The Languages of Mongolia

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“Altaic” grouping

Syntax:
• SOV
• Flexible lexical categories

Morphology:
• Lots of case markers (5+)
• Agglutinative

Phonology:
• Prefers CV alternation
• Vowel harmony
Altaic Sprachbund

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Altaic_languages

Spread of the Mongol Empire

Middle Mongol as Koiné

- Mongol Empire, 13th & 14th Centuries A.D (Genghis Khan)
- Yuan Dynasty, 1271-1368 A.D (Kublai Khan)
- Northern Yuan Dynasty, 1368, 1635 (Toghon Temür [Huizong])

Classical Mongol

- Mongol languages in between Proto-Mongolic and Modern Mongolic languages
Outer vs Inner Mongolia

- Chinese revolution 1911
- Outer = Independent from China
- Inner = Autonomous region of China
Modern Languages

- **Khalkha (Standard)**
  - Central Outer Mongolia
  - Written Mongol
  - Cyrillic Khalkha
- **Khorchin (also standard)**
  - Eastern Inner Mongolia & Manchuria
- Ordos
  - South Inner Mongolia
- Khamnigan
  - Northeast, Russia, China, Mongolia
- Buryat
  - North, China, Outer & Inner Mongolia
  - Russian influence
- Oirat
  - West Outer & Inner Mongolia
Literary standards & Scripts
Standards are preserves in written, not oral, forms of the language

Written/Traditional Mongol
- “Old Script”, Evolved from creation in 13th century
- Used in Outer Mongolia for decorative or academic purposes
- Retains many features of “ancient” Middle Mongol, especially phonetic information, but is not too different linguistically

Cyrillic Khalkha
- “New Script”, Replaced Written Mongol as standard in 1940s
- Uses Cyrillic alphabet
- Based on Northern sub-dialects of Khalkha
- Used in Inner Mongolia to communicate with Outer Mongolia

Both are artificial standards based on multiple dialectical features.
Scripts

- Middle & Classical
  - Borrowed Uighur script (Vertical “Traditional script”)
  - Chinese characters
  - Arabic

- Modern
  - Vertical / Horizontal Traditional script (Written Mongol - Inner Mongolia)
  - Latin (1930s & Online)
  - Cyrillic (Cyrillic Khalkha - Outer Mongolia)
Interesting Update

Announced March 2020, completion by 2025

- Re-establish official use of the traditional script
- Enhance ability of online users to communicate with the traditional script
- Increase time for study in Mongolian school system
- Use in cultural centers
References


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- Wikipedia for general historical events and information

Images

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