

# Language contact and lexical competition: Chinese impact on Mongolian negative imperatives

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This paper investigates Chinese impact on Mongolian negations. Negative imperatives are mainly marked by a pre-verbal negator *büü* in Mongolian historical documents like *Secrete History of the Mongols*, *Altan Tobci*, *Erdeniyin Tobciya* and *Mongolian Lao Kida* as shown in Table (1).

Table 1. Tokens of imperative negators in four historical documents

Sources negators	Secret History of the Mongols (1228)	Altan Tobci (1655)	Erdeniyin Tobciya (1662)	Mongolian Lao Kida (1790)
bü	71	135	17	18
bütügei	0	5	0	5

*Büü* hardly appears and *bütügei* is used instead in Modern Khalkha Mongolian and Standard Inner Mongolian dialects. However, *büü* is preserved in a Mongolian vernacular spoken in Heilongjiang. Contacts and interactions among Mongolian and Sinic people there are lively and the Mongolian variety spoken in that area contains abundant Chinese borrowings. (Bao, 2006) In this paper, we will explore the possibilities that *büü*, which is phonetically identical to Chinese negator 不 “bú” by a coincidence, resists in the variety because it resembles its Chinese counterpart *bú*, or the choice of *büü* and *bütügei* reflects areal dialectal differences rather than historical changes. Data drawn from Mongolian varieties in different areas and related Mongolic languages such as Kanjia and Monghuer are used to examine competing proposals.

## Selected References:

Bao, Lianqun. 2006. “Meng Han shuangyu xingrongci: qi gouci tezheng,” (Mongolian-Chinese bilingual adjectives- its morphological features) paper posted at the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the International Association of Chinese Linguistics & 10<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Chinese Languages and Linguistics Joint Meeting, Academia Sinica, Taipei, May 25-29, 2006.