

# Sentential Negative Markers as Pro-Forms of Negative Sentences in Modern Mongolian

Enkhjargal Dagvasumberel

The National University of Mongolia, The School of Sciences,  
Faculty of Humanities, Department of European Studies  
Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar, PO-46 №857  
E-mail: enjee\_2011@yahoo.com, enjee2011@num.edu.mn

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## Abstract

Negation in modern Mongolian was analyzed by scholars namely: Luvsanvandan Sh (1968, 2000), Wonsoo Yu (1991), Mönkh-Amgalan Yu (1998), Purev-Ochir B. (1998, 2001), Byambasan P. (2006), Kunihiko Hasimoto (2008), Bat-Ireedui J.(2009), Ravdan E. (2009), Mönkh-Amgalan Yu & Kan Shin (2014). Sentential negation in modern Mongolian is not sufficiently studied in sentential and discourse levels. The tendency of modern linguistic requires us to conduct more comprehensive and deeper research than previous scholars did. Our research is considered to be the first intended research on negation in modern Mongolian, because it is one part of Ph.D dissertation on negative meaning of modern Mongolian. There are two forms of sentential negations in modern Mongolian language, namely: explicit and implicit. Explicit negation is expressed by negative markers, but implicit negation is expressed by forms without negative markers, positive forms, intonations, structures with interrogative words and phrases. Negative markers have preverbal and postverbal positions in sentences. Preverbal negative markers are all particles (*büüi*, *bitgij*, *ül*, *es*, *alga*) and have SONegV sentential type, but postverbal negative markers are particles (*ügüj*, *biš*, *bus*) and negative grammatical morphemes (*-güj*, *-üdzaj<sup>2</sup>*, *-lgüj*, *-ltgüj*, *-mgüj*, *-šgüj*) which have SOVNeg type. Particles, which are used as preverbal and postverbal negative markers in modern Mongolian, have more specific features than negative markers in other languages. Their unique features are to be used not only as negative markers in negative sentences, but also to substitute for verb phrases in c-command and sentences in the discourse level. This paper aims to consider how sentential negative markers in modern Mongolian are used as pro-forms of negative sentences.

**Keywords:** modern Mongolian, preverbal, postverbal, negative marker, pro-verb, pro-clause, pro-sentence

## 1. Theoretical background

Pro-forms were defined by scholars Paul Schachter and Timothy Shopen (2007:24). They argue that the term *pro-form* is a cover term for several closed classes of words which, under certain circumstances, are used as substitutes for words belonging to open classes, or for larger constituents. By far the commonest type of pro-form is the *pronoun*, a word used as a substitute for a noun or noun phrase.

There are many pro-forms, namely: *pronouns*, *pro-sentences*, *pro-clauses*, *pro-verbs*, *pro-adjectives*, *pro-adverbs* and *interrogative pro-forms* in general linguistics. *Pro-verbs*, *pro-adjectives*, and *pro-adverbs* are words which substitute for verbs (or verb phrases), adjectives (or adjective phrases), and adverbs (or adverb phrases) respectively. *Pro-sentences* are words like English *yes* and *no*, which are used in answering questions, and which are understood as equivalent to affirmative and negative sentences respectively. (Timothy Shopen, 2007:24). For example, in answering to *Is it raining?*, *Yes* is equivalent to *It's raining* and *No* is to *It isn't raining*. In some languages, the same words that are used as pro-sentences meaning 'yes' or 'no' can be used as *pro-clauses*.

Giuliano Bernini a Paola Ramat (1996:89) considered that the expressions 'yes', 'no' are also called pro-sentences, in that they represent an entire sentence with the same propositional content as the utterance in the preceding context. In their opinion 'No' represents a whole sentence. For example:

- A. Have you seen John? – B. No (=I haven't seen John)  
A. Hai visto Giovanni- B. No (=Non ho visto Giovanni)

## 2. Sentential negative markers in modern Mongolian

Modern Mongolian is one of SOV languages in the world and so we should examine negative markers in SOV languages. John Whitman mentioned in the article "Preverbal elements in Korean and Japanese (2005:880-881): 'Dahl (1979) (see also Dryer 1988, 1992) observes that SOV languages evince two typical negation patterns: one where the marker of negation immediately precedes the verb and one where it follows. According to John Whitman's opinion, inflected negative markers appear in the latter pattern; preverbal negators are uninflected particles. We show his examples in (1–2) which are written in Korean and Japanese:

### (1) Preverbal negation

- a. Mica ka hakkyo ey *an* ka-ss-ta. (Korean)  
Mica nom school to neg go-past-indic

‘Mica didn’t go to school.’

- b. Tuki *na* mi-tamaφ-i so!  
moon neg see-honorific-continuative prt  
Please don’t look at the moon!

(2) Postverbal negation

- a. Mica ka hakkyo ey ka-ci *anh*-ass-ta. (Korean)  
Mica nom school to go-susp neg-past-indic  
‘Mica didn’t go to school.’
- b. Yooko ga gakkoo ni ik-*ana*-katta koto (Japanese)  
Yo’ko nom school to go-neg-past that  
‘that Yo’ko didn’t go to school’

Dryer (1988, 1992) shows that the SONegV pattern in (1) and the SOVNeg pattern in (2) are overwhelmingly the most common patterns in verb-final languages. Of the 117 verb final languages in Dryer’s (1988) sample, 39 (15 families) show SONegV, while 64 (19 families) show SOVNeg. In contrast, 8 languages (5 families) have NegSOV, while 6 (3 families) have SNegOV (1988: 96).

There are two types of negative markers in modern Mongolian syntax like in Korean and Japanese: preverbal and postverbal. Preverbal negative markers are all particles (*büü*, *bitgij*, *ül*, *es*, *alga*) and they have SONegV sentential type, but postverbal negative markers are particles (*ügüj*, *biš*, *bus*) and negative morphemes (*-güj*, *-údžaj*<sup>2</sup>, *-lgüj*, *-ltgüj*, *-mgüj*, *-šgüj*) which have SOVNeg type.

Here we will consider preverbal negative markers: *bitgij*, *alga* and postverbal negative markers *ügüj*, *biš*, because they are used as pro-forms in modern Mongolian syntax.

2.1 Preverbal negative marker “*bitgij*”

The particle ‘*bitgij*’ is one of negative imperative markers in modern Mongolian (Enkhjargal D, 2012). ‘*Bitgij*’ precedes verbs in negative imperative sentences. It means ‘not’. Modern Mongolian has many affixes, which determine verbal tense, because it is an agglutinative language. ‘*bitgij*’ is used with verbs, which have different imperative affixes.

2.1.1 SO +*bitgij*+V+imperative.affix (SO+NegV+imp. Zero.affix.)

The sentence type expresses a suggestion and some advice. *bitgij*+V+imperative zero affix is used in the second person.

- (1) Uulzaxijg *bitgij* yar.  
Meet:ACC NEG be in a hurry.  
‘Don’t be in a hurry to meet.’

2.1.2 SO+*bitgij*+V+-affix +*baj* (SO+NegV+affix+*baj*)

Here “*baj*” is an imperative of the verb “be”. The sentence type expresses a warning. *bitgij*+V+-affix +*baj* is used in the second person.

- (2) Či ***bitgij*** xašgiraad ***baj*** činij duraar boldoggüj yum.  
You NEG scream be:IMP your will:INS happen:3SG:NEG...  
‘Don’t scream, everything doesn’t turn into your will...’

2.1.3 SO+ *bitgij* +V-aaraj<sup>3</sup> (SO+NegV+imp. affix)

Here –aaraj<sup>3</sup> is an affix of imperative in modern Mongolian. *aaraj* has versions –eerej, –ooroj, –öörej, because modern Mongolian is one of Altaic languages, which have vowel harmony. (William O’Grady, Michael Dobrovolsky & Mark Aronoff, 1997:371). It expresses some advice. The affix is used in the second person.

- (3) Ereeleed oyoson alčuurijg Endež ***bitgij*** geegeerej.  
Colourfully sew:PAST handkerchief:ACC NEG lose:2SG. IMP.  
‘Don’t lose the colourfully sewed handkerchief!’

2.1.4 SO+*bitgij*+V-gtun/gtün (SO+NegV+imp. affix)

Here –gtun has version –gtün according to the vowel harmony. The affix expresses a polite imperative. It is used in the second person.

- (4) ***Bitgij*** daxin urvaž odogtun.  
NEG again turn against leave:IMP.affix.  
‘Don’t turn against and leave again’

2.1.5 SO+*bitgij*+V+-g (SO+NegV+imp. affix)

The sentence type expresses wishes. *bitgij*+V+-g used in the third person. For example,

- (5) Xamag Mongolijn sür daragdaxijn tsagt  
All Mongolian pride cover:GEN time  
Xaan čamajg ***bitgij*** duudag, nügel bolno.  
King you NEG call:IMP.AFFIX, sin be:FUT.AFFIX.

‘When Hamag Mongolian pride is ashamed, it is sinful to call you The Majesty King.’

2.1.6 SO+*bitgij*+ V-aasaj<sup>4</sup> (SO+NegV+imp. affix)

The morphological affix –aasaj has versions namely: –eesej, –oosoj, –öösej according to the system of vowel harmony. The sentence type expresses wishes. *bitgij*+ V-aasaj<sup>4</sup> is used in the third person.

- (6) *Bitgij* öglöö boloosoj.  
NEG morning be:IMP.AFFIX  
‘I wish the morning would not come.’

## 2.2 Preverbal negative marker “alga”

We suggest that “alga” precedes a verb *bajx* (exist, be). “Alga bajx” means “not exist” and “not be”. For example:

- (7) Bas tanaj cagaan      *alga l bajna lee.*  
 Also your white (horse) NEG be:PAST:3SG.  
 ‘Also your white (horse) wasn’t there.’

## 2.3 Sentential negative marker “ügüj”

### 2.3.1 “ügüj” as a postverbal negative marker

“ügüj” is one of negative markers in modern Mongolian syntax. It means ‘not’. “ügüj” follows verbs and it negates sentences. For example:

- (8) Čamaas      *öör xünij      xajrlaž čadax č      ügüj, gancxan minij boddog yum.*  
 You:ABL. another person:ACC love can FOC NEG, only my thought.  
 ‘My only thought is that I can’t fall in love with anyone else apart from you.’

### 2.3.2 “ügüj” as preverbal negative marker

“ügüj” could be used as a preverbal negative marker like negative marker “alga”. It could be used before a verb “bajx” (exist, be). *ügüj bajx=alga bajx*.

## 2.4 Postverbal negative marker “biš”

“Biš” was studied by Mongolists Gantogtokh, G (1987:137), Mönkh-Amgalan, Yu (1998:204), Önörbayan, Ts (1998:231), Bat-Ireedui J (2009:7), Mönkh-Amgalan Yu & Kan Shin (2014:335). Bat-Ireedui, J (2009:7) considered that “biš” is used after nouns, pronouns, adjectives, numerals and verbal participle and appears at the end of sentences. We argue that “biš” is a postverbal negative marker, which follows the verb and negates sentences. It means ‘not’. It belongs to the type SO+V+-affix.Neg. The type SO+V+-affix.Neg has 4 forms, such as *SO+V+-dag<sup>4</sup>+ biš*, *SO+V+-san<sup>4</sup>+biš*, *SO+V+-ltaj<sup>3</sup> biš* and *SO+participle+biš*.

### 2.4.1 SO+V+-dag<sup>4</sup>+ biš

Here <sup>4</sup> refers to an affix “-dag”. This affix has versions namely: *-deg*, *-dog* and *-dög* according to the system of vowel harmony. Mongolists often use *-dg* (Jan Olof Svantesson, 1991:190) instead of the “-dag”. *-dag<sup>4</sup>* is a present tense determining affix.

- (9) *Övčin gedeg čini cag xemžeetej irdeg jum biš.*  
 Illness that your time measurable come:3SG NEG.  
 ‘Illness doesn’t come measurably.’

### 2.4.2 SO+V+-affix.Neg=SO+V+-san+ biš

“-san” has versions *-sen*, *-son* and *-sön* according to the vowel harmony. Mongolists often use an abbreviation *-sŋ* (Jan Olof Svantesson, 1991:190) instead of the “-san”. “-san” is a past tense determining affix and ‘*san+biš*’ means *didn’t*.

- (10) *Bi ööröö jamar durlaž üzsen biš dee.*  
 I myself what fell:PTCP in love NEG.  
 ‘I have not fallen in love.’

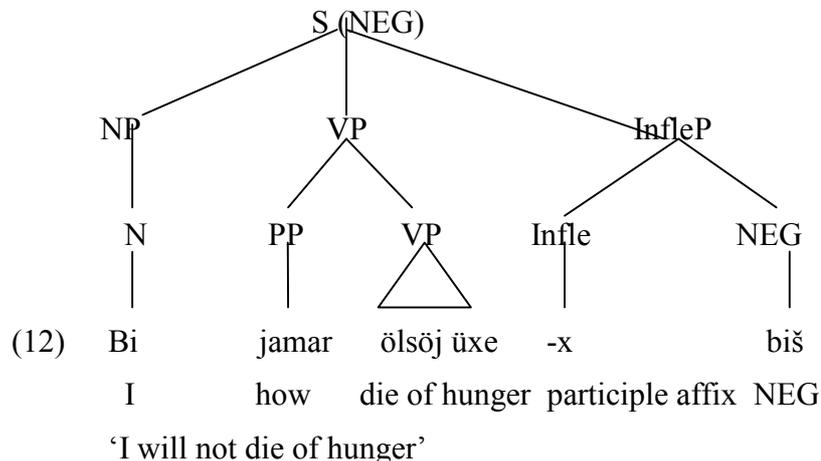
### 2.4.3 SO+V-ltaj<sup>3</sup> biš

Here <sup>3</sup> refers to an affix *-ltaj*. This affix has versions namely: *-ltej* and *-ltoj* according to the system of vowel harmony. The affix *-ltaj<sup>3</sup>* is connected to primary roots of verbs and it follows negative marker “biš”. *ltaj<sup>3</sup> biš* means ‘*would not be*’.

- (11) *Uul xadnaas ajž bajna č gež xeletej biš.*  
 Mountain rock:ABL. Afraid be:1SG FOC that say NEG.  
 ‘I wouldn’t say that I am afraid of the mountain and rock.’

### 2.4.4 SO+participle+biš

The type was analyzed by Mönkh-Amgalan, Yu (1998) and Bat-Ireedui, J (2009). In this case negative marker *biš* is preceded by a participle. ‘SO+participle+biš’ type sentence expresses future tense. The tree diagram of the type is shown below.



### 3. Negative markers as negative pro-verbs in modern Mongolian syntax

We suggest that “*alga*”, “*biš*”, “*ügüj*” could be *pro-verbs*, which are used instead of verbs in negative sentences.

#### 3.1 Negative marker ‘*alga*’ as a negative pro-verb

John Street (1963:163) named “*alga*” as a copular particle and determined its meaning. In his opinion “*alga*” means ‘is/was not there/here’ or there is/was no.

##### 3.1.1 SO+Neg=SO+*alga*

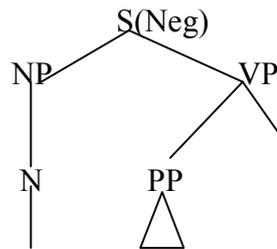
“*Alga*” could be used instead of the verb “*bajxgüj*” (doesn’t exist, is not). In this case “*alga*” could be used in sentences of the type: SO+Neg=SO+*alga*      *alga*=is not

(13) *Undrax aa, Undrax aa gež duudav. Xariu alga.* (L.Badarch, Incense light)

Undrakh, Undrakh, that call:PAST. Answer NEG.

‘He called -Undrakh, Undrakh. There was no answer.’

*Alga* could substitute for verbs *not be*, *not exist*, *not appear*, *not seem* in c-command from X-bar theory point of view (Noam Chomsky 1988, Jackendoff R.S. 1972). For example



(14) Bat      gertee      alga. (negative pro-verb)

Bat      at home      not

‘Bat is not at home.’

##### 3.1.2 SOV-ijn arga +*alga*

- *ijn* is a genitive case affix, *arga* means *way*. Instead of the word “*arga*” (way) another words such as *nöxcöl* (chance), *bolomž* (possibility), *šaardlaga* (demand), *xereg* (need)” and so on could be used.

(15) *Ene cag törijn üjmeend čini xen bolovč zügeer suuxijn arga alga.*

This war: DAT anybody sit idle:GEN way NEG.

‘There is no way to sit idle for everybody during the war.’

#### 3.3 Sentential negative marker ‘*biš*’ as a negative pro-verb

“*Biš*” could be used instead of verbs and it negates sentences. *biš*=is not. It has the type SO+pro-verb= SO +*biš*. For example,

(16) *Činij tajvan nojršdog cag biš.*

Your peaceful sleeping time NEG

‘It is not time to sleep peacefully for you.’

#### 3.4 Sentential negative marker ‘*ügüj*’ as a negative pro-verb

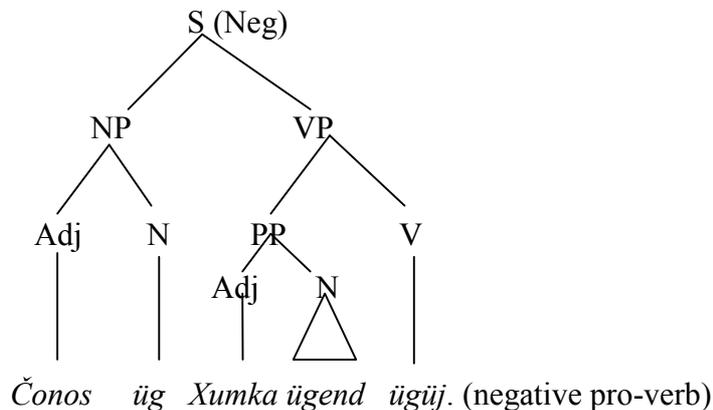
We suggest that “*ügüj*” could be used instead of verbs. SO+Neg=SO + *ügüj* (*ügüj*=is not, doesn’t exist)

(17) *Čonos üg Xumka ügend ügüj.*

Chonos word Humka word Neg.

‘There is no Chonos word in Humka vocabulary.’

Let us see the sentence structure. *Ügüj* is used as a pro-verb.



Čonos      üg      Xumka      ügend      ügüj. (negative pro-verb)

### 4. Sentential negative markers as negative pro-clauses

The negative marker ‘*ügüj*’ could be used as pro-clauses in compound sentences. For example

- (18) Temüžiniġ bij **ügüġ** bi medexgüġ.  
 Temujin:GEN is not:ACC I know not.  
 ‘I don’t know if Temujin is or not.’

In another word, here *ügüġ* represents a clause ‘Temujin is not.’

### 5. Sentential negative markers as negative pro-sentences

Mongolist Luvsanvandan Sh (2000:82) argued that words “*tijm*, *tegne*, *ügüġ*, *biš*” (yes, no) in modern Mongolian can be used instead of sentences. He named following sentences as sentence-words.

- (1) Q: Ta önöö oroj manajd očix uu?  
 You today evening our home:DAT come:FUT?  
 “Will you come to us today evening?”  
 A: - Tegnee. (Bi önöö oroj tanajd očno.)  
 -Yes. (I today evening your home:DAT come:FUT)  
 -Yes. (I will come to you today evening)  
 (2) Q: – Ta önöö oroj manajd očix uu?  
 You today evening our home:DAT come:FUT?  
 “Will you come to us today evening?”  
 A: -**No**. (Bi önöö oroj tanajd očixgüġ.)  
 -No. (I today evening your home:DAT come:FUT:Neg)  
 -No. (I will not come to you today evening.)

Mongolists (Tumurtoġoo D. and others 2004:264, Bazarragčaa M. 1987:278) defined the answers *Yes* and *No* as an improper interjectional sentence. We suggest that the answers, which represent sentences in the context could be pro-sentences. In our opinion, negative markers “*alga*”, “*biš*”, “*ügüġ*”, “*bitġij*” could be used instead of sentences.

#### 5.1 Negative marker “*alga*” as a negative pro-sentence

“*Alga*” can be used as a pro-sentence in the discourse level. For example:

- (19) Q: Ta narijn dund mongol xün bajna uu? A: Alga.  
 You:PL among Mongolian is? A. NEG  
 ‘Q:Is there a Mongolian among you? A: There is not.’ (alga= there is not.)

#### 5.2 Negative marker “*biš*” as a negative pro-sentence

John Street (1963:167) named the word ‘*ügüġ*’ as an interjectory sentence. Mongolists (Tumurtoġoo D. and others 2004:264, Bazarragčaa M. 1987:278) consider “*biš*” in the context as an interjectory sentence.

- Ta jamar ündesten be?* (-What is your nationality?)  
 -*Taa l daa.* (-Guess, please.)  
 -*Arab gež ter xüüxnij xelexed Darmajev tolgoj segsrev.* (–Arabian, said the woman, but Darmayev shook the head.)  
 -*Tegvel turk.* (Or Turkish.)  
 -**Biš.** (is not.)  
 -*Kazak.* (Kazakh.)  
 -**Biš.** (is not.)  
 -*Enetxeg.* (Indian.)  
 -**Biš gež xelev**” (-is not, said.)

We name “*biš*” in this context as a pro-sentence. In this case “*biš*” represents whole sentence.

#### 5.3 Negative marker “*ügüġ*” as a pro-sentence

Here we consider that “*ügüġ*” could be used as a pro-sentence in sentence above level.

- (20) Q: -Xüüxdüüdiinxee ju bolox xuvi zajataj törsniġg üzüilsen üü? A: -Ügüġ.  
 Children your what will fortune with born:ACC foretold?  
 ‘Was your children’s future foretold?’ A: -No.

Answer ‘No’ could stand in a place of a sentence ‘My children’s future was not foretold.’

#### 5.4 Negative marker ‘*bitġij*’ as a negative pro-sentence

Mönkh-Amġalan Yu & Kan Shin (2014:225) suppose that *bitġij* could be used separately without verbs and expresses a prohibitive meaning.

- Bitġij!. Odoo bolno.  
 Not! Now enough.  
 ‘Do not continue! It is enough.’

We agree with the idea and we suggest that *bitġij* is used as a pro-sentence in the discourse level.

### 6. Conclusion

Typically, negative markers negate sentences. In this article we argue that sentential negative markers in modern Mongolian are used as pro-forms of negative sentences. The modern Mongolian language examples are taken from modern Mongolian literature. The following results were found:

- Preverbal negative particles (*bitġij*, *alga*) and postverbal negative particles (*ügüġ*, *biš*) in modern Mongolian have more specific features than negative markers in other languages.
- Sentential negative marker “*ügüġ*” is a unique marker, because it has two positions in negative sentences: postverbal and preverbal.

- Sentential negative markers in modern Mongolian “*alga*”, “*biš*”, “*ügiij*” are used instead of verbs in negative sentences.
- Postverbal negative marker “*ügiij*” could represent clauses in compound sentences.
- Negative markers namely: “*alga*”, “*biš*”, “*ügiij*” and “*bitgij*” not only negate declarative sentences, but also they are used as negative pro-forms, such as negative pro-verbs and pro-sentences.
- Words, which substitute for whole sentences in the discourse level, are named as interjectory sentences (John Street 1963:167), improper interjectional sentences (Tumurtogoo D. and others 2004:264, Bazarragchaa M. 1987:278) and sentence-words (Luvsanvandan Sh. 2000:82) in modern Mongolian. However, we suggest that interjectory sentences and improper interjectional sentences in modern Mongolian could be negative *pro-sentences*, because negative markers “*alga*”, “*biš*”, “*ügiij*” and “*bitgij*” substitute whole sentences in the contexts.

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**Examples from Modern Mongolian literature**

- (1) G. Bataa, Bundangijn noyon (The king of heart)
- (2) Ch. Lodoidamba, Hugaraaguj nojon nuruu (Unrefracted tower of strength)
- (3) D. Natsagdorj, Uchirtai gurvan tolgoj (Three Meaningful Hills)
- (4) (The Secret history of Mongols)
- (5) J.Uyanga, Žamuxijin očil (Jamukh's confession)
- (6) B. Dogmid Üxex xünd xani xereggüj (Dying person doesn't need any companion)
- (7) D. Namdag, Büdee xüuxen (Darling Budee).
- (8) D. Batbayar, Cööröm (Pond)
- (9) L.Vangan, Emč nar (The doctors)
- (10) L.Vangan, Emč nar (The doctors)
- (11) Ts.Damdinsuren, Xojor cagaan jum (Two white things)
- (12) G. Duinkherjav, Amin dens (The Balance of good and bad deeds)
- (13) L.Badarch, Xüžijn gal (Incense light)
- (15) D. Namdag, Šine zam (The new road)
- (16) G.Bataa. Bunangijn nojon (The king of heart)
- (17) B. Rinchen, Zaan zaluudaj (The best man)
- (18) The Secret history of Mongols
- (19) author's knowledge
- (20) D. Tsevegmid, Sojolijn zul badarsan ni (Culture light rising)

**Transcription**

Transcription of Mongolian cyrillic	c	č	x	j	ž	š
English equivalent	ts	ch	h/kh	y	j	sh