

## □ B. MUNKHTSETSEG



### THE NATIVE LANGUAGE OF MONGOLIAN TUVANS

#### MOĞOL TUVANLARI'NIN DOĞAL DİLİ

##### Özet

Tuvanlar, Moğolistan'ın Tsengel, Bayan-Ulgii, Jargalant, Buyant, Hovd, Tsagaan nuur, Huvsgul bölgelerinde yaşamakta Moğolca ve Tuvanca konuşmaktadırlar. Birçok yabancı araştırmacı, Tsaatan göçebelerinin ve Tuvan şamanizminin yaşam tarzını incelemiştir. . Moğolistan hükümeti, Tuvans'ın kendine özgü kültürünü ve yaşam tarzını korumak ve benzersiz kültürel mirasını aktarmak için dikkat etmeli ve önlem almalıdır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Tuvan dili, Tsaatan, Uigar-Urianhai, Türk

##### Abstract

The Tuvans are living in Tsengel sum, Bayan-Ulgii province, Jargalant and Buyant, Hovd province and Tsagaan nuur sum, Huvsgul province, Mongolia and they speak both Mongolian and Tuvan languages. Many foreign researchers have studied the lifestyle of Tsaatan nomads and Tuvan shamanism. The government of Mongolia should pay attention and take measures to preserve and inherit the unique culture and lifestyle of Tuvans.

**Keywords:** Tuvan language, Tsaatan, Uigar-Urianhai, Turkic

## Резюме

Тувинцы живут в сумме Ценгеля, провинции Баян-Ульгий, Жаргалант и Буянт Ховд провинции и Цагаан нуур сум, провинции Хувсгул Монголии и говорят на монгольском и тувинском языке. Несмотря на то, что многие иностранные исследователи изучали образ жизни тувинского шаманизма и кочевников Цаатана, монгольское правительство уделяло мало внимания изучению и сохранению культуры вышеупомянутых этнических меньшинств. Тем не менее, я думаю, что в интересах монгольского правительства уделить должное внимание и принять меры, которые могли бы помочь сохранить и унаследовать уникальную культуру и образ жизни тувинцев и цаатанских кочевников.

**Ключевые слова:** тувинский язык, цаатан, уйгар-урианхайский, тюркский.

The Tuvans are a Turkic ethnic group living in Mongolia, Russia and China. In China and Mongolia, Tuvans are national minorities because of their past settlement in various territories, the Tuvans have had to live in mixed communities with other ethnic groups, assimilating into the host population as a result. Tuvans in Mongolia inhabit different provinces, Bayan-Ulgii, Khovd and Khuvsgul. The largest population of Tuvans in Mongolia are the Tsengel Tuvans; The Dukha people live in Khuvsgul province (Mongush, 2003:163). According to the 2002 national census, there are 3800 Tuvans in Mongolia. Tuvans are mainly descendants of nomadic groups of Turkified Mongols and speak Turkic language. Dozens of books and articles have been published regarding the history, tradition, and the origin of Tuvan language and relations among Tuvan, Mongolian and Turkic languages.

The purpose of the article is about Tuvan language and its immunity. First of all, it is worth noting that there exist different terms for the “Tuvan language” which is confusing. The terms are as follows:

1. The Tuvan language of Tsengel Tuvans
2. Tsaatan language
3. Tsaatan Urianhai language
4. Uigar Tsaatan language
5. Uigar Urianhai language
6. Dukha language



During the socialist regime, fieldworks conducted by Science Academy of Language and Literature played an important role in Tuvan studies. In the result of that work, Tuvan language of the reindeer people was formulated as “Uigar-Urianhai language”. Since 1972, professor L. Bold has studied and done research work regarding Uigar-Urianhai language, then earned The Doctor of Science on the theme “The Mongolian language links to the Sayan Turkic language historically” in 1996.

According to the research carried out by Professor L. Bold, literature, folk songs, fairy and epics have not been studied well, except the shamanism of the Reindeer people in Huvsgul province (Bold. L. 1978: 136). Although not many scholars studied the minority ethnic group, there are many valuable works which contribute

significantly to Tuvan studies. The articles related to the structure of Tuvan verse and semasiology of Tuvan language published by Professor Ts. Shagdarsuren are highly appreciated.

By doing research on Tuvan shamanism and ethnography, professor S. Dulam published the article "Analysis on shamanism and ethnography of Uigar-Tsaatan Reindeer people" (Dulam. S. 1995:110), containing Tuvan shaman's callings, clothes, symbolism, rituals and differences from other ethnic groups. For linguistics, Dr. Kh. Gansukh did fieldwork in Tsengel, Bayan-Ulgii province, and got the Doctoral degree in linguistic in 2009 on the theme "The features of Tsengel Tuvans language", including features of morphology, syntax, grammar, and specific type of local dialect and some elements from Turkic language. Also Dr. B. Bayarsaikhan studied the terms in Tuvan language that related to husbandry of Tuvans in Tsengel, Bayan-Ulgii province. Collecting and classifying these terms are very significant to Tuvan studies because the terms in Tuvan that related to husbandry are almost forgotten and danger in disappearing. Scholar G. Zolbayar who lives in Bayan-Ulgii province conducted a survey on folk literature of Tsengel Tuvans, then published 2 series of books "Altan Dagsha" (1998) and "Mungun Dagsha" (2013).

If Tuvan children are no longer learning their native language, and adults are shifting to using Mongolian in place of Tuvan, it can lead to the endangerment and loss of their traditional language. Therefore, we must consider about Tuvan language and its immunity. Here is a question: How will a minority language survive in globalization? To keep their culture, tradition, language and lifestyle, one should practice and use them on everyday life. For Reindeer people in Huvsgul province, visiting tourists bother the local reindeers' lives to continue in their ways properly. So they are forced to adapt the ways of life and in some ways they are in danger to lose their unique lifestyle because of external factors.



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For Tsengel Tuvans, households migrate to urban areas for many reasons, especially, because of unemployment. So the fewer people who left in the areas tend not to practice traditional custom, therefore the customs, such as wedding, burial, making felt, sheep shearing etc. die away. Many of the people in Tsengel sum are Kazaks, everyone speaks Kazak and every activity holds in Kazak language, so it is difficult for the fewer Tuvans to survive their culture, tradition and language. Therefore, it is time for Mongolian government to take measures to protect these people's unique culture and language. Also, it is important for Tuvans to pass on their tradition and language to the next generation. One way to preserve a language is to teach, speak and use it every day. All Tuvan children study at the local school in Mongolian for most of the year.

While children may understand spoken Tuvan, they usually communicate with their parents and siblings in Mongolian. They are bilingual, speaking both Tuvan and Mongolian. Tuva children study in schools, where classes are held in Mongolian. Teaching Tuvan language in Mongolia varies from place to place because of approaches of the local authorities to the issue.

The Tuvan school in Tsengel, Bayan Ulgii province has been teaching Tuvan language and literature classes in Tuvan from the first grade, whereas Tuva Foundation established a ger-summer training program in Khovd province in 2013, with the help of TIKA, Implementation Organization of Turkish Government. In 2005, the Mongolian government adopted a 'Tuva Language Study Programme' aimed at supporting the efforts to preserve their cultural heritage. In 2013, The Center for Circumpolar Studies collaborates with Oyunbadam, a native Tuvan speaker who is also a trained teacher, in her efforts to establish the language program in the traditional summer camps on the taiga, where the nomadic reindeer herders gather in extended family groups for the brief summer period. The language program will encourage rich and meaningful use of the native language within an authentic cultural setting and assist in transmission of culturally relevant information from elders to the younger generation. Their culture is an important source for the study of ethnic variations and language.

### Conclusion

The Tuvans are living in Tsengel sum, Bayan-Ulgii province, Jargalant and Buyant, Hovd province and Tsagaan Nuur sum, Huvsgul province, Mongolia and they speak both Mongolian and Tuvan languages. Many foreign researchers have studied the unique lifestyle of Tsaatan nomads and Tuvan shamanism. In the next fifty years, it is estimated that 3500 languages will go extinct. Tuvan which is spoken by much smaller numbers of speakers in China, Mongolia and Russian Federation is one of these threatened languages. When a language goes extinct, the tradition and lifestyle of the people are lost. So government of Mongolia should pay attention and take measures to preserve and inherit the unique culture, language and lifestyle of Tuvans.

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