

## WORDS OF TURKIC ORIGIN IN THE MODERN BURYAT LANGUAGE

**Babasan D. TSYRENOV\***

**Abstract:** *The author examines the use of some Turkic borrowings in the Buryat literary language and the Buryat-Russian dictionary. A large part of the vocabulary borrowed from the Turkic languages are concentrated in the Western Buryat dialect, which is more closely with some Turkic peoples during the history. Some Turkic borrowing entered the Buryat literary language based on the East-Buryat dialect. Penetrated into the literary Buryat language they are reflected in the language and literature and in the Buryat dictionaries, including the Buryat-Russian dictionary. The author considers that to reveal the whole range of Turkic borrowings is possible with a full etymological study of the Buryat language.*

**Keywords:** *Turkisms, borrowing, Buryat, vocabulary.*

### **Bugünkü Buryatçada Türkçe Kökenli Kelimeler**

**Özet:** *Bu makalede Türk dillerinden alınan kelimelerin Buryatçada ve Buryatça sözlüklerde kullanılması ele alınmaktadır. Türk dillerinden alınan kelimelerin çoğu Batı Buryat lehçesi alanında yoğunlaşmıştır. Bu bölge tarih boyunca bazı Türk halkları ile dâba yakın iletişime sahne olmuştur. Türk dillerden alınan bazı kelimeler Doğu Buryat lehçesine istinaden edebi dile yayılmıştır. Böylece bu kelimeler ardından edebi dile, Buryatça sözlüklere ve Buryatça-Rusça sözlüklere de yansımaya başlamıştır. Bizce göre Türk dillerinden alınan kelimelerin tam listesinin meydana çıkarılması Buryatça kelime hazinesinin tam etimolojik incelemesiyle mümkündür.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *Türk dillerden alınan kelimeler, yabancı dillerden alınan kelimeler, Buryatça, sözlük.*

### **1. Introduction**

The problem of the Turko-Mongolian language community is a subject of debate for many years. Such prominent Russian scholars like V.I. Rassadin (1969, 2007), S.S. Khar'kova (1988), A.M. Shcherbak (2005), L.D. Shagdarov (1971) and others carried out research in the field of the issues of the relationship and interaction of the Turkic-Mongolian languages. In this paper we will not touch on the common features in the languages of the Altaic group, since we don't have such a goal, but also because this issue requires special study which provides a much

---

\* Philosophy Doctor in Philology, scientific researcher of the Department of Linguistics of the Institute for Mongolian, Buddhist and Tibetan Studies of the Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences. E-mail:tbabasan@mail.ru.

greater material than it is possible in the article. A.M. Shcherbak in the monograph "Turko-Mongolian language contacts in the history of the Mongolian language" gives a general list of lexical Turkisms in the Buryat and other Mongolian languages, which includes about 600 words (Shcherbak 2005: 19-68). A separate list of words of non-Turkic origin among the Turkic borrowings of the Buryat language is given (Shcherbak 2005: 68-70). According to his findings the words such as "*khalib*" a "form for casting bullets", "*bulad*" "steel" and others were not borrowed from Turkic languages, but from Arabic and Persian.

Major studies in the lexis of the Mongolian languages, including the Buryat language were conducted in the middle of the XX<sup>th</sup> century by T.A. Bertagaev (1974). In his monographic studies vocabulary of the Mongolian languages is described also from the point of view of the origin of words. In the works of the later period Turkish as well as other borrowings in the Buryat language also became an object of interest of scientific research in a certain extent.

As the main criteria for determining the borrowed words he advanced the principle "thing – name" and availability of phonomorphological and semantic features of such words and also a rare compatibility of words with other words, synonymous parallels and doublets (Bertagaev 1974: 360). The semantic features were likely considered by him as narrowness of lexical and semantic family of of borrowed words. The same was mentioned by S.S. Khar'kova, who suggested to determine the original word in a particular language taking into account its lexical-semantic jack composition (Khar'kova 1988: 76). But it should be noted that this criterion is widely used for the relatively new borrowings, but for those that were borrowed long time ago it is not appropriate because these words having entered the vocabulary of the recipient language form semantic transformations. At the same time the figurative meanings can coincide to a large extent. According to L.D. Shagdarov "when direct and figurative meanings regularly coincide in general words in many Altaic languages, it can be assumed that they are not borrowings from one language to another, but that the figurative meanings in these words developed according to the same rules that must be as a result of kinship of the Turkic and the Mongolian languages" (Shagdarov 1971:123) At the same time the scholars stresses the kinship of the Turkic and the Mongolian languages, supporting in this way the idea of the orthodox Altaicists.

However, in the Buryat language there is a large part of vocabulary common for both of the Mongolian and the Turkic languages. Nowadays it is difficult to clearly identify their origin, whether they were borrowed during direct contacts or refer to a certain common historical past. A well-known researcher of Turkic-Mongolian languages V.I. Rassadin in his monograph concludes: "The Buryat language being formed both in common Mongolian frames and in its self-development has experienced a remarkable influence of the Turkic languages. These Turkisms penetrated into the Buryat language during ancient years and also after resettlement

of proto-Buryats into the Baikal region (approximately X-XI centuries AD)” (Rassadin 2007: 100). He said that they had managed to identify about 50 lexemes-Turkisms found only in the Buryat language and not found in other Mongolian languages. One (a big) part of these words became the property of common Buryat language, and the other one - remained within a certain dialect or dialects group (Rassadin 2007: 75).

## 2. The Turkisms in Western Dialects and in standard Buryat

The fact that there is a great number of borrowings in the Western Buryat dialects (including Barguzinsky dialect, which is a part of a group of Western Buryat dialects), and Sayan dialects (Okinsky, Tunkinsky and Zakamensky dialects) is explained by that Buryat language area was in contact with the Turkic tribes in the western part. This is also confirmed by the fact that in the "Buryat-Russian dictionary" these exclusive Turkisms are noted with the appropriate dialect letters. For example: *arbaa* Boh<sup>1</sup>. ‘arba’; *arbaa tergen* ‘cabriolet, two-wheeled cart’; *ataabai* Okin<sup>2</sup>. ‘grandfather’; *bürteg* dial. ‘waste, rubbish’; *taabai* lit. and rec. ‘grandfather’, etc. However, the fixation in the dictionary does not mean that these words from the vocabulary of the dialect passed into the literary language or the language of fiction. In the whole the language of the Buryat literature is in literature style with a little number of dialects. Nevertheless, in some works there are several dialect words, which were borrowed from the dialects of the Turkic languages. For example, the word *hab* ‘turned thread (of tendon),’ in *habagsha* in a literary language, is used in M. Osodoev’s works (1975: 54), a representative of Western Buryat dialect area:

<i>Zarim</i>	<i>honyuusha</i>	<i>ükhübüüd</i>	<i>Ardaniie</i>	<i>toyronkhoy,</i>
Some	curious	children-[pl]	Ardan-Nacc	surrounded-pst
<i>hab</i>	<i>tomokhyjen’</i>	<i>aldangüy</i>		<i>shertene</i>
thread	twist-fut[acc/3sg]	without stopping		watch-[prs/3pl]

‘Some curious children surrounded Ardan and watched as [he] was twisting thread of tendon’.

<i>Tiiheden’</i>	<i>Ardan</i>	<i>medekheer</i>	<i>urmashazha,</i>	<i>erkhy</i>	<i>doleobor</i>
Then	Ardan	noticeably	glad-cvb	thumb	forefinger
<i>khoeroyngoo</i>	<i>sharkhirtar</i>	<i>habaa</i>	<i>tomono</i>		
two-gen/refl	ache-cvb/lim	thread-refl	twist-prs/3sg		

‘Then Ardan is glad doing that even aching thumb and forefinger and is twisting a thread’.

<sup>1</sup> Boh. – the Bohan dialect of Buryat language.

<sup>2</sup> Okin. – the Okinsky dialect of Buryat language.

It should be noted that the word is given in the dictionary without a mark, but with reference to literature variant: *habagsha* ‘thread’.

The word *hügehe* ‘to beat, punch’ has a Turkic origin, old-Turk. *sök* = ‘scold, scold; break the army’, Kirgh., Kaz., Khack. = *Sök* Tat. *sük*, Bask. *hük* ‘scold, berate, abuse’ (Rassadin 2007: 84). In the Buryat-Russian dictionary the word is given a mark – Western Buryat, but despite this *hügehe* is widely used in colloquial Buryat, dialects of other areas, as well as in literature, for example:

<i>Ulankhadahan</i>	<i>daisan</i>	<i>shuumaraar</i>	<i>morinhoo</i>	<i>hüren</i>
Amok	enemy	quickly	horse-abl	jump-cvb/connect
<i>buugaad,</i>	<i>khamar</i>	<i>amaaraa</i>	<i>shuha</i>	<i>haylan</i>
descend-cvb/part	nose	mouth-instr	blood	trickle out-cvb/connect
<i>khebitehen</i>	<i>Gombyn</i>	<i>deerehee</i>	<i>üshöö</i>	<i>xedy xedy</i>
laying	Gombo-gen	above-abl	yet	several times
<i>hügebe</i>				
beat-pst/3sg				

‘Amok enemy quickly jumped the horse off and fisted several times laying Gombo, who was bleeding from the nose and mouth’ (Ts. Don 1935: 45);

<i>Khüghööe</i>	<i>hügekhe</i>	<i>gekhedee</i>	<i>tudaagüi,</i>	<i>nyudargadaa</i>
Old lady-acc	beat	want-dat/refl	missed	fist-dat/refl
<i>eže ekhigüi</i>	<i>tatagdazha,</i>	<i>khashaagai</i>	<i>teg dunda</i>	
unwittingly	stretched-cvb	yard-gen	middle	
<i>sharban unashalai</i>				
drop-pst/intens/3sg				

‘Wanting to hit the old lady (he) did not get her and moving by inertia stretched out in the middle of the yard’ (M. Osodoev 1975: 112).

Word *saazha* ‘tress – hair’ is also referred by V.I. Rassadin to exclusive Buryat Turkisms, i.e. the word is not found in any other Mongolian language or dialect. *Saazha* is marked in the Buryat-Russian dictionary as belonging to the Western Buryat dialect, it is mostly used in the Barguzin dialect which is a part of the Western Buryat dialect area. In the Buryat literature the word *saazha* is extremely rare, besides it was not included into common Buryat lexical fund. Nevertheless, we recorded its use in the story "Budamshuu" by Ts. Shagzhin:

... <i>Targan</i>	<i>noyodoi</i>	<i>dunda</i>	<i>Budamshuu</i>	<i>khübüün</i>
... Fat	rich man-gen	between	Budamshuu	boy
<i>hemeekhen</i>	<i>orozho, tedenei</i>	<i>oron</i>	<i>deerekhi</i>	<i>gezegenüüdheen</i>
carefully	snuck them	bed	located	tresses-abl/poss3pl

WORDS OF TURKIC ORIGIN IN THE MODERN BURYAT LANGUAGE

*kholbon*            *uyazharkhiba*  
connecting        bound-pst/3sg

‘... young Budamshuu carefully snuck between the fat rich, bound together their tresses’ (Ts. Shagzhin 1987: 14).

Buryats have been referred to nomadic herders since ancient years. In the recent historical past (XIX-early XX<sup>th</sup> centuries) they got a significant part of their food from livestock and the nature, except fabrics, metals. The main part of their diet was meat and dairy food. The number of dishes prepared from milk was more than hundred. For preparation and storage of dairy food various utensils were used: *huulga* ‘bucket’, *bailgansag* ‘wooden jug for milk’, *oyoorsog* ‘jug’. In Western Buryat dialects the latter is called *töörseg*, in Zakamensky dialect the word is used to mean a small tub for turning milk into butter "comp. in Turkic languages: Kirgh. *torsuk*, Kaz. *torsyk* tat. *tursyk*, Bashk. *turhyk*, Khack. *torsyk*, Tuv. *dorzuk* ‘wineskin for the storage and transportation liquids’. As such containers were made of the skin of the cattle back leg hip, using a narrower part of the popliteal skin for the neck of it, that just is in the Turkic language *torsuk*, *torsyk* ..., then this whole leather bottle got in the Turkic languages the same name" (Rassadin 2007: 91). In the Western Buryat dialects this word denotes a wooden bowl for milk and liquid dairy products, in other dialects this word denotes the basket, wicker basket and something like this.

In the Buryat literature, in the language of the writers – representatives of the Western Buryat dialect area, we find examples of usage of the word, e.g.:

<i>Töörsegüüd</i>	<i>sookhi</i>	<i>zöökheyen’</i>	<i>khuulazha</i>	<i>abaad,</i>
Pots-pl	inside-pstp	sour cream	gather-cvb	take-cvb
<i>eedehyjen’</i>	<i>bulanda</i>	<i>bayhan</i>	<i>torkho ruu</i>	<i>yuulezhe</i>
clabber-acc/3sg	corner-dat	standing	tub	into-pstp shed-cvb
<i>kheed,</i>	<i>gerhee</i>	<i>khaluun uha</i>	<i>asarzha,</i>	<i>tedeniien’</i>
put-cvb	house-abl	hot	water	bringing-cvb
				them-acc/poss3pl
<i>yalayshatarn’</i>	<i>ugaagaad,</i>	<i>shene</i>	<i>hü</i>	<i>khezherkhibe</i>
shine-cvb/lim	wash-cvb	fresh	milk	pour-intens

‘Having gathered sour cream from the pots and having mixed the remaining clabber in the tub standing in the corner (she) brought a hot water from the house and washed them to shine and add fresh milk’ (M. Osodoev 1975: 73).

Some Turkic borrowings usual in some dialects enter the literary Buryat language and the language of fiction. As part of the literary language they are often used in tandem with the standard language, for example, as *shiikhan* ‘blain, furuncle’ – *khad’ha shiikhan* ‘blain, furuncle’. The word *shiihan* in different phonetic forms corresponds the word in many Turkic languages, and is totally identical in the meaning:

<i>Khüütende</i>	<i>khüldekhe daarakha,</i>	<i>kheere gazaa</i>	<i>khonokho,</i>
Cold-dat	freeze	field	sleep
<i>übshe khabshan</i>	<i>bolokho,</i>	<i>khad'kha shiikhanda</i>	<i>barigdakha,</i>
ill	become	blain	get
<i>agnuurida</i>	<i>yuredöö</i>	<i>yamar haitai</i>	<i>yuume baykhab daa</i>
hunting-dat	generally	what good thing	being-ptsp pstp-conf

‘What can be good in hunting: to freeze in the cold, sleep in a field, get the blain’ (B. Mungonov 1974: 54).

This word has not yet been taken in a literary language, but it is on a half way. The peculiarity of this is that the dialectal word is first used in tandem with the literature one, and then it can be used on its own, making a pair of synonyms with it. For example, the Western Buryat word *nazhar* ‘summer’ has become a poetic synonym of the literary word *zun* with an identical meaning.

Turkic borrowings in the Buryat language are not surely limited by the above mentioned words. Their number is much more. As our study shows some Turkic borrowings are not labeled in the Buryat-Russian dictionary at all, at the same time we should note that such labels have appeared in the last edition of the dictionary: **khöl** II (from *Turk Köl*.) ‘lake’ (Buryat-Russian ... 2008: 486]. The fact that the words borrowed from the Turkic languages get litters in the dictionaries, indicating a Buryat dialect as the source, rather than one of the Turkic languages or some of them, means that these words were borrowed long ago and lost a touch of another language. To identify the whole range of Turkisms in the Buryat language is possible while carrying the extensive etymological research, compiling an etymological dictionary.

#### References:

- BERTAGAEV T.A. (1971). *Vnutrennyaya rekonstruktsiya i etimologiya slov v altayskikh yazykah*, *Problema obschnosti altayskikh yazykov*, Moskva, 90–109.
- BERTAGAEV T.A. (1974). *Leksika sovremennykh mongolskikh yazykov*, Moskva.
- Buryatsko-russkiy slovar*, Vol. II O-Ya (Ed. by S.D. Namsaraev), Ulan-Ude.
- HAR'KOVA S.S. (1988). *Ob odnom kriterii vyjavleniya tyurkizmov v mongolskikh yazykah*, *Problemy mongolskogo yazykoznanija*, Novosibirsk, 75–82.
- RASSADIN, V.I. (1969). *O tyurkizmah v buryatskom yazyke*, *K izucheniyu buryatskogo yazyka*, Ulan-Ude, 129–134.
- RASSADIN, V.I. (2007). *Ocherki po istorii slozheniya tyurko-mongolskoy yazykovoy obschnosti*. Part I: *Tyurkskoe vliyanie na leksiku mongolskikh yazykov*, Elista.
- SCHERBAK A.M. (2005). *Tyurko-mongolskie yazykovye kontakty v istorii mongolskikh yazykov*, Sankt-Peterburg: Nauka.
- SHAGDAROV L.D. (1971). *O razvitií perenosnyh znacheniy v slovah, obschih nekotorym tyurkskim i mongolskim yazykam*, *Problemy obschnosti altayskikh yazykov*, Moskva: 121–126.