

# On the Spoken Manchu complementizer *gəm*

SHIM Jaehong  
Seoul National University, KOREA

## 1. Introduction

The purpose of this study is to clarify the distribution and the meaning of a Spoken Manchu word *gəm(ə)* and to analyze it as a complementizer.

### 1.1 verb meaning ‘say’ and complementizer

Complementizer is a functional category that introduces a clausal complement to certain verbs (Adger 2003). Some verbs take complement obligatorily. Consider the following example:

(1) \**Jason whispered the phoenix had escaped.*

*Jason whispered that the phoenix had escaped.*

(Adger 2003: 290)

In (1), the verb *whispered* requires a complementizer *that* in order to take the clause *the phoenix had escaped* as its complement. Otherwise, the sentence becomes ungrammatical. The complementizer is essential for a sentence

with such verbs to be grammatical. However, it has no lexical meaning by itself.

It is well known that complementizers in many languages were derived from certain *verba dicendi*, verbs meaning ‘say’ (Lord 1976 on Kwa; Song 1998 on Mongolian; Chappell 2008 on Sinitic languages; Hsieh 2012 on Kavalan). When ‘say’ verbs are grammaticalized as a complementizer, the original lexical meaning is lost and the grammaticalized complementizer is fixed semantically, morphologically and syntactically (Song 1998). According to Song (1998), the Mongolian complementizer *ge-j* is regarded to be derived from *ge-*, a verb meaning ‘say’, through grammaticalization. Consider the following examples:

(2) Mongolian verb *ge-* ‘say’ and the complementizer *gej*

a. Mongolian *ge-* with its lexical meaning

*Minii            ner-iig            Dorj    ge-deg.*  
 1SG.GEN    name-ACC    Dorj    say-HAB.PTCP  
 ‘My name is Aika. (*lit.* People call my name ‘Aika’)

b. Mongolian complementizer *gej*

*Ulaanbaatar   xot-iig            azi-in            cagaan    dagina*  
 Ulaanbaatar   city-ACC    Asia-GEN    white    fairy  
*gej            xel-deg.*  
say-CVB    speak-HAB.PTCP  
 ‘People say Ulaanbaatar as the white fairy of Asia.’

Example (2) illustrates the Mongolian verb *ge-* ‘say’ and the complementizer *gej*. In (2a), the verb *ge-* has its lexical meaning and various morphemes can be attached to the verb as it is not morphologically fixed. On the other hand, the *gej* in (2b) has no lexical meaning and its function is only connecting word *cagaan dagina* to the verb *xel-deg*. Though it has no lexical meaning, if one takes the complementizer out of the whole sentence, the sentence

becomes ungrammatical. Moreover, as grammaticalized complementizers are fixed morphologically, it is not possible to change the ‘apparent’ suffix -*j* to other morpheme (Song 1998: 173):

(3)

a. \**Ulaanbaatar xot-iig azi-in cagaan dagina xel-deg.*

b. \**Ulaanbaatar xot-iig azi-in cagaan dagina ge-ed xel-deg.*

The example (3) shows cases where the example (2b) becomes ungrammatical. The sentence in (3a) is ungrammatical because it lacks a complementizer. In (3b), the imperfective converb-(*g*)AAD is attached to the stem *ge* instead of -*j*. Since the complementizer is fixed morphologically, the complementizer of this sentence is not grammatical anymore. Therefore, it is not appropriate to segment *gej* to a stem and a suffix.

As we have seen so far, a complementizer allows certain verbs to take a clausal complement. Also, when a complementizer is grammaticalized from a verb, its original meaning disappears, and the grammaticalized complementizer is morphologically fixed and appears as a single form.

## 1.2 Spoken Manchu

In this paper, Spoken Manchu refers to a dialect of Manchu language that is spoken around Heilongjiang prefecture of the People’s Republic of China. Since the Manchus ruled mainland China, their language has been overtaken by the use of Mandarin Chinese. As a result, Manchu has become a language that is in serious threat of extinction. In 2006, only about 10 elderly people in their 70s or older were able to speak Manchu as their native language (Kim et al. 2008: 3).

The data of this study was quoted from Enghebatu (1995) and Kim et al. (2008): Enghebatu (1995) contains fieldwork data from 1960s in Sanjiazhi,

Heilongjiang, People's Republic of China, with elicited data and spontaneous speech texts. Kim et al. (2008) contains fieldwork data elicited in the same place from 2005 to 2006.

## 2. Previous study

Enghebatu (1998) is the first attempt to clarify and analyze the Manchu verb *gə*<sup>1</sup>. The purpose of this study was analyzing not only the verb with converb *-m(ə)*, but also all conjugated forms of the verb. After investigating the usages of the verb in his field work data, he concluded that it is a conjunctive verb and it has the same meaning and function as *sembi* in written Manchu. He pointed out that the verb not only means 'say', but also expresses various functions. Although he classified the meanings and functions of the verbs in great detail, they can be broadly condensed into the following three categories:

(3) The function of *gə*- in Enghebatu (1998)

- a. direct quotation
- b. expressing intention
- c. introducing cause

Although, his examples and explanations were enough to provide sufficient evidence to regard this form as a complementizer, he did not conclude that the *gə**m(ə)* was a complementizer.

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<sup>1</sup> In Enghebatu (1995, 1998) *gu*- was used to transcribe the word, as he regarded phonetic form of the reflex of the written Manchu vowel *e* as [u]. In this paper, I will use [ə] to represent the same vowel. However, when citing the data of Enghebatu as an example, the example sentence will be presented as its original transcription.

There are some studies that attempted to deal with *seme* in Written Manchu (Gorelova 2002; Kawachi & Kiyose 2002; Choi 2006; Do & Chung 2017).

Gorelova (2002) and Kawachi & Kiyose (2002) mentioned that *seme* is not only used in quotative sentences, but also plays other roles such as a conjunction or a topic marker.

Choi (2006: 184-187) argued that *seme* is a quotative postposition. He showed that a sentence with a quotation becomes ungrammatical without *seme*. He also pointed out that it is difficult to specify a subject and analyze a relationship between *seme* and the following verb when *seme* is analyzed as a main clause predicate. In addition, he argued that the stem and the suffix cannot be analyzed because the *seme* is morphologically fixed.

Do & Chung (2017) analyzed the distribution of *seme* from the generative point of view and proposed to view it as a complementizer head of an embedded clause. They also clarified verbs which frequently follow *seme*: *ala-* ‘report’, *donji-* ‘hear’, *gūni-* ‘think’, *hendu-* ‘say, speak’, *gisure-* ‘speak, talk’.

From now on, I will give analysis that this form is sufficient to be analyzed as a complementizer by analyzing the usages of the form in Enghebatu (1998) and Kim et al. (2008) and comparing it with the complementizer attested in Written Manchu.

### 3. The distribution of *gəm(ə)*

#### 3.1. Examples of *gə-* used as a *verbum dicendi*

Like *se-* in Written Manchu, when *gə-* is used as a verb, the basic meaning is ‘to say, to call’:

- (4) The basic meaning of *gə-*  
*gaudiŋlaŋ*      *gu-m*

Gaodinglang say-IPFV

‘Gaodinglang says.’

(Enghebatu 1995: 85)

*gə-* can be used as a transitive verb:

- (5) An example of *gə-* used as a transitive verb

"*ʃuu*" *bu:ʃl*<sup>2</sup> *ga:l* *gu-m?*

*ʃuu* NEG.COP hand say.PFV

‘Isn’t *ʃuu* called hand? (lit. Don’t they say *ʃuu* as hand?)’

(Enghebatu 1995: 43)

*gə-* can introduce a direct quotation:

- (6) An example of *gə-* introducing a direct quotation

*bi* *dɔndzi-ɣ* *ba:-du* *gaujyanvai*

ISG.NOM hear-PFV.PTCP place-DL Gaoyuanwai

*u:tʃaŋfu* *baile* *falbu:-ɔ* *gu-mu.*

Wuchang.prefecture toward exile-PFV.PTCP say-IPFV

‘(They) were saying (someone) exiled Gaoyuanwai at the place I heard about.’

(Enghebatu 1995: 82)

*gə-* can introduce an indirect quotation as well:

- (7) An example of *gə-* introducing an indirect quotation

*çin-bu* *vininɣu* *u:dzuun* *te:-me* *gu-mu*

2SG-ACC true emperor occupy-IPFV say-CVB

*uininɣu* *jemdze* *çim-bu* *va:-me* *gu-mbe.*

<sup>2</sup> This word is a loanword from Mandarin Chinese *bushi* (不是) ‘not be’

today      night      2SG-ACC   kill-IPFV   say-IPFV  
 ‘He said you will become a real emperor so that he wants to kill  
 you tonight.’

(Enghebatu 1995: 101)

The accusative case marking on the subject of the subordinate clause shows that it is an indirect quotation. It is also noteworthy that the first *gə*- in the above example not only introduced an indirect quotation, but also realized as a converbial form. This shows that *gə*- maintains a characteristic as a verb.

An example of *gə*- used as a verbum dicendi can be found in Kim et al. (2008) as well:

(8) A recent example of *gə*- used as a verbum dicendi.

*amə      min-də      bu-xə-nij*<sup>3</sup>                      *ʃak      gə-m*  
 father   1SG-DL   give-PFV.PTCP-NMLZ   thing   say-CVB  
*bəlgi-m      ba-xə.*  
 receive-CVB   earn-PFV.PTCP

‘I received a gift from my father (*lit.* My father said that it is something he gave me, so that I received).’

(Kim et al. 2008: 210)

In example (4-8), *gə*- expresses a meaning as a verbum dicendi and it can be used as converbial form as well as a main predicate.

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<sup>3</sup> In Written Manchu, a nominalizer is not required when a participle is used to make an attributive construction. Considering that the main function of a nominalizer is to make a non-nominal into a noun, it is redundant to add a nominalizer to the attributive construction which is attached to a noun. However, in this example, a nominalizer is realized even though the participle in matter is attached to a noun *ʃak*. Shim (2021) tried to explain this phenomenon as a result of a language contact with Mandarin Chinese. The nominalizer *-nij* seems to be reinterpreted as a possessive marker due to the influence of the Mandarin Chinese possessive marker *de* (的).

More importantly, when a *gə-* introduces a quotation, it does not require any complementizer or quotation marker. As we will see later, this is the main feature that distinguishes *gə* from other *verba dicendi*. Song (1998: 168-170) also pointed out that in Mongolian, *ge-*, a *verbum dicendi* which was developed into a complementizer *gej*, also does not require any additional complementizer or marker to introduce a quotation, unlike other *verba dicendi*.

From now on, I will show examples of *gəṃ(ə)* used as complementizers.

### 3.2. Examples of *gəṃ(ə)* used as a complementizer

#### 3.2.1. *Verba dicendi*

*gəṃ(ə)* has been analyzed as derived from a converbial form of the verb *gə-* (Enghebatu 1998). It is required when *verba dicendi* other than *gə-* take a quotation as their complement. When *gəṃ(ə)* used in this context, the lexical meaning is lost so that it plays a purely functional role. Consider the following example:

- (9) Examples of *gəṃ(ə)* introducing a direct quotation to a *verbum dicendi*

- a. *in du<sup>a</sup>χa ba:-du bunu-mu in-bu tandu-m*  
 3SG.GEN gate place-DL send-CVB he-ACC hit-CVB  
*va:-ka gum gizuru*  
 kill-PFV.PTCP COMP say.IMP

‘Take (a dead man) to his gate and say that (he) hit and killed him.’

(Enghebatu 1995: 81)

- b. *bila: u:dzun xu:ʂunje gum xula:-mbe*  
 river lord heshenye COMP call-IPFV  
 ‘(People) call the river God as heshenye.’

(Enghebatu 1995: 91)

When introducing an indirect quotation to verba dicendi other than *gə-*, the *gəm(ə)* is also needed:

- (10) Examples of *gəm(ə)* introducing an indirect quotation to a verbum dicendi.

a. *niantçi-buu duu gum ta<sup>q</sup>χbu-κə*  
 nianqi-ACC younger.brother COMP introduce-PFV.PTCP  
 ‘He introduced nianqi as a younger brother.’

(Enghebatu 1995: 81)

b. *çi dziduur uirin-du χavadzē bandzi-tçe*  
 2SG.NOM come.IPFV.PTCP time-DL boy give.birth-COND  
*ai guvvuu xula:-me gum a:lu-γ bi:-ka?*  
 what name call-IPFV COMP tell-PFV.PTCP be-PFV.PTCP  
 ‘When you came here, what name have you had told (your wife)  
 to call him with if she gave birth to a son?’

(Enghebatu 1995: 87)

As Song (1998: 170-171) noted, verba dicendi require a complementizer in order to take a subordinate clause as their complement, except of the verb from which the complementizer has been developed. So, we can say Spoken Manchu *gəm(ə)* also shows a characteristic feature as a complementizer in this regard.

While most of the examples show [[Quotation *gəm(ə)*] V] word order, there is also an example with *gəm(ə)* preceded by the matrix verb.

- (11) An example of *gəm(ə)* placing after the main predicate

*nia:mx-buu şunda-m jap-pu-m va:dzŋ-muu*  
 person-ACC release-CVB go-CAUS-CVB complete-CVB  
*χai gizulu-m sa:-r-<sup>q</sup>χu gumuu.*

yet say-IPFV know-IPFV.PTCP-NEG COMP  
 ‘you say that you don’t know even though you freed a person and  
 let him run away.’

(Enghebatu 1995: 103)

In example (11), the matrix verb *gizuluu-m* precedes *gumuu* which connects it to the quotation *sa:-r<sup>q</sup>χυ*. However, when the quotation follows the verbum dicendi, *gəm(ə)* is not mandatory. In fact, in most cases, when *gisəlam* ‘say’ is used with a quotation, the quotation is usually placed after the verb and *gəm(ə)* is not realized after the quotation. I speculate that in this case, the quotation is not embedded in the clause where the *gisəlam* plays a role of the predicate:

- (12) *moŋ baile gizuluu-γuu*  
 1PL.EXCL toward say-PFV.PTCP  
*"uiniŋγuu ja:buu-m mutu-r-ku.*  
 today go-CVB be.able-IPFV.PTCP-NEG  
*ʃl:χvi ma:daiz ukui-m ba:ba a:<sup>q</sup>χυ."*  
 lime sack use-CVB obtain.PFV.PTCP NEG  
 “(He) told us: We cannot go today. We are not able to use the lime sack.”

(Enghebatu 1995: 74)

In Mongolian, not only verba dicendi, but also mental-state verbs require a complementizer in order to take a subordinate clause as a complement (Song 1998: 170-172). This is also true for Spoken Manchu:

- (13) An example of *gəm(ə)* introducing a direct quotation to a mental-state verb  
*ga:lɣ-du aidzi metçen dza:vu-muu*

hand-DL    small rifle    take-CVB  
 iskun    *sydži-m*    *jɔ:-mu*  
 forward run-CVB    go-CVB  
*vuiyun dʒa:v-ke*    *gum*    *gunna:-ka*.  
 alive catch-OPT COMP think-PFV.PTCP  
 ‘He took a pistol in his hand, ran straight ahead, and thought that  
 he shall catch it alive.’

(Enghebatu 1995: 78)

In Kim et al. (2008), there is one example of *gəm* used to connect a quotation to verba dicendi:

(14) A recent example of *gəm* used as a verbum dicendi

*min*    *gəwə*    *Meng xianxiao* *gəm*    *xola-m*.  
 1SG.GEN name Meng Xianxiao COMP    call-IPFV  
 ‘My name is Meng Xianxiao (*lit.* (people) call me as Meng Xian-  
 xiao).

(Kim et al. 2008: 161)

The verbs that require a *gəm(ə)* to take a quotation as a complement clause include: *gisələm* ‘say’, *aləm* ‘inform’, *xolam* ‘call’, *gunim* ‘think’, *tačibum* ‘introduce’.

Summarizing the discussion of this section, it is reasonable to see *gəm(ə)* as a complementizer of a quotation when it is subordinated by verba dicendi and mental-state verbs.

### 3.2.2. Other cases

Unlike Mongolian (Song 1998 172-173) or Written Manchu (Gorelova 2002), which use complementizers in various adverbial clauses, there are not many examples of *gəm(ə)* used to link subordinate clause to verbs other than verba

dicendi. In Kim et al. (2008: 194), there is an example where *gəm(ə)* used to link a subordinate clause to form a resultative construction:

- (15) *bi ulgunji-xə-niŋŋə gəm suŋgu-xə.*  
 1SG.NOM rejoice-PFV.PTCP COMP cry-PFV.PTCP  
 ‘I wept for joy (*lit.* I cried because I was happy).’  
 (Kim et al. 2008: 194)

With the exception of verba dicendi, *gəm(ə)* is most frequently used in linking a proper noun to *gowə* ‘name’, a reflex of Written Manchu *gebu*:

- (16) Examples of *gəm(ə)* linking a proper noun to *gowə* ‘name’
- a. *sɔ: ur tɔgsɔ a:nuum ila:n bo: gum guvɯu?*  
 2PL.NOM this village why three house COMP name  
 ‘Why do you call this village Sanjiazi’  
 (Enghebatu 1995: 59)
- b. *bianliang χɔ:tɔn-du amba χa:vun jansuŋ gum guvɯu*  
 Bianliang city-DL important official Yansong COMP name  
 ‘In Bianliang city, an important official namely Yansong’  
 (Enghebatu 1995: 80)
- c. *jansuŋ-du um bo: a:ka bi, niantɕi gum guvɯu.*  
 Yansong-DL one house servant be Nianqi COMP name  
 ‘Yansong had a servant, named Nianqi.’  
 (Enghebatu 1995: 80)
- d. *gaudzuŋgui xuyɯu vanjjejin gum guvɯu,*  
 Gaozhonggui wife Wangyueying COMP name  
*bandzi-γ-niŋŋu umuʂ sain.*  
 look-PFV.PTCP-NMLZ very good

‘Gaozhonggui’s wife was named Wangyueying, and looked very beautiful.’

(Enghebatu 1995: 80)

- e. *çi*            *χaʁadze*    *bandzi-tçe*  
 2SG.NOM boy            give.birth-COND  
*gaudinlan*       *gum*       *guvvu*    *a:la*  
 Gaodinglang    COMP    name    make.IMP  
 ‘If you have a son, name him Gaodinglang (*lit.* If you give birth to a son, make him a name ‘Gaodinglang’).’

(Enghebatu 1995: 82)

- f. *ur*    *dziu*       *çi-n*            *χaʁadze* *gaudinlan*       *gum*       *guvvu*,  
 this exactly 2SG-GEN boy       Gaodinglang    COMP    name  
*ur*    *anie*    *dzuan*    *dzuu*    *su:*    *ᠠᠨᠢᠭᠡᠨ*.  
 this year    ten       two    age    become-PFV.PTCP  
 ‘This boy is your son namely Gaodinglang, he turned twelve this year.’

(Enghebatu 1995: 87)

- g. *gaudinlan*    *gum*       *aidzi*    *χaʁadze*  
 Gaodinglang COMP    little    boy  
*gaudzuṅgui*       *χaʁadze*    *gu-mu*  
 Gaozhonggui    boy            say-CVB  
*dzuan* *dzuu*    *bia*       *u:ṭṣun-bu*    *u:ṭṣu:lu-mbe*.  
 ten    two    month    song-ACC    sing-IPFV  
 ‘A boy named Gaodinglang sings the *twelve month song*, saying he is the son of Gaozhonggui.’

(Enghebatu 1995: 86)

Example (16) shows how *gəm(ə)* associates proper nouns with other common nouns. Notably, (15g) shows that *gəm(ə)* is also possible to connect a proper noun to nouns other than *gowə*.

Here, the usage of *gəm(ə)* is peculiar, given that participles are the most typical way to form an attributive construction in Written Manchu. Although we can find instances of *seme* followed by *gebu* ‘name’ from Written Manchu texts, a verb always follows *gebu* in all cases:

(17) Examples of *seme* attested with *gebu*

- a. *sure kundulen han, deo beile de*  
 sure kundulen khan younger.brother beile DL  
*darhan baturu seme gebu bu-he,*  
 darhan baturu COMP name give-PFV.PTCP  
 ‘Sure Kundulen Khan gave the younger-brother beile the name Darhan Baturu.’

(MLTZ 1:4a)

- b. *genggiyen han seme gebu hūla-ha*  
 genggiyen khan COMP name call-PFV.PTCP  
 ‘(They) called (him) by name ‘Genggiyen Han’.’

(MLTZ 5:2a)

Such construction is also observed in Spoken Manchu data:

- (18) *da:tçi ila:n χa:lu niamχ bi:-γ-niŋŋu.*  
 originally three surname person be-PFV.PTCP-NMLZ  
*tur-dele ila:n bo: gum guvvu xula:-χ-niŋŋu.*  
 that-ABL three surname COMP name call-PFV.PTCP-NMLZ  
 ‘Originally there were three surnames. So (people) called it San-  
 jiazi (three-surname village)’

(Enghebatu 1995: 59)

It seems that the construction  $[[N \text{ } gəm(ə)]_{CP} \text{ } gowə]$  was originated from a construction  $[[N \text{ } se-re]_{VP} \text{ } N]$ . There is one example which seemed to a relic of this construction:

(19) An example of *gə-rə* used instead of *gəm(ə)*

*ilan bo: tōgsɔ deryi:-du dzuan ba: guru*  
 three house village west-DL ten li far  
*amba bira:-du xu:ʃunfu gumu (gu-ru) um ba: bi*  
 big river-DL Heshenfu COMP one place be  
 ‘There is a place called Heshenfu by a big river 10 li west of San-  
 jiazi village.’

(Enghebatu 1995: 91)

This construction was firstly reported in Enghebatu (1998). However, the historical development of such construction or whether the *gəm(ə)* used in this construction can be analyzed as a complementizer is still a subject of further study.

#### 4. Concluding remarks

Summarizing the discussions so far, when *gə-* is used as a verb, it means ‘say’ and it does not require any morphological device to take a quotation as a complement. When other verba dicendi introduce a quotation as their complement, *gəm(ə)*, the converbial form of *gə-* is required. Therefore, it is reasonable to view *gəm(ə)* as a complementizer. We also saw that *gəm(ə)* can be used in a resultative construction. However, it is not clear if it can be a complementizer for other adverbial clauses such as purposive clause, concessive clause, etc. Furthermore, the historical development of *gəm(ə)* is still

to be clarified. For example, why *gəm(ə)* completely substituted for *seme*, which is not attested at all in Spoken Manchu, and whether the *seme* has been replaced by *gəm(ə)* or has undergone a separate development process. The answer to this question is left for further study.

### Abbreviations

1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
ABL	ablative
ACC	accusative
COMP	complementizer
COND	conditional
COP	copula
CVB	converb
DL	dative-locative
EXCL	exclusive
GEN	genitive
HAB	habitual
IMP	imperative
IPFV	imperfective
MLTZ	<i>Manwen Laodang Taizu</i>
NEG	negation
NMLZ	nominalizer
NOM	nominative
OPT	optative
PFV	perfective
PL	plural
POSS	possessive

PTCP    participle  
SG       singular

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**ABSTRACT**

## On the Spoken Manchu complementizer *gəm*

SHIM Jaehong

Seoul National University, KOREA

It is well known cross-linguistically that complementizers often originate from certain *verba dicendi*, verbs meaning ‘say’ (Lord 1976 on Kwa; Song 1998 on Mongolian; Chappell 2008 on Sinitic languages; Hsieh 2012 on Kavalan). If a verb develops into a complementizer, it takes only one fixed morphological form and the lexical meaning is removed.

In Spoken Manchu, *gəm(ə)*, originally a converbial form of a *verbum dicendi* *gə-* ‘say’, can be viewed as a complementizer. When the verb *gə-* is used as a verb, it retains its lexical meaning and can take various morphemes.

Unlike other *verba dicendi* in Spoken Manchu, it can take a quotation without any complementizer or quotation marker. However, when the other *verba dicendi* have a quotation as a complement clause preceding themselves, they require *gəm(ə)*, an apparent converbial form of the verb *gə-*. By introducing *gəm(ə)*, *gəm(ə)* can be also used before certain mental-state verbs to introduce quotations.

Apart from the usages with *verba dicendi* and mental-state verbs, it is hard to find cases where *gəm(ə)* is used as a complementizer introducing other adverbial clauses. In the data analyzed here, only one resultative clause was found. However, there are many cases where *gəm(ə)* connects proper nouns to common nouns as complements. This construction is thought to be developed from the canonical Manchu attributive construction using participial form of verbs.