someone). This can be summed up in Figure 13:

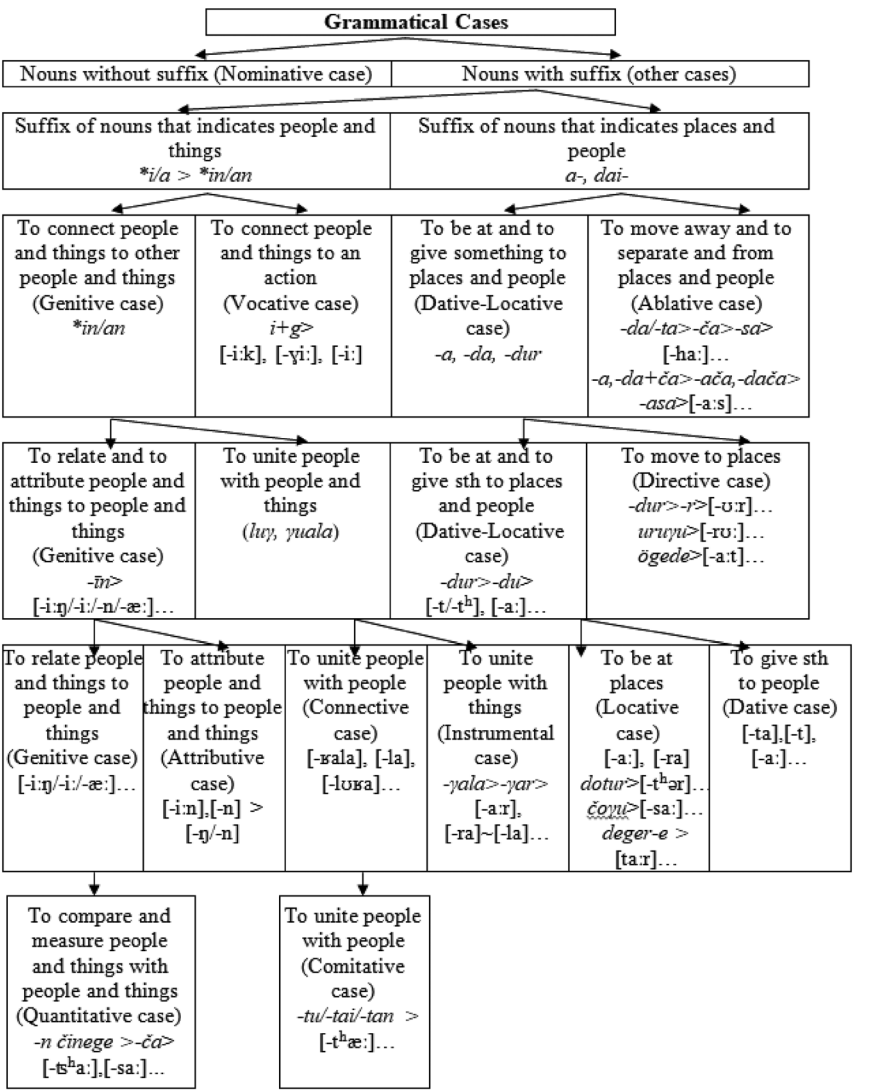

Figure 13: Origin, development, and tendency of grammatical case suffixes of Mongolic languages and dialects.

In accordance with the theory of grammaticalization, the grammatical cases of Mongolian languages have branched out and undergone a process of extension from a quantitative point of view. While their functions have been restricted to a limited scale, this process is still ongoing.

Abbreviations

PM	Proto Mongolian
AM	Ancient Mongolian
MM	Middle Mongolian
MoM	Modern Mongolian
Mo	Written Mongolian
Khalkh	Khalkha dialect
Uv-khalkh	Uvurkhangai khalkha subdialect
Govi-khalkha	Gobi khalkha subdialect
South	South Mongolia dialect
Chah	Chahar subdialect
Ord	Ordos subdialect
Alsh	Alasha subdialect
Baar	Baarin subdialect
Khorch	Khorchin subdialect
Kharch	Kharchin subdialect
Oir	Oirat dialect
Dör	Dörbet subdialect
Kalm	Kalmyk language in Russia
Bur	Buryat language in Russia, dialect
Aga	Aga buryat subdialect
Khori	Khori buryat subdialect
Barg	Barga subdialect
Mngr	Monguor language
Huzu	Huzu dialect
Minkhe	Minkhe dialect
Dongx	Dongxiang language
Dag	Dagur language
Bon	Bonan language
East yug	Eastern Yugur language

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