

## The Nominative/Genitive Alternation in Modern Inner Mongolian Relative Clauses: A Statistical Perspective\*

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**Hsiao, Su-ying. 2012. The Nominative/Genitive Alternation in Modern Inner Mongolian Relative Clauses: A Statistical Perspective.** *Linguistic Research* 29(2), 351-380. This paper investigates the nominative/genitive alternation in Modern Inner Mongolian from a statistical perspective, and accounts for the different preferences of nominative or genitive subjects in relative clauses between Mongolian and Japanese from a synchronic point of view. It is proposed that finiteness of relative clauses accounts for the subject Case marking alternation. Nominal subject occurs in a finite relative clause, and genitive subject occurs in a non-finite, nominal relative clause. Our statistical study shows that nominative subjects are less preferred than their genitive counterparts in Modern Inner Mongolian. Compared to Mongolian nominative/genitive alternation, nominative subjects are more common in Japanese. It is claimed that the developments of verbal noun aspectual suffixes to finite indicative suffixes also occurred in the history of Japanese, and Japanese goes faster than Mongolian does. Aspectual suffixes have evolved into indicative suffixes in Japanese, while in Inner Mongolian it is an ongoing development. (Academia Sinica)

**Keywords** nominative/genitive alternation, relative clause, Mongolian

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## 1. Introduction

This paper investigates the nominative/genitive alternation in Modern Inner Mongolian from a statistical perspective, and accounts for the different preferences of nominative or genitive subjects in relative clauses between Mongolian and Japanese from a synchronic point of view.

Subjects in relative clauses and nominal complements are generally marked genitive in Middle Mongolian, but Modern Mongolian exhibits the nominative/genitive alternation. Our statistical study shows that nominative subjects are less preferred than their genitive counterparts in Modern Inner Mongolian. It is proposed that finiteness of relative clauses accounts for the subject Case marking alternation. Nominal subject occurs in a finite relative clause, and genitive subject occurs in a non-finite, nominal relative clause. Mongolian relative clauses exhibit nominal characteristics and subjects in relative clauses and nominal complements are in most cases marked genitive in the past. Alongside the recent development of reanalyzing verbal noun suffixes as indicative suffixes, verbal nouns may take the predicative position in matrix clauses as well. By analogy, relative clauses are reanalysed as a finite clause and nominative subject in a relative clause is also possible for some Mongolian speakers.

Compared to Mongolian nominative/genitive alternation, nominative subjects are more common in Japanese. It is claimed that the developments of verbal noun aspectual suffixes to finite indicative suffixes also occurred in the history of Japanese and Japanese goes faster than Mongolian. Verbal noun aspectual suffixes have evolved into indicative suffixes in Japanese, while in Inner Mongolian it is an ongoing development.

This paper is organized as follows. Section 2 gives background information about Mongolian in general and Mongolian relative clauses in particular. Section 3 reports the results of a statistical study of the nominative/genitive alternation in Modern Inner Mongolian relative clauses. Section 4 discusses finiteness of clauses and the nominative/genitive alternation, and compares Inner Mongolian and Japanese from a diachronic point of view. Concluding remarks follow in Section 5.

## 2. Basic Characteristics of Mongolian Relative Clauses

Mongolian is an agglutinative language, in which verbs are marked by suffixes for the imperative, indicative, verbal noun and converb forms. Roles of nouns are marked by a system of grammatical Cases including nominative, accusative, genitive, dative, locative, ablative, instrumental, and comitative.<sup>1</sup> The canonical word order is subject-object-predicate. Mongolian has vowel harmony. Masculine (a, o, u) and feminine (e, ö, ü) vowels don't co-occur in a non-compound word, and neutral vowel (i) is free from the constraint.<sup>2</sup>

- (1) a. *Önödör dörbedüger kičiyel i suru-na.*  
 today fourth lesson ACC study-IND.NONPST  
 “(We) will study Lesson four today.”
- b. *Ta Mongγol kele mede-n\_e uu?*  
 2PL.NOM Mongol language know-IND.NONPST Q  
 “Do you know Mongolian?”
- (2) a. *Bi öčügedür Batu yi ol-ju üje-be.*  
 1SG.NOM yesterday Batu ACC meet-CVB.IMPFV see-IND.PST  
 “I met Batu yesterday.”
- b. *Önödör Batu nigen kituγ\_a ab-u-ba.*  
 today Batu.NOM one knife take-FILL-IND.PST  
 “Batu bought a knife today.”

<sup>1</sup> Mongolian nominative Case form is ZERO, and accusative Case marker is usually omitted. Besides, dative and locative Cases share the same form.

<sup>2</sup> The Mongolian examples in this paper are transliterations of written forms used in Inner Mongolia. “\_” links alphabets in a word but written separately according to the orthography. A hyphen is inserted by the author to show the boundary of the verbal stem and a suffix. List of abbreviations used in glosses in this article: ABL, ablative Case; ACC, accusative Case; AGR, agreement; CAUSE, causative morpheme; COND, conditional; COOP, cooperative; CVB, converb; DAT, dative Case; DPST, direct past; FILL, a vowel filled between a stem ending with a consonant and a suffix starting with a consonant; FTR, future; GEN, genitive Case; HAB, imperfective habitual; IMP, imperative; IMPFV, imperfective; IND, indicative form; IDPST, indirect past; LOC, locative Case; NEG, negation; NOM, nominative Case; NONPST, non-past; NSR, non-subject relative; PART, particle; PASS, passive morpheme; PFV, perfective; PL, plural; POSS, possessive; PST, past; Q, question particle; QUOTE, quotation marker; RECP, reciprocal; REFL, reflexive; SG, singular; SR, subject relative; TERM, terminal; TOP, topic marker; VN, verbal noun; VOL, volition.

Indicative suffixes contain not only temporal but also modal or aspectual meanings. For example, the verbal suffix “-la” might express a past event or a present perfective situation which the speaker witnesses, as shown in (3)a and (3)b, or an event which the speaker has the confidence that it will take place in no time. See (3)c.

- (3) a. Kejijy\_e ire-be?            Öñödör ire-l\_e.  
       when come-IND.PST today come-IND.DPST  
       “When did (you) come? (I) came yesterday.”
- b. Ende ƣurban čaƣ saƣu-l\_a.  
       here three time sit-IND.DPST  
       “(I) have been siting here for three hours.”
- c. Qoƣula jaƣusi belen bol-u-l\_a.  
       food snack ready become-FILL-IND.DPST.  
       “The meal will be ready soon.”

Verbal nouns contain aspectual informations and possess characteristics of both verbs and nouns. Besides of assigning Cases to their own arguments in the embedded clauses, the verbal nouns *üje-gsen* “see-VN.PFV” and *ide-kü* “eat-VN.FTR” in (4) nominalize the clauses they head and make them legitimate to host Case markers.

- (4) [[Temegen, üker, morin, moƣai, noqai, ünegen, arsalan, kümün]  
       camel cow horse snake dog fox lion person  
       i bi [bür luƣ\_a] yi ni qadaƣa-ju  
       ACC 1SG.NOM all COM ACC PART sting-CVB.IMPFV  
       *üje-gsen*] **dü** [kümün ü miqan *ide-kü*]  
       see-VN.PFV DAT person GEN meat.ACC eat-VN.FTR  
       **dü** ilegüü sayıqan bayi-n\_a. (Choijinjab et al eds. 1987: 265)<sup>3</sup>  
       DAT much well be-IND.NONPST

“Having checked out by stinging camels, cows, horses, snakes, dogs, foxes, lions and men, eating men’s meat is superfluously good.”

<sup>3</sup> Glosses and the English translation are mine.

The contrast between (5a) and (5b) shows that the clause headed by verbal noun is nominal since the negative predicate *ügei* only negates a nominal.

- (5) a. Bi            sayıqan    ungsi-ju            *čida-qu*  
 1SG.NOM well      read-CVB.IMPFV be\_capable-VN.FTR  
*ügei.*  
 be.NEG  
 “I can’t read well.”
- b. \*Bi            sayıqan    ungsi-ju            *čida-n\_a*  
 1SG.NOM well      read-CVB.IMPFV be\_capable-IND.NONPST  
*ügei.*  
 be.NEG  
 “I can’t read well.”

Converbs are non-finite and used for connecting verbs or clauses.

- (6) a. Kedün      čaγ    *bol-ju*            *bayi-n\_a?*  
 how\_many time    become-CVB.IMPFV be-IND.NONPST  
 “What time is it?”
- b. \*Kedün      čaγ    *bol-ju?*  
 how\_many time    become-CVB.IMPFV  
 Intended reading “What time is it?”
- (7) a. Namayi      kümün    *eri-bel,*            uda-qu            ügei  
 1SG.ACC person    find-CVB.COND be\_late-VN.FTR be.NEG  
 ire-n\_e                      ge-rei.  
 come-IND.NONPST    say-2IMP  
 “If someone look for me, please say that (I) will come back soon.”
- b. \*Namayi      kümün    *eri-bel.*  
 1SG.ACC person    find-CVB.COND  
 “\*If someone look for me.”

Nouns and adjectives can play as predicates without a copula in Mongolian. They are negated by a negative copula. See (8) and (9).

- (8) a. Bi                    suruγči.  
 1SG.NOM student  
 “I am a student.”
- b. Ta                    *Mongγol*    *kümün*    üü?  
 2PL.NOM Monggol person Q  
 “Are you a Mongolian?”
- c. Bida                  *maγu*    *kümün*    *bisi*.  
 2PL.NOM bad person be.NEG  
 “We are not bad guys.”
- (9) a. Minü              ger        *baγ\_a*.  
 1SG.GEN house small  
 “My house is small.”
- b. Minü              ger        *baγ\_a*    *ügei*.  
 1SG.GEN house small NEG  
 “My house is not small.”

Verbal nouns with the imperfective habitual suffixes “-day/-deg”, like nouns and adjectives, might occur as matrix predicates. See (10).

- (10) a. Bi              tere      kituγ\_a    bar    noγuγ\_a    *kerči-deg*.  
 1SG.NOM that knife INS vegetable cut-VN.HAB  
 “I cut vegetables with that knife.”
- b. Ta              abu,    eji        tei      ben              qamtu  
 2PL.NOM father mother COM REFL.POSS together  
*saγu-daγ*      uu?  
 sit-VN.HAB Q  
 “Do you live with your parents?”

Spoken data show that verbal nouns with the perfective suffixes “-γsan/-gsen”<sup>4</sup> and future suffixes “-qu/-kü” can also occur as matrix predicates without a copula in

<sup>4</sup> The suffixes transliterated as “-γsan/-gsen” are pronounced as “-san/-sen” and sometimes written as such in texts containing colloquial features like Mongolian Laoqida. Mongolian Laoqida, a conversation textbook used for learning Mongolian in the Office of Interpreters in Korea, was translated from a Chinese version in 1741 and revised in 1776 and 1790. Many words in Mongolian Laoqida were spelt according to their spoken forms.

affirmative and interrogative sentences.<sup>5</sup> See (11) and (12).

- (11) a. *dolon sar\_a yin arban dolon edür yin bars*  
 seven month GEN ten seven day GEN tiger  
*čay tu törü-sen.* (Mongolian Laoqida Vol.8, 19b)  
 time DAT be\_born-VN.PFV  
 “(I) was born at the Tiger’s time (3-5 o’clock in the morning) on  
 the 17<sup>th</sup> day of the seventh month (in the cow’s year forty years  
 ago).”
- b. *činü mori ger te teŋge-sen üü*  
 2SG.GEN horse.NOM house LOC raise.VN.PFV Q  
*ijaur ab-u-ysan*  
 originally buy-FILL-VN.PFV  
 uu? (Mongolian Laoqida Vol. 5, 19a-b)  
 Q  
 “Are your horses the ones raised at home or originally bought  
 (from the animal market)?”
- c. *bida ür yin kirayan du baqan*  
 1PL.NOM dawn GEN dusk\_before\_dawn DAT somewhat  
*buda id-ed odu üdesi bol-tal\_a*  
 rice.ACC eat-CVB.PFV now evening become-CVB.TERM  
*buda ide-sen ügei.* (Mongolian Laoqida Vol.3, 20b)  
 rice.ACC eat-VN.PFV NEG  
 “Now it’s evening. We haven’t eaten meals since we ate some rice  
 at dawn.”
- (12) a. *bi tende eči-jü ed i*  
 1SG.NOM there.DAT go-CVB.IMPV thing ACC  
*qudald-ad tedü ire-kü.* (Mongolian Laoqida Vol.8, 1b)  
 sell-CVB.PFV immediately come-VN.FTR  
 “I will come (back) immediately after I go there and sell goods.”
- b. *nige degel i ki-jü kür-kü*  
 one gown ACC do-CVB.IMPV reach-VN.FTR

<sup>5</sup> Mongolian verbal noun suffixes are on the way to become indicative suffixes. See Hsiao (2007, 2009, 2011) and Section 4 for further discussions.

üü ? (Mongolian Laoqida Vol.6, 10b)

Q

“Is it enough to make a gown?”

- c. ...mön\_kü         *ayu-qu*  
 this\_very\_one    be\_afraid-VN.FTR  
*ügei.* (Mongolian Laoqida Vol.1, 9b)  
 be.NEG

“These same ones are not afraid.”

Most of Mongolian relative clauses are pre-nominal. They might be classified into three types, i. e. relative clauses proper, gapless relative clauses and headless relative clauses.

Relative clauses proper are gapped relative clauses with head nouns. There are no explicit marking such as a relative pronoun between a relative clause and the head noun in Mongolian as shown in (13).

- (13) [xödege   xoni   xariɣul-ju         bayi-ɣsan]   minü  
 countryside sheep tend-CVB.IMPFV exist-VN.PFV 1SG.GEN  
 ökin   degüü  
 girl   younger\_sibling  
 “my younger sister who was tending sheep in the countryside”

Subject, object, Dative/Locative, Instrument and Ablative can be relativized but no resumptive pronouns are allowed to fill the gaps.

- (14) a. Batu            joɣus            naɣad-daɣ.  
 Batu.NOM    money.ACC   play-VN.HAB  
 “Batu gambles.”  
 b. [joɣus            naɣad-daɣ]        kümün  
 money.ACC   play-VN.HAB   person  
 “people who gamble”
- (15) a. Bi                öčügedür   Batu   yi        ol-ju  
 1SG.NOM   yesterday Batu   ACC   meet-CVB.IMPFV  
 üje-be.



see-IND.PST

“I met Batu yesterday.”

- b. [minü öçügedür ün ol-ju üje-gsen]  
 1SG.GEN yesterday GEN meet-CVB.IMPV see-VN.PFV  
 kümün  
 person

“the man I met yesterday”

- (16) a. öçögedür bi süm\_e dü oçi-ba.  
 yesterday 1SG.NOM temple DAT go-IND.PST  
 “I went to a temple yesterday.”

- b. [çinü öçügedür ün oçi-şsan] süm\_e  
 2SG.GEN yesterday GEN go-VN.PFV temple  
 “the temple you went to yesterday”

- c. \*[çinü öçügedür ün tende oçi-şsan]  
 2SG.GEN yesterday GEN there.DAT go-VN.PFV  
 süm\_e  
 temple

Intended reading “the temple you went there yesterday”

- (17) a. Bi tere kituş\_a bar noşuş\_a kerçi-deg.  
 1SG.NOM that knife INS vegetable.ACC cut-VN.HAB  
 “I cut vegetables with that knife.”

- b. [minü noşuş\_a kerçi-deg] kituş\_a  
 1SG.GEN vegetable.ACC cut-VN.HAB knife  
 “the knife which I cut vegetable with”

- c. \*[minü tegün iyer noşuş\_a kerçi-deg]  
 1SG.GEN 3SG INS vegetable.ACC cut-VN.HAB  
 kituş\_a  
 knife

Intended reading “the knife which I cut vegetable with it”

- (18) a. Batu nada aça nige aq\_a.  
 Batu.NOM 1SG ABL one older  
 “Batu is one year older than me.”

- b. [Batu yin nige aq\_a] kümün  
 Batu GEN one older person

“the person who Batu is one year older than”

- c. \*[Batu yin tegün eče nige aq\_a] kümün  
 Batu GEN 3SG ABL one older person  
 Intended reading “the person who Batu is one year older than  
 him/her”

Gapless relative clauses are headed by abstract nouns such as *ači* “merit”, *jarliγ* “edict” and *yosun* “maner, rule”.

- (19) a. tan i teǰige-gsen hači (SHM<sup>6</sup> Vol. 9, Sec. 214)  
 2PL ACC feed-VN.PFV merit  
 “the merit that (my mother) raised you up”
- b. [Činggis qaγan u nereid-ü-gsen] mön  
 Chinggis emperor GEN name-FILL-VN.PFV the\_very\_same  
 jarliγ (SHM Vol.12, Sec. 269)  
 edict  
 “the very same edict in which Chinggis Khaan named (Ögödei as  
 his successor)”
- c. [Qori-tümed ün Qorilartai-mergen ü ökin  
 Qori-tümed GEN Qorilartai-mergen GEN daughter  
 Ariγ-usun a töre-(g)sen Alan-γo’a: yi  
 Ariγ-usun LOC be\_born-VN.PFV Alan-γo’a: ACC  
 tende γuyu:-ǰu Dobun-mergen ü  
 there.DAT ask-CVB.IMPFV Dobun-mergen GEN  
 abu-γsan] yosun teyi:mü. (SHM Vol.1, Sec.9)  
 take-VN.PFV manner like\_that  
 “So that is how (Duwa-soqor) requested Alan-γo’a: (as his wife),  
 who was born at Ariγ-usun by Qori-tümed’s Qorilartai-mergen’s  
 daughter, there and Dobun-mergen took (her as his wife).”

Headless relative clauses are gapped relative clauses without overt head nouns.

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<sup>6</sup> SHM stands for Mongγol-un niyuca tobčiyan “the Secret History of the Mongols”.

- (20) [öber ün ol-u-γsan jöge-gsen] iyer  
 self GEN get.FILL-VN.PFV gather-VN.PFV INS  
 iyen (SHM Vol.9, Sec. 212)  
 REFL.POSS  
 “with (the people) who you have found and gathered by yourself”

Mongolian exhibits the Nominative/Genitive alternation, a phenomenon called Ga/No Conversion shown in (21) in the Japanese literature (Harada 1971, among others), in marking agents in embedded clauses. See (22).

- (21) a. *Taguchi ga/\*no* hon o kai-ta.  
 Taguchi NOM/GEN bookACC write-PST  
 “Taguchi wrote the book.”  
 b. [*Taguchi ga/no* kai-ta] hon  
 Taguchi NOM/GEN write-PST book  
 “the book which Taguchi wrote”
- (22) a. *Bi/\*Minü* öčügedür Batu yi  
 1SG.NOM/1SG.GEN yesterday Batu ACC  
 ol-ju üje-be.  
 meet-CVB.IMPFV see-IND.PST  
 “I met Batu yesterday.”  
 b. [*Bi/Minü* öčügedür ün ol-ju  
 1SG.NOM/1SG.GEN yesterday GEN meet-CVB.IMPFV  
 üje-gsen] tere kümün čini Batu bayi-n\_a.  
 see-VN.PFV that person 2SG.POSS Batu exist-IND.NONPST  
 “The person who I met yesterday is Batu.”

However, Nominative/Genitive alternation in marking agent subjects in relative clauses is rare in Middle Mongolian. Example (23) is the only case in Secret History of the Mongols that agent in a relative clause is marked as nominative.

- (23) edö'e: Naya: da ča asaγ-tala qaha:n  
 now Naya DAT ABL ask-CVB.TERM emperor  
 soyurqa-'a:su tengiri yin jaya'(a:) a:r [ečige

allow-CVB.COND heaven GEN destiny INS father  
**eke** töre-'ü:l-ü-gsen] mariya:n  
 mother.NOM be\_born-CAUSE-FILL-VN.PFV muscle.REFL.POSS  
 ača asaχu:'a:su! (SHM Vol.7, 197)  
 ABL ask.CAUSE.1SG.Vol  
 “Now while asking Nayaa, if the Khaan allows, please ask my own  
 body to which (my) father and mother gave birth with the destiny of  
 Heaven!”

The following section examines the distributions of nominative and genitive Cases in Inner Mongolian relative clauses from a statistical perspective.

### 3. A Statistical Study

In a statistical research conducted in June of 2010, 100 Mongolian native speakers were recruited from under and graduate students of Inner Mongolia University to grade sentences on a 1-4 scale in a questionnaire. Score (1) means perfect sentences, (2) means grammatical but unnatural sentences, (3) means sentences with doubts, and (4) means definitely bad sentences. Sentences with a mean score smaller than 2 are classified as grammatical ones in our analysis.

The questionnaires were distributed to the participants and collected when done by 5 student assistants. All of the participants are native speakers of Mongolian and Mongolian-Chinese bilingual, with some knowledge in English (and/or Japanese). Background information about the participants' gender, age, education, hometown and language skills is also collected for reference and further analysis.

The questionnaire contains the instruction with samples and 64 sentences, including 25 filler sentences, 5 Nom/Gen pairs, and sentences including those dealing with the issues of word order, targets of relativization, resumptive pronouns and simple sentences served for baseline comparison. Sentences were arranged in a randomized order.

Filler sentences are presumptively perfect sentences taken from a textbook. They are meant to control the quality of the answers of the participants. (24a-d) exemplify some of the filler sentences.

- (24) a. Ta sayin bayi-n\_a uu?  
 2PL.NOM good exist-IND.NONPST Q  
 “How are you?”
- b. Ta yeke ĵalaŷu qara-ŷda-ĵu  
 2PL.NOM very young watch-PASS-CVB.IMPFV  
 bayi-n\_a.  
 exist-IND.NONPST  
 “You look very young.”
- c. Bi baŷsi yin aĵil tei.  
 1SG.NOM teacher GEN work COM  
 “I am a teacher.”  
 Literally “I am with a teacher’s work.”
- d. Ta qoyar i tani-lča-ŷul-u-y\_a.  
 2PL two ACC know-RECP-CAUSE-FILL-1.Vol  
 “Let’s introduce you two to know each other!”

The nominative/genitive pairs used in our questionnaire are listed below.

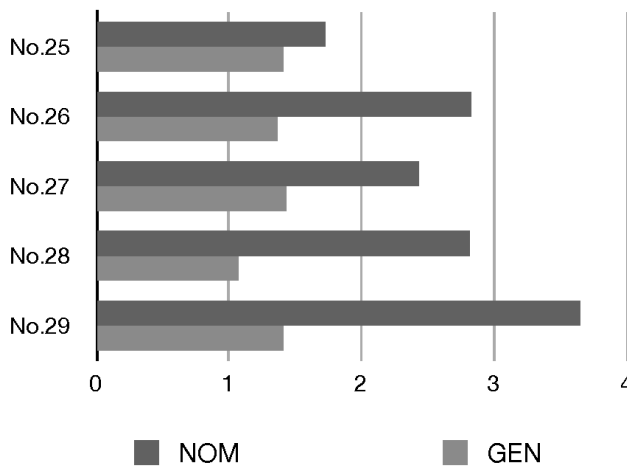
- (25) a. [öčügedür **Baŷatur** Batu du qudaldu-ĵu  
 yesterday Baŷatur.NOM Batu DAT sell-CVB.IMPFV  
 ög-ü-gsen] tere mori yeke sayin.  
 give-FILL-VN.PFV that horse very good  
 “The horse which Baŷatur sold to Batu yesterday is very good.”
- b. [öčügedür **Baŷatur un** Batu du qudaldu-ĵu  
 yesterday Baŷatur GEN Batu DAT sell-CVB.IMPFV  
 ög-ü-gsen] tere mori yeke sayin.  
 give-FILL-VN.PFV that horse very good  
 “The horse which Baŷatur sold to Batu yesterday is very good.”
- (26) a. [**bi** öčügedür ün ol-ĵu üĵe-gsen]  
 1SG.NOM yesterday GEN meet-CVB.IMPFV see-VN.PFV  
 tere kümün čini Batu bayi-n\_a.  
 that person 2SG.POSS Batu exist-IND.NONPST  
 “The person who I met yesterday is Batu.”
- b. [**Minü** öčügedür ün ol-ĵu üĵe-gsen]

- 1SG.GEN yesterday GEN meet-CVB.IMPFV see-VN.PFV  
 tere kümün čini Batu bayi-n\_a.  
 that person 2SG.POSS Batu exist-IND.NONPST  
 “The person who I met yesterday is Batu.”
- (27) a. [*Bi* öçügedür ol-ju üje-gsen] tere  
 1SG.NOM yesterday meet-CVB.IMPFV see-VN.PFV that  
 mori unu-γsan kümün bol Batu yum.  
 horse ride-VN.PFV person TOP Batu thing  
 “The horseriding person I met yesterday is Batu.”
- b. [Öçügedür ün *nünü* ol-ju üje-gsen]  
 yesterday GEN 1SG.GEN meet-CVB.IMPFV see-VN.PFV  
 tere mori unu-γsan kümün bol Batu yum.  
 that horse ride-VN.PFV person TOP Batu thing  
 “The horseriding person I met yesterday is Batu.”
- (28) a. Bi [*Baγatur* biči-gsen] ĵakiy\_a yi  
 1SG.NOM Baγatur.NOM write-VN.IMPFV letter ACC  
 ungsi-ba.  
 read-IND.PST  
 “I read the letter Baγatur wrote.”
- b. Bi [*Baγatur un* biči-gsen] ĵakiy\_a yi  
 1SG.NOM Baγatur GEN write-VN.IMPFV letter ACC  
 ungsi-ba.  
 read-IND.PST  
 “I read the letter Baγatur wrote.”
- (29) a. Baγatur önödör [*bi* biči-gsen] ĵakiy\_a  
 Baγatur.NOM today 1SG.NOM write-VN.IMPFV letter  
 yi ungsi-ba.  
 ACC read-IND.PST  
 “Today Baγatur read the letter I wrote.”
- b. Baγatur önödör [*nünü* biči-gsen] ĵakiy\_a  
 Baγatur.NOM today 1SG.GEN write-VN.IMPFV letter  
 yi ungsi-ba.  
 ACC read-IND.PST  
 “Today Baγatur read the letter I wrote.”

Questionnaires where the mean score for the filler sentences is larger than 2 or there are more than 5 missing values were discarded. There are 91 valid subjects (M 20; F 71; Average age 23:09). We used t-Test to analyze the data. Genitive Case subject is significantly preferred. (25a) is the only sentence with a nominative subject and gets a mean score smaller than 2. See Table 1 and Figure 1.

**Table 1.** Nominative vs. Genitive Case Subjects in Inner Mongolian Relative Clauses

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value
(25a)	91	1.7033	1.00073	-2.917**
(25b)	91	1.4066	.82970	
(26a)	91	2.8242	1.21649	-11.234***
(26b)	91	1.3626	.80989	
(27a)	91	2.3956	1.17514	-7.594***
(27b)	91	1.4286	.73247	
(28a)	91	2.8132	1.13443	-14.364***
(28b)	91	1.0659	.32667	
(29a)	91	3.6374	.79406	-20.219***
(29b)	91	1.4286	.78850	



**Figure 1.** Comparison of Mean Scores of Nominative and Genitive Case Subjects in Inner Mongolian Relative Clauses

No participant rejects all five pairs of sentences. 5 participants accept all pairs of

sentences. 67 participants accept all sentences with genitive subjects, but only 5 participants accept all nominative subject sentences. Participants who accept all of the nominative sentences also accept their genitive counterparts. 9 participants reject all nominative subject sentences, while no participant rejects all genitive subject sentences. 6 participants accept all genitive sentences but reject all of their nominative counterparts. Table 2 shows the distributions of answers for the NOM/GEN pairs. (28b) is the only sentence that received no “definitely bad” grading.

Although they are not the preferred forms, nominative subjects are acceptable for some speakers. For every nominative subject sentence, there were some native speakers who graded it as a perfect one. For example, 51 participants out of 91 regard (25a) as perfect expressions, and 24 think it is grammatical but unnatural. Only 16 participants graded it as doubtful or bad sentences. The average score of (25a) is 1.7033, which makes it qualified to be an acceptable sentence according to our criteria.

**Table 2.** The Distributions of Answers for the NOM/GEN Pairs (N=91)

	1 N (%)	2 N (%)	3 N (%)	4 N (%)
(25a)	52 (57.1)	24 (26.4)	5 (5.5)	10 (11.0)
(25b)	69 (75.8)	12 (13.2)	5 (5.5)	5 (5.5)
(26a)	18 (19.8)	22 (24.2)	9 (9.9)	42 (46.2)
(26b)	71 (78.0)	13 (14.3)	1 (1.1)	6 (6.6)
(27a)	24 (26.4)	34 (37.4)	6 (6.6)	27 (29.7)
(27b)	62 (68.1)	22 (24.2)	4 (4.4)	3 (3.3)
(28a)	12 (13.2)	32 (35.2)	8 (8.8)	39 (42.9)
(28b)	87 (95.6)	2 (2.2)	2 (2.2)	0 (0.0)
(29a)	3 (3.3)	9 (9.9)	6 (6.6)	73 (80.2)
(29b)	65 (71.4)	18 (19.8)	3 (3.3)	5 (5.5)

Table 3 and Table 4 further display the distributions in groups and show detail information about each pairs of sentences. The data demonstrate that even though there exist idiosyncratic variations in judging the sentences, the genitive ones are preferred.

There are only 7 cases in which a participant accepted a nominal subject



sentence but reject a genitive one. On the other hand, there are 198 cases that one accept the genitive subject sentence but reject its nominative counterpart. See Table 3.

**Table 3.** The Distributions of the Group of Answers 1 and 2 for the NOM/GEN Pairs

	N	Accepted (1-2) N (%)	Note
(25a)	91	76 (83.5)	NOM accepted & GEN rejected 5 (5.5); GEN accepted & NOM rejected 10 (11.0); Both accepted 71 (78.0)
(25b)	91	81 (89.0)	
(26a)	91	40 (44.0)	NOM accepted & GEN rejected 0 (0.0); GEN accepted & NOM rejected 44 (48.4); Both accepted 40 (44.0)
(26b)	91	84 (92.3)	
(27a)	91	58 (63.7)	NOM accepted & GEN rejected 2 (2.2); GEN accepted & NOM rejected 28 (30.8); Both accepted 56 (61.5)
(27b)	91	84 (92.3)	
(28a)	91	44 (48.4)	NOM accepted & GEN rejected 0 (0.0); GEN accepted & NOM rejected 45 (49.5); Both accepted 44 (48.4)
(28b)	91	89 (97.8)	
(29a)	91	12 (13.2)	NOM accepted & GEN rejected 0 (0.0); GEN accepted & NOM rejected 71 (78.0); Both accepted 12 (13.2)
(29b)	91	83 (91.2)	

For participants who reject at least one of the test sentences in a pair, genitive subject sentences are acceptable to many of them. See Table 4.

**Table 4.** The Distributions of the Group of Answers 3 and 4 for the NOM/GEN Pairs

	N	Rejected (3-4) N (%)	Note
(25a)	91	15 (16.5)	NOM rejected & GEN accepted 10 (11.0); GEN rejected & NOM accepted 5 (5.5); Both rejected 5 (5.5)
(25b)	91	10 (11.0)	
(26a)	91	51 (56.0)	NOM rejected & GEN accepted 44 (48.4); GEN rejected & NOM accepted 0 (0.0); Both rejected 7 (7.7)
(26b)	91	7 (7.7)	
(27a)	91	33 (36.3)	NOM rejected & GEN accepted 28 (30.8); GEN rejected & NOM accepted 2 (2.2); Both rejected 5 (5.5)
(27b)	91	7 (7.7)	
(28a)	91	47 (51.6)	NOM rejected & GEN accepted 45 (49.5); GEN rejected & NOM accepted 0 (0.0); Both rejected 2 (2.2)
(28b)	91	2 (2.2)	
(29a)	91	79 (86.8)	NOM rejected & GEN accepted 71 (78.0); GEN rejected & NOM accepted 0 (0.0); Both rejected 8 (8.8)
(29b)	91	8 (8.8)	

In the next section, we will first discuss the licensing of nominative and genitive Cases in relative clauses and then compare the distributions of nominative/genitive alternation in Inner Mongolian and Japanese in a diachronic view.

## 4. Implications

### 4.1 Finiteness of Clauses and the Nominative/Genitive Alternation

A finite clause contains some inflectional elements such as tense and agreement of person and/or number. In nominative-accusative languages, the subject of a finite clause takes nominative Case. We propose that the finiteness of clauses is related to subject Case marking. Nominal subjects appear in finite clauses, and genitive subjects occur in nominal clauses.

Unlike matrix clauses, Mongolian relative clauses cannot be headed by a finite indicative verb, but by a non-finite verbal noun. Compare (30) and (31).

- (30) a. Batu öçügedür *ire-be*.  
 Batu yesterday come-IND.PST  
 “Batu came yesterday.”
- b. Batu öçügedür ire-gsen *bayi-n\_a*.  
 Batu yesterday come-VN.PFV exist.IND.NONPST  
 “Batu came yesterday.”  
 Literally “The situation that Batu came yesterday exists.”
- (31) a. [öçügedür(-ün) *ire-gsen*] kümün  
 yesterday(-GEN) come-VN.PFV person  
 “the person who came yesterday”
- b. \*[öçügedür *ire-be*] kümün  
 yesterday come-IND.PST person  
 Intended reading “the person who came yesterday”
- c. \*[öçügedür ire-gsen *bayi-n\_a*] kümün  
 yesterday come-VN.PFV exist-IND.NONPST person  
 Intended reading “the person who came yesterday”

We have shown in (5), reproduced here as (32), that clauses headed by verbal nouns are nominalized clauses because the negative predicate *ügei* takes a nominal as its complement.

- (32) a. Bi sayıqan ungsi-ju *čida-qu*  
 1SG.NOM well read-CVB.IMPFV be\_capable-VN.FTR  
*ügei*.  
 be.NEG  
 “I can’t read well.”
- b. \*Bi sayıqan ungsi-ju *čida-n\_a*  
 1SG.NOM well read-CVB.IMPFV be\_capable-IND.NONPST  
*ügei*.  
 be.NEG  
 “I can’t read well.”

Clauses headed by verbal nouns can host Case markers. See (33).

- (33) [küü ni ĵakidal *ire-güil-ü-gsen*]  
 [son.NOM 3SG.POSS letter.ACC come-CAUSE-FILL-VN.PFV]  
*dü* eke ni sanay\_a amur bol-ĵai.  
 DAT mother.NOM 3SG.POSS thought easy become-IDPST  
 “The mother became released when her son sent a letter (back).”  
 (Chinggeltai 1991: 555)

Data from Turkish, also an Altaic language, support the claim that finiteness is related to Case markings. There are two types of relative clauses in Turkish. The native type, like Mongolian relatives, is pre-nominal and lacks an overt relative marker. The native relative clauses are nominalized and subjects in relative clause are genitive. See (34)<sup>7</sup>. The other type, which is post-nominal and marked by a relative pronoun *ki*, is borrowed from Persian. The borrowed relative clauses are finite. Compare (35a) and (35b).

- (34) [ *bayan-im otur-duĵ-u*] divan (Cagri 2005: 6, (3a))  
 lady-GEN sit-NSR-3SG sofa  
 ‘the sofa that the lady is sitting on’
- (35) a. [kitab-1 *al-an*] kız çanta-sı-nı kaybetti.  
 book-ACC buy-SR girl bag-AGR-ACC lost  
 “The girl who bought the book lost her bag.”  
 (Cagri 2005:2, Note 3(i))
- b. kız [ki kitab-1 *al-dı,*] çanta-sı-nı. kaybetti  
 girl COMP book-ACC buy-PST bag-AGR-ACC lost  
 “The girl, who bought the book, lost her bag.”  
 (Cagri 2005:2, Note 3(ii))

Besides, English relative clauses are finite and the clause-internal subjects are nominative. Gerundive Nominals in English have genitive subjects. See (36) and

<sup>7</sup> According to Cagri (2005:2), Turkish native relative clause has two forms of verbal inflections, which are labeled in the literature as the Subject Relative and the Non-Subject Relative forms generally based on the grammatical function of the head noun of the relative clause plays. Cagri (2005:2-3) also notes that the SR form is sometimes licensed for non-subjects. Kornfilt (2008) glosses the NSR suffix *-DİK* as FN (Factive Nominalization).

(37).

- (36) a. Who is the person [(whom) [*you saw* yesterday]]?  
 b. The student [whom [*Jim asked* to submit a paper next week]] is John.
- (37) a. *John's* being eager to please (Chomsky 1970: (3a))  
 b. *John's* refusing the offer (Chomsky 1970: (3b))  
 c. *Mary's* having left surprised me. (Schachter 1976: (22))

A finite clause and a nominal clause containing aspect can be expressed in terms of CP and AspP in the Chomskyan framework. It has been proposed that nominative Case is licensed by a finite T (head of a TP selected by C [+Finite]) and genitive Case by a nominal head D (Chomsky 1986: 74, 1995: 114). We will not go into the technical details of how the subject position of a finite clause gets nominative Case assigned/licensed, and how a phrase inside a nominal phrase gets genitive Case in this paper.<sup>8</sup> Suffice it to say that finiteness of the clause is a keypoint to Mongolian nominative/genitive alternation.

#### 4.2 A Comparison of the Nom/Gen Alternation in Mongolian and Japanese

Although both Mongolian and Japanese show Nom/Gen alternation, the distributions of nominative and genitive Cases in relative clauses are different. In Inner Mongolian, genitive Case subject is significantly preferred. According to Maki et al.'s statistic study, nominative subjects are significantly preferred in Japanese. Maki et al. (2004 : (34)) shows that the participants who accept genitive subjects also accept nominative subjects, with 86 participants accepting (38b) out of 299

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<sup>8</sup> For analyses in the Chomskyan framework, see Miyagawa (2011) for example. Miyagawa (2011) reviews two approaches dealing with nominative/genitive alternation, D-licensing hypothesis and C-licensing hypothesis. In the D-licensing hypothesis, nominative subject and genitive subject appear in different structures. The clause with a nominative subject is a CP, whereas the clause with a genitive subject is a smaller, reduced structure such as a TP, an AspP, or a MoodP. In the C-licensing hypothesis, both nominative subject and genitive subject appear in a CP, but the C which licenses genitive subject possesses a nominal feature. Hale (2002) proposes a D-licensing analysis of Dagur, a Mongolic language, and Kornfilt (2008) provides a C-licensing analysis of Turkish.

participants who accept (38a).

- (38) a. [Kinoo, Taguchi ga yonda] hon  
 yesterday Taguchi NOM read.PST book  
 “the book Taguchi read yesterday”  
 (Maki et. al. 2004: Q3)
- b. [Kinoo, Taguchi no yonda] hon  
 yesterday Taguchi GEN read.PST book  
 “the book Taguchi read yesterday”  
 (Maki et. al. 2004: Q4)

Besides, those who accept genitive subjects judge the examples with genitive subjects worse than the counterparts with nominative subjects.

We will account for the different distributions of Mongolian and Japanese from a historical point of view. Mongolian verbal nouns are on the way to become a new set of indicative suffixes (Hsiao 2007, 2009, 2011). We have shown in (10), (11) and (12), reproduced as (39) to (41) below, that verbal nouns might take the position of indicative endings. The imperfective habitual verbal noun suffix *-day/-deg* has turned out to be also an indicative ending and may appear in affirmative, negative and interrogative contexts freely. The perfective verbal noun suffix *-γsan/-gsen* occurs in interrogative and negative sentences freely, but usually cooccur with a copula in affirmative sentences in written language though a copula is not necessary in spoken language.<sup>9</sup> As for the verbal noun future suffix *-qu/-kü*, it mainly occur in interrogative and negative sentences.

- (39) a. Bi            tere    kituγ\_a   bar   noγuγ\_a   **kerči-deg.**  
 1SG.NOM    that    knife    INS vegetable    cut-VN.HAB  
 “I cut vegetables with that knife.”
- b. Ta            abu,    eji    tei    ben            qamtu  
 2PL.NOM    father    mother    COM REFL.POSS    together

<sup>9</sup> According to our field notes, the verbal noun perfective suffix is acceptable in affirmative sentences without the support of a copula in written and spoken Khalkha Mongolian. It reveals that Khalkha Mongolian goes faster than Inner Mongolian in the development of verbal noun aspectual suffixes to indicative suffixes. We leave this for further research.

*saγu-daγ* uu?

sit-VN.HAB Q

“Do you live with your parents?”

- (40) a. *dolon sar\_a yin arban dolon edür yin bars*  
 seven month GEN ten seven day GEN tiger  
*čay tu törü-sen.* (Mongolian Laoqida Vol.8, 19b)  
 time DAT be\_born-VN.PFV

“(I) was born at the Tiger’s time (3-5 o’clock in the morning) on the 17<sup>th</sup> day of the seventh month (in the cow’s year forty years ago).”

- b. *činü mori ger te teḡge-sen üü*  
 2SG.GEN horse.NOM house LOC raise.VN.PFV Q  
*ijaur ab-u-γsan* uu?  
 originally buy-FILL-VN.PFV Q

(Mongolian Laoqida Vol. 5, 19a-b)

“Are your horses the ones raised at home or originally bought (from the animal market)?”

- c. *bida ür yin kirayan du baqan*  
 1PL.NOM dawn GEN dusk\_before\_dawn DAT somewhat  
*buda id-ed odu üdesi bol-tal\_a*  
 rice.ACC eat-CVB.PFV now evening become-CVB.TERM  
*buda ide-sen ügei.* (Mongolian Laoqida Vol.3, 20b)  
 rice.ACC eat-VN.PFV NEG

“Now it’s evening. We haven’t eaten meals since we ate some rice at dawn.”

- (41) a. *bi tende eči-jü ed i Iqudald-ad*  
 1SG.NOM there.DAT go-CVB.IMPFV thing ACC sell-CVB.PFV  
*tedü ire-kü.* (Mongolian Laoqida Vol.8, 1b)  
 immediately come-VN.FTR

“I will come (back) immediately after I go there and sell goods.”

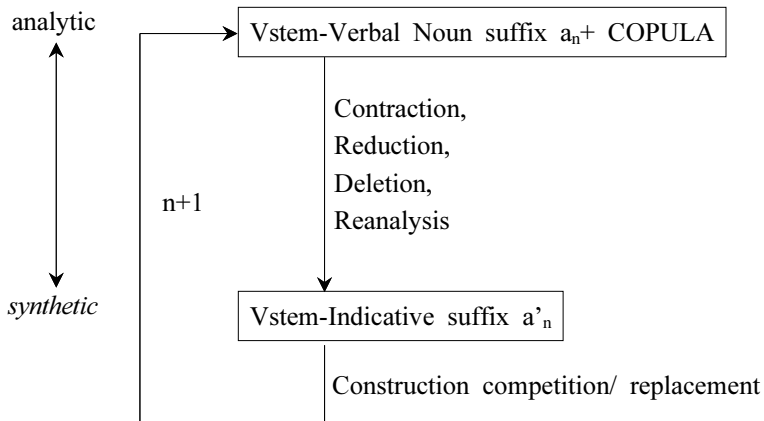
- b. *nige degel i ki-jü kür-kü*  
 one gown ACC do-CVB.IMPFV reach-VN.FTR  
 üü ? (Mongolian Laoqida Vol.6, 10b)  
 Q

- “Is it enough to make a gown?”
- c. ...mön\_kü      *ayu-qu*      *ügei.*  
 this\_very\_one   be\_afraid-VN.FTR   be.NEG  
 (Mongolian Laoqida Vol.1, 9b)
- “These same ones are not afraid.”

Poppe (1955: 260-261) claims that all indicative endings are derived from verbal nouns and a zero “be” verb in Mongolian, though it is hard to trace the original meanings and usages of these verbal nouns. The development from verbal noun suffixes to indicative suffixes is a change from the analytic side to the synthetic side in an “analytic-synthetic cycle” in Mongolian historical syntax (Hsiao 2007, 2009, 2011).

A language shows analytic characteristics when a temporal meaning is expressed by verbal-nominal suffixes and a copula verb. When the copula verb is omitted, or when the verbal suffixes and the copula verb are reduced, contracted and lost their original meanings, these reduced/contracted forms are reanalyzed as indicative suffixes and the language becomes more synthetic at the stage. The change from analytic to synthetic is cyclic.

The analytic-synthetic cycle is illustrated in Figure 2.



**Figure 2.** Substitution of Sets of Verbal Suffixes and the Analytic-Synthetic Cycle<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Figure 2 is adapted from Figure 4 in Hsiao 2007.



There are at least two lines of changes in the temporal system from Middle to Modern Mongolian. One line is the emergence of non-past verbal suffixes *-na/-ne*, and the other is the rise of perfective suffixes *-γsan/-gšen* as indicative past markers and imperfective *-qu/-kü* non-past ones. It is the latter trend that is relevant to our discussion of the nominative/genitive alternation.

Perfective verbal suffixes *-γsan/-gšen* do not express past time in Middle Mongolian documents, but might express past time in texts of Late Mongolian and Modern Mongolian. Hsiao (2007) demonstrates that negative adverbs *ülii* “NEG” and *ese* “NEG” gradually gave their way to negative predicate *ügei* “exist.NEG” or negative suffix *-güi* in Mongolian diachronically.<sup>11</sup> Alongside the typological changes of negative constructions, Mongolian is getting more analytic, representing past time by perfective verbal noun *-γsan/-gšen* and omissible present tensed verb of existence rather than by a synthetic inflectional verb. It is also argued that the competition between these two sets of negators sped up a series of syntactic changes in temporal system of Mongolian. Changes caused by asymmetries in one set of constructions might trigger or speed up other series of changes. Table 5 shows that readjustments to eliminate asymmetries in negative constructions introduced affirmative/negative asymmetries in the temporal system. At the reconstructed Stage I, *ülii/ese* and *ügei* were in complementary distribution and there was a verbal-nominal asymmetry in negative constructions. At Stage II, the functions of *ügei* and *ülii/ese* were overlapping. They were competing for the function of negating verbal nouns. At Stage III, *ülii* and *ese* were replaced by *ügei/-güi* and an affirmative-negative asymmetry in the temporal system emerged. Indicative verbs are used in affirmative sentences, but verbal nouns are used in negative sentences. At Stage IV, past affirmatives tend to be expressed by perfective verbal nouns plus omissible copula verb by analogy to their negative counterparts.

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<sup>11</sup> *ülii* is used to negate past verbs, and *ese* is used for non-past verbs.

**Table 5.** Historical Changes of Negation and the Temporal System in Mongolian<sup>12</sup>

Historical Stages	Affirmative	Negative
Stage I	V[±PST]; Nominals + Copula	{ <i>ülü/ese</i> } + V[±PST]; Nominals + <i>ügei</i> + <i>Copula</i>
Stage II (Middle Mongolian ~Late Mongolian)	V[±PST]; Nominals + (Copula)	{ <i>ülü/ese</i> } + V[±PST]/VN[±PFV]; <i>VN</i> [±PFV] + <i>ügei</i> + (Copula); Nominals + <i>ügei</i> + (Copula)
Stage III (Late Mongolian ~Modern Mongolian)	<i>V</i> [±PST] ; Nominals + (Copula)	<i>VN</i> [±PFV] + <i>ügei</i> /- <i>güi</i> + (Copula); Nominals + <i>ügei</i> + (Copula)
Stage IV (Modern Mongolian)	<i>V</i> [-PST]; <i>VN</i> [+PFV] + (Copula); Nominals + (Copula)	VN[±PFV] + - <i>güi</i> + (Copula); Nominals + <i>ügei</i> + (Copula)

It is claimed that the developments of verbal noun aspectual suffixes to inflectional suffixes also occurred in the history of Japanese, and Japanese goes faster than Mongolian does.<sup>13</sup> Shibatani (1990: 123) notes that perfective suffix *-tari*, which became the modern perfective/past tense marker *-ta* eventually, started to cover the usage of a past tense suffix at the end of Late Old Japanese period (the 8<sup>th</sup> century) and the tense suffixes *-ki* and *-keri* in Old Japanese disappeared during Middle Japanese period (12<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> centuries).

Verbal suffixes *-ta* “PFV/PST” and *-ru* “IMPFV/NONPST” have dual functions in Modern Japanese. They express both aspect and tense meaning and appear in both subordinate and matrix contexts. See (42) and (43).

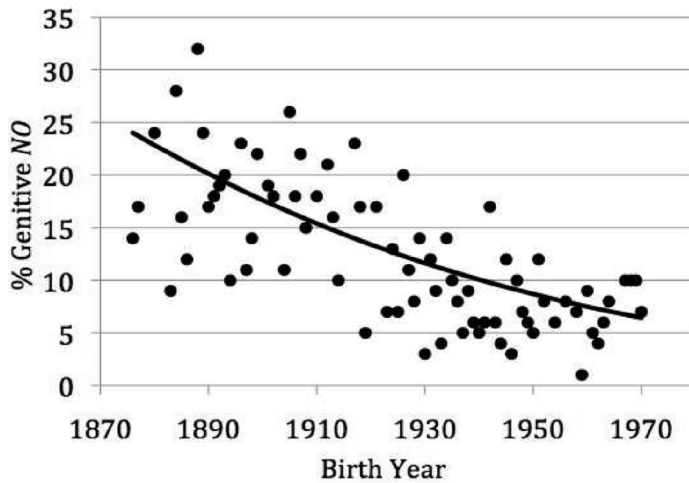
- (42) a. Watasi wa [tsitsi ga sotsugyoo *si-ta*] gakkoo  
I TOP father NOM graduate do-PFV/PST school

<sup>12</sup> This table is a revision of Hsiao 2007, Table 7.

<sup>13</sup> Note that the development from an aspect suffix plus a copula into a tense marker occurred in the history of the Korean language, too. The past tense suffix *-as/-es* in Modern Korean developed from *-a/-e isi* (> *-a/-e is'*) “be in the state of” in Middle Korean (Sohn 1999:55). It is noteworthy that subject of a relative clause is marked genitive in Middle Korean and nominative in Modern Korean (Sohn 1999:52, Lee 2011: 228). These changes remind us of the analytic-synthetic cycle in Mongolian historical syntax. Whether these changes in Middle Korean are related to each other is an interesting issue to address in further research.

- e iki-masu.  
 DAT go-NONPST  
 “I am going to enter the school Daddy graduated from.”
- b. Watasi wa ootoo ni okasi o *age-ta*.  
 I TOP younger.brother DAT candy ACC give-PST  
 “I gave my younger brother candies.”
- (43) a. Taro ga/no *hasi-ru* riyuu  
 Taro NOM/GEN run-IMPV/NONPST reason  
 (Niimuma & Taguchi 2006: (5)a,b)  
 “the reason that Taro runs”
- b. Watasi wa ashita *benkyoo su-ru*.  
 I TOP tomorrow study do-NONPST  
 “I will study tomorrow.”

With regard to the nominative/genitive alternation in Japanese, Nambu and Matsuda (2007) shows that younger generations use genitive subjects less. See Figure 3.



**Figure 3.** Scatterplot of the Rate of Genitive *no* in the MJD Corpus (Nambu and Matsuda 2007)

Shibatani (1990: 347-357) discusses the development of *ga* and *no*. Both of *ga*

and *no* are attributive markers in Old Japanese and both could mark the subject of a nominalized clause. *Ga* evolved into a nominative marker in Early Modern Japanese, and *no* remains an attributive and genitive marker. He suggests that genitive subject in Modern Japanese is a historical residue. If Shibatani's (1990) suggestion is on the right track, then it's a natural consequence that younger generations use genitive subjects less. Because alongside the development of aspectual suffixes into tense suffixes, subordinate clauses and independent clauses look no difference in the shape of predicates. Like the case in Mongolian, relative clauses can be analysed as finite clauses and have nominal subjects by analogy to their matrix counterparts.

## 5. Concluding Remarks

To conclude, finiteness of relative clauses accounts for the subject Case marking alternation. Nominal subjects appear in finite clauses, and genitive subjects occur in nominals. Subjects in relative clauses and nominal complements are generally marked genitive in Middle Mongolian, but Modern Mongolian exhibits the nominative/genitive alternation.

Alongside the recent development of reanalyzing verbal noun suffixes as indicative suffixes, verbal nouns may take the predicative position in matrix clauses as well. In these cases, predicates in relative clauses resemble those in matrix clauses. Therefore, relative clauses can be analysed as finite clauses and have nominal subjects by analogy to their matrix counterparts.

Our statistical study shows that nominative subjects are less preferred than their genitive counterparts in Modern Inner Mongolian. Compared to Mongolian nominative/genitive alternation, nominative subjects are more common in Japanese. It is claimed that the developments of verbal noun aspectual suffixes to inflectional suffixes also occurred in the history of Japanese, and Japanese goes faster than Mongolian does. Aspectual suffixes have developed into inflectional suffixes and replaced the original tense suffixes in Middle Japanese, while it is an ongoing development in Modern Mongolian.

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