

exercises too long or difficult. We will continue to use the book.

Richard N. FRYE

Harvard University

Frederick Holden BUCK, *Comparative Study of Postpositions in Mongolian Dialects and the Written Language* [= *Harvard-Yenching Institute Studies XII*], Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1955, xvii + 158 pages in 8°.

The book reviewed is a careful and thorough study of the postpositions in Mongolian. The postpositions play a role similar to that of the prepositions in Indo-European languages, i. e., they constitute, together with the word governed, one member of a sentence. Some morphological features and syntactical functions make them a separate part of speech.

The problem of the parts of speech in Mongolian is no more complicated than that in Latin, Greek, Slavic, and other Indo-European languages, although some parts of speech in Mongolian are morphologically less differentiated. Somewhat more difficult are the adverbs and some other secondary parts of speech which present a heterogeneous picture. The latter parts of speech are little explored in Mongolian linguistics.

The investigation of the postpositions requires the solution of many questions. Most of them can be answered only if the postpositions are studied in connection with other words to which they refer. This means that not only the postpositions but also the forms of the words governed by the former require investigation.

The author of the book reviewed is right when he starts with a survey of the parts of speech (p. 25 f.) and proceeds to the declensions (p. 33 f.). The latter chapter is important, because the postpositions govern different case forms and sometimes the bare stem of a noun. The investigation of the stems ending in

*n* is of particular interest. The final *n* which alternates with zero has disappeared in some languages in all cases (e. g., in Dagur), while in other languages it is preserved (Mogul), but in most of the languages it disappears in some cases and is present in other cases (e. g., in Khalkha). The comparison with the most ancient materials proves that the presentation of the final *n* in all cases is the original phenomenon while the disappearance of the consonant *n* is relatively new.

The declension of the pronouns differs from that of the nouns in that some pronouns have a special form of the nominative different from the stem (*bi* "I"—*namayi* "me," *ene* "this"—*egüni* an accusative). Therefore, the author devotes the whole of chapter IV (p. 44 f.) to the declension of the pronouns. The declension of the pronoun *bi* "I" is particularly irregular. Its stem *min* < \**bin* occurs only in the genitive case (*minu* < \**binu*). In all the remaining oblique cases the stem is *nada* or *nama*. Their origin is explained by the author in accordance with RAMSTEDT's theory. RAMSTEDT believed that *nama* had developed from \**nima*, this development being due to the so-called "breaking" of the vowel \**i*. The form \**nima*, in its turn, was considered by RAMSTEDT as having resulted from \**mima*, i. e., as a case of dissimilation *m—m* > *n—m*. This explanation raises, however, great doubts, because there are no other examples of such a development which might corroborate RAMSTEDT's hypothesis. The stem *nama* contains the element *ma* found also in *čima* < \**tima* (the stem of *či* < \**ti* "thou"), *ima* (the stem of \**i* "he"), etc. The element *da* in *nada* is an old locative suffix. Consequently, the primary stem or root is *na* which is explained in more recent works of RAMSTEDT as an extinct pronoun of the first person \**na* "I" identical with Korean *na* "I" (G. J. RAMSTEDT, *Studies in Korean Etymology*, 1949, p. 156).

The discussion of the pronouns governed by postpositions is particularly important (p. 44 f.). Here the author demonstrates that such postpositions as *dotor* "in, within" or *doro* "under, beneath" occur with the bare stem of the demonstrative pronoun (e. g., *tün dotor* "in it," *tün doro* "under it," etc.) but never occur with the bare stem of the personal pronouns which always

appear in the genitive case (i. e., *mini dotor* "in me," *mini doro* "under me," etc.) (p. 55). This is an important observation. The reason is that the bare stems of the personal pronouns almost never occur in the modern language.

This discussion is followed by numerous examples with other postpositions such as *darui* "immediately after," *jüg* "towards, in the direction of," etc.

Chapter VI ("Lexicon of Minimal Form Postpositions with Examples of Usage") (pp. 85-130) is probably the most valuable part of the book, because it contains a large number of postpositions governing various case forms of both the nouns and pronouns. The examples were taken from the *Secret History* and other old sources and modern Mongolian languages. All examples are accompanied by indications of the pages of the sources concerned.

The examples given in the book lead to the conclusion that often the same postposition occurs with different forms of the word governed. Thus, *adali* "like, equal" (p. 86) occurs with the dative, comitative, genitive, and even the simple stem. Other postpositions govern a smaller number of forms, as, e. g., *degere* (*de'ere*, *dēre*) "on" (p. 90) which occurs only with the stem (with the final *n* preserved) or the genitive case.

The postpositions are, with a few exceptions (e. g., *kürtele* "till, until"), of nominal origin. This explains why most of the postpositions, together with the noun governed, form syntactical groups of the same type as the groups consisting of two nouns. The noun governed is a genitive form or it does not have any grammatical termination. Cf. Mo. *modun-u degere* "on the tree" and *modun-u üjügür* "the top of the tree." Cf. also *usun dotora* "in the water" and *usun dalai* "water sea." Therefore, it is possible that the noun governed acted originally as a syntactical attribute of what is now a postposition.

It is not possible to dwell on all cases here and I would like only to remark that the interesting and valuable book of Dr. BUCK has brought us much closer to the understanding of the nature of the Mongolian postpositions.

As any book devoted to a new subject, this book is not free

from elements raising doubts. Thus, for instance, I cannot agree with the author when he lists *ügei* “not, without” (originally “the absence, non-existence”) among the postpositions (p. 117) in the same sense as *tuqai* “about, concerning” or *tula* “because.” The point is that the presence or absence of *ügei* does not change the syntactical relations within the syntactical group concerned. Cf. *usun ügei γaǰar* “a waterless country” (*usun ügei* answers the question “what kind of country?”) and *usun dalai* “water sea” (*usun* answers the same question). Unlike *ügei* the word *tuqai* “about, concerning” really governs the preceding word and the absence of *tuqai* from the sentence concerned changes the whole construction, as e. g., *asudal tuqai bičikü* “to write about (or on) a question” and *asudal bičikü* “to write a question.” A still better example can be given with the postposition *ǰüg* “towards,” as, e. g., *ger ǰüg ködelümüi* “moves towards the house” and *ger ködelümüi* “the house moves.” Therefore, I would separate all words not governing the preceding word from the genuine postpositions. However, if the reader disregards such disputable statements which are very few, he will probably agree that the book is an important contribution to Mongolian studies and general linguistics.

Nicholas POPPE

University of Washington