

# Thoughts on the existence status of the Mongolian Script Diphthongs.

Written by Liang JinBao  
Summarized by Jirimutu

## ABSTRACT

This article have compared the opinion related with the existence status of the diphthongs (  $\langle \text{ai} \rangle$  ) and double coda of syllable (  $\langle \text{ai} \rangle$  ) of the Mongolian Script, which is mentioned in the books and dictionaries published in the history. It is mainly using the component part  $\langle \text{ai} \rangle$  of the word  $\langle \text{ai} \rangle$  as the researching objects, find out and insist on why we can say “The diphthongs definitely exist in modern Mongolian and also it is absolutely necessary for explaining some of the linguistic phenomenon in modern Mongolian”. Pointed out the new grammar opinion “there are no diphthongs in Mongolian Script” in the newly published dictionary  $\langle \text{ai} \rangle$  in 2012 is not match the reality of the Mongolian Script. Listed out the author’s opinions and suggestions according to summarization results, Pointed out the standardization of new grammar opinion forcibly will impact current Mongolian Language education system and information technology development negatively and widely.

**Keywords:** Mongolian Language, Diphthong, Double Coda of Syllable

## 1. RAISE THE PROBLEM

The Language is developed through the social development. But the Language phonetics development and script development is different in the speed. The development of the phonetics of a Language is faster and the development of the script of a language is more slowly at all times. Moreover, the changes of the phonetics of a language come over naturally and the changes of the script system of a language are made by human beings in certain time and certain circumstance. The linguists in different periods had been explaining the Language phenomenon occurred in the periods using their own linguistic knowledge and their own opinion. For Example, The linguists in different periods had been explaining the word  $\langle \text{ai} \rangle$  in different way. The main difference is on the composition opinion of the component  $\langle \text{ai} \rangle$  . If we look this two teeth as the medial for of  $\langle \text{y} \rangle$  consonant, it becomes double coda of syllable. If we look this two teeth as the medial form of  $\langle \text{i} \rangle$  vowel, it becomes the diphthongs. If we look it as the combination of medial form of the  $\langle \text{y} \rangle$  consonant and medial form of  $\langle \text{i} \rangle$  vowel, it becomes the  $\langle \text{combination of y + I} \rangle$  separated syllable.

- ① The opinion which look it as double coda of syllable  
 «**יל**» = A + Y + L, the representative works are **אמנון** **ל** «**יל**» (at the beginning of the 18th century) , **אמנון** **ל** «**יל**» (1828).
- ② The opinion which look it as diphthongs  
 «**יל**» = A + I + L, the representative works are **אמנון** **ל** «**יל**» (1951) etc.
- ③ The opinion which look it as y + l, the opinion no diphthongs  
 «**יל**» = A + Y + l + L, the representative works are **אמנון** **ל** «**יל**» (2012) etc.

We can see that the same word have been analyzed or explained as different composition component in the different periods of time in the history. It is the representative linguistic phenomenon related with the selected word «**יל**». All of these opinion is comes from the representative linguistic works in the history. We cannot easily say which is correct and which is incorrect. But if we study the reasons of these opinions, I think we can summarize it into following two cases.

- A) The word composition changed in different periods of time in the history, but the word's actual writing form was not changed even after the composition changed.
- B) The word composition not changed in different periods of time in the history. The recognition of the word composition structure was changed in different periods of time in the history.

Let me use the available related books to analyze the word composition.

## 2. THE RELATED BOOKS

..... *The direct translation omitted.*

he listed all of the his reference books and the opinions how to decompose the word «**יל**» .

(1) The opinion which look it as double coda of syllable

- ① **אמנון** **ל** «**יל**» (at the beginning of the 18th century) ,
- ② **אמנון** **ל** «**יל**» (1828).
- ③ «**יל**»
- ④ **אמנון** **ל** «**יל**» (1903).
- ⑤ **אמנון** **ל** «**יל**» (1927).
- ⑥ **אמנון** **ל** «**יל**» .
- ⑦ **אמנון** **ל** «**יל**» (1903).

- ⑧ ጥንታዊ ስህተት ለመቀነስ ለማድረግ ለሚያስፈልግ የሚሆኑትን ስህተቶች ለማሳደግ (1927).
- ⑨ ዲ.ቲ.ቲ. ስህተት ለመቀነስ ለማድረግ ለሚያስፈልግ የሚሆኑትን ስህተቶች ለማሳደግ (1979).
- ⑩ ለሁለተኛው ስህተት ለመቀነስ ለማድረግ ለሚያስፈልግ የሚሆኑትን ስህተቶች ለማሳደግ (2009).

(2) The opinions which look it as diphthongs

- ① ከሁለተኛው ስህተት ለመቀነስ ለማድረግ ለሚያስፈልግ የሚሆኑትን ስህተቶች ለማሳደግ (1951)
- ② ለሁለተኛው ስህተት ለመቀነስ ለማድረግ ለሚያስፈልግ የሚሆኑትን ስህተቶች ለማሳደግ (1960)
- ③ «ሁለተኛው ስህተት ለመቀነስ ለማድረግ ለሚያስፈልግ የሚሆኑትን ስህተቶች ለማሳደግ» (1964)
- ④ ለሁለተኛው ስህተት ለመቀነስ ለማድረግ ለሚያስፈልግ የሚሆኑትን ስህተቶች ለማሳደግ (1975)
- ⑤ ለሁለተኛው ስህተት ለመቀነስ ለማድረግ ለሚያስፈልግ የሚሆኑትን ስህተቶች ለማሳደግ (1975)
- ⑥ ለሁለተኛው ስህተት ለመቀነስ ለማድረግ ለሚያስፈልግ የሚሆኑትን ስህተቶች ለማሳደግ (1979)
- ⑦ ለሁለተኛው ስህተት ለመቀነስ ለማድረግ ለሚያስፈልግ የሚሆኑትን ስህተቶች ለማሳደግ (1983)
- ⑧ ለሁለተኛው ስህተት ለመቀነስ ለማድረግ ለሚያስፈልግ የሚሆኑትን ስህተቶች ለማሳደግ (1979)
- ⑨ ለሁለተኛው ስህተት ለመቀነስ ለማድረግ ለሚያስፈልግ የሚሆኑትን ስህተቶች ለማሳደግ (1978)
- ⑩ ለሁለተኛው ስህተት ለመቀነስ ለማድረግ ለሚያስፈልግ የሚሆኑትን ስህተቶች ለማሳደግ (1977)
- ⑪ ለሁለተኛው ስህተት ለመቀነስ ለማድረግ ለሚያስፈልግ የሚሆኑትን ስህተቶች ለማሳደግ (1977)
- ⑫ ለሁለተኛው ስህተት ለመቀነስ ለማድረግ ለሚያስፈልግ የሚሆኑትን ስህተቶች ለማሳደግ (1978)
- ⑬ ለሁለተኛው ስህተት ለመቀነስ ለማድረግ ለሚያስፈልግ የሚሆኑትን ስህተቶች ለማሳደግ (1998)
- ⑭ ለሁለተኛው ስህተት ለመቀነስ ለማድረግ ለሚያስፈልግ የሚሆኑትን ስህተቶች ለማሳደግ (2001)
- ⑮ ለሁለተኛው ስህተት ለመቀነስ ለማድረግ ለሚያስፈልግ የሚሆኑትን ስህተቶች ለማሳደግ (2006)
- ⑯ ለሁለተኛው ስህተት ለመቀነስ ለማድረግ ለሚያስፈልግ የሚሆኑትን ስህተቶች ለማሳደግ (2009)
- ⑰ ለሁለተኛው ስህተት ለመቀነስ ለማድረግ ለሚያስፈልግ የሚሆኑትን ስህተቶች ለማሳደግ (2013)

(3) The opinions which look it as combination of y + l, the opinion no diphthongs

- ① ሁለተኛው ስህተት ለመቀነስ ለማድረግ ለሚያስፈልግ የሚሆኑትን ስህተቶች ለማሳደግ (2012) .
- ② ለሁለተኛው ስህተት ለመቀነስ ለማድረግ ለሚያስፈልግ የሚሆኑትን ስህተቶች ለማሳደግ (2012) .

(4) The intermediate opinions of existence of diphthongs

- ① ሁለተኛው ስህተት ለመቀነስ ለማድረግ ለሚያስፈልግ የሚሆኑትን ስህተቶች ለማሳደግ (1990) .
- ② ለሁለተኛው ስህተት ለመቀነስ ለማድረግ ለሚያስፈልግ የሚሆኑትን ስህተቶች ለማሳደግ (1984)
- ③ ለሁለተኛው ስህተት ለመቀነስ ለማድረግ ለሚያስፈልግ የሚሆኑትን ስህተቶች ለማሳደግ (1984)
- ④ ለሁለተኛው ስህተት ለመቀነስ ለማድረግ ለሚያስፈልግ የሚሆኑትን ስህተቶች ለማሳደግ (1959)
- ⑤ ለሁለተኛው ስህተት ለመቀነስ ለማድረግ ለሚያስፈልግ የሚሆኑትን ስህተቶች ለማሳደግ (1979)
- ⑥ ለሁለተኛው ስህተት ለመቀነስ ለማድረግ ለሚያስፈልግ የሚሆኑትን ስህተቶች ለማሳደግ (1984)

### 3. THE DISCUSSION OF THE IMPACT

We have investigated in all of these books , works and articles listed above, and we can get understand that the internal structure and the writing form of the word 《ᠠᠨᠢ》 was not changed at all actually, but the recognition opinion of the linguists was changed in the different periods of time. But why the word composition linguistic rule which was not attracted people’s attention in the past become so important. It is because the language and script usage is just restricted on the speaking, listening, reading and writing. We had paid our attention on the accuracy of the pronunciation that it is just for speaking with mouth and listening with ears, and paid our attention on the accuracy of the script is for writing by hands and reading by eyes. But today, with the information technology development, there are another new requirement – encodings appeared front of us and we have to handle it just like the reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Especially, the current standard encoding is based on the word composition element. The word’s composition method, which is the encoding method in the real word, becomes more important than before.

Although there are several different opinion for how to decompose the word 《ᠠᠨᠢ》 , we need to discuss the impact of the “no diphthong” opinion mentioned in the dictionary 《ᠠᠨᠢ ᠠᠨᠢ ᠠᠨᠢ ᠠᠨᠢ》 (2012), which is the largely impacting current Mongolian Language education system, as well as the information technology fields.

Let me discuss the impact of the changes in details.

#### ① **Removing the diphthongs from Mongolian script will impact the current education system large widely.**

Since the Mongolian grammar book 《ᠠᠨᠢ ᠠᠨᠢ ᠠᠨᠢ ᠠᠨᠢ》 written by Lobsongwangdan published in 1951, almost all of the linguistic books as well as the primary school, secondary school as well as college and university text books have agreed the grammar opinion that is “The Mongolian script have diphthongs”. We have been using the grammar with diphthongs in our entire society Mongolian Language education for 60 years. Inner Mongolia University professor Quejingzhabu, famous linguists, have written in his article as “In Inner Mongolia, when we learning and mastering the Mongolian grammar knowledge and educating the linguistic professionals and experts, the several white books written by Lobsongwangdan teacher had provided the irreplaceable historical mission”. And he had been continuing to write as “I am feeling very proud and glad on that I had introduced the Lobsongwangdan teacher’s white books into Inner Mongolia, had done the objective works hardly in my duty as the one of who attending the teacher’s lecture” to expressed his respect to the teacher and to his Mongolian grammar books. All of these respectful linguistic books are agreeing the “Mongolian

have diphthongs". But the opinion "Mongolian have no diphthongs" in the currently published dictionary 《*ᠮᠣᠩᠭᠣᠯᠢ ᠨᠠᠭᠤ ᠨᠠᠵᠤ ᠨᠠᠭᠤ ᠨᠠᠵᠤ*》 is repudiating the opinion "Mongolian have diphthongs" in the books mentioned above. This is not just for changing one or two words; this is the grammar changes actually and will widely impact the Mongolian Language education system. For example,

- a) We need to popularize the new theory of the grammar in the education system.  
(I skipped the detail translation)
- b) It will impact and require to the Mongolian Syllable Separation education methodology.  
(I skipped the detail translation)
- c) This will lead us to redefine the Mongolian connection-vowel (*ᠨᠠᠭᠤ ᠨᠠᠵᠤ*) grammar theory.  
(I skipped the detail translation)

## ② Removing the diphthongs from Mongolian script will impact Information Technology utilization.

As I have risen above, the impact of removing diphthongs from Mongolian script is very significant in the Information Technology utilization. Mainly,

- a) The impact on Mongolian word typing input.  
(I skipped the detail translation, if necessary translate it later)
- b) Lead the data sorting problem.  
(I skipped the detail translation, if necessary translate it later)
- c) Lead the data consistency problem  
(I skipped the detail translation, if necessary translate it later)

## ③ The contradiction list existing in the dictionary 《*ᠮᠣᠩᠭᠣᠯᠢ ᠨᠠᠭᠤ ᠨᠠᠵᠤ ᠨᠠᠭᠤ ᠨᠠᠵᠤ*》

Although in the preface of the dictionary, the authors have pointed out the new theory of "Mongolian have no diphthongs exist", but they are not able to promote the theory into entire dictionary entries and there are so many contradiction exist in the dictionary. It seems that they are very hurried on creating the dictionary or there are exists different opinion between the authors. It is very important and need the author's patient, neat manner and attitude, because this dictionary will be the epochal landmark in the Mongolian. It is ok to find one or two word mistake, but we cannot accept the theoretical mistakes exist in the dictionary. Let me list some of them.

- a) Page 704, in the table of the Mongolian script rule, there only one 《*ᠮ*》

in medial form and there are no 《ᠠᠨ》 form in medial. But in the GB 26226-2010, there are 《ᠠᠨ》 form in medial. It is making puzzle on if the 《ᠠᠨ》 have or no medial 《ᠠᠨ》 form.

- b) In this dictionary, when they explain the standard pronunciation, there are a lot of explanation like “....when the I under o, it will pronounce ....”, this is confusing us on the theory “Mongolian have no diphthongs”.
- c) Page 773. “There are some rules to pronounce the doubled vowel as the long vowel in Mongolian ....”, and there are have some explanation of double ii.
- d) Page 774, there are some standard pronunciation of double or triple vowel ... the diphthong ai .....

Even this dictionary is agreeing the diphthong exist in Mongolian and why they want to introduce the “No Diphthong” theory into Mongolian?

#### ④ The problems existing

Here I have listed some problems existing in our linguistic fields. These list is my own note of the conversation with some of the linguistic professionals and experts when I write this article. Maybe it is not understandable enough, because of the problem listed here is not summarized clearly.

- a) There are some opinions that “the Mongolian diphthongs are exist in script and not exist in language”.  
(The detail translation is ignored)
- b) The diphthongs of the Mongolian are exists from beginning to now.  
(The detail translation is ignored)
- c) The reason why remove the Mongolian diphthongs.  
I am not able to find the reasonable explanation why we have to remove the Mongolian diphthongs. I have found some explanation like “When we encoding the ancient and modern Mongolian in computer and designing the encoding rules for all of the ancient and modern Mongolian, we met some problems related with how to encode the Mongolian diphthongs.”  
But I am not able to find out any reasonable explanation yet. If there no urgent requirement, why we hurry to change the existing grammar theory?  
(Above is summarized, is not the translation.)
- d) We have to insist the word composition rule consistently.  
(The detail translation is ignored)
- e) The word composition of 《ᠠᠨ · ᠠᠨ · ᠠᠨ · ᠠᠨ》

(The detail translation is ignored)

- f) Are there any changes to Mongolian script orthographic?

(The detail translation is ignored)

### ⑤ The author's point of view

It is impossible to find out which is correct and which is incorrect by researching one word 《ᠶᠢᠨᠢ》, but going through the research, maybe I can get some finding in the Mongolian language phenomenon. I would like share my finding and my opinion on it.

Actually, the diphthongs itself is not exist in the Mongolian script before. But with the language development, it is appeared in the Mongolian script and made the Mongolian script's changes and development. Actually the double coda of the syllables and diphthongs are two different explanation of one phonetic phenomenon. I can summarize them in following list.

- a) There are no diphthongs exist in Mongolian script in the beginning time, the diphthongs in modern Mongolian are the different explanation of the double coda of syllable in ancient Mongolian script. According to the materials listed in this article, there are no diphthongs and long vowels exist in Mongolian language before 14th century. But there are 《y+i》 form 《ᠶᠢᠨᠢ》 in the Mongolian script, in the period of 14<sup>th</sup> century to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Mongolian diphthongs and long vowels appeared in the Mongolian language and in the Mongolian script, the linguists in that time explained this 《ᠶᠢᠨᠢ》 in the Mongolian script is the medial 《y》. It is the double coda of syllable theory appeared.

Maybe in that time the 《ᠶᠢᠨᠢ》 still was the old composition 《y+i》, it is just the linguists explained it as the medial form of 《y》.

Since the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century, the same form 《ᠶᠢᠨᠢ》 have been explained as the medial form of 《i》 and the diphthong theory appeared. But maybe the word composition of 《ᠶᠢᠨᠢ》 is not changed, still was the old form 《y+i》.

Although we are explaining the same word composition 《ᠶᠢᠨᠢ》 which had different explanation in the listed three different periods of time, is the medial form of 《i》 with two long teeth. Maybe after one thousand year later, the linguists in that time will explain it as medial form of 《a》 vowel with two long teeth. Who can exactly predict that is wrong?

- b) Even the diphthong theory have its own weak points, we have to remove it. Maybe it is better to select double coda of syllable theory is near from us

than the «y+i» theory. Maybe we will select the «ᠶ» is the medial form of «y» first.

- c) We have one integrity linguistic theories in Mongolian to explains a lot kinds of phonetic and scripting phenomenon now. It is the achievement and results of the effort provided by numerous linguists, professionals and experts. For example, the medial form of «i» is «ᠶ» and the medial form of «i» with single tooth «ᠶ» will be used under consonant. The two teeth form of «i» is used under vowel «a» «e» «o» «u» and under «ue» in first syllable of the word. All of these theories are created and standardized under the great effort of the linguists, experts and professionals in the past time. For these reason, we cannot easily remove these standardized theory. It is not match the language development rule.
- d) If the explanation or opinion have different in the different period of time, we should insist on selecting the most modern one, the most fitting with modern linguistic theory one to match the modern user's requirement.
- e) There are diphthongs exactly exists in Modern Mongolian language and script. Not only exists, but also it is so pretty in the logic actually.