

ON THE THREE PAIRS OF RELATIVE WORDS IN MONGOLIC AND TURKIC GROUPS

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Abstract: We seek to comparatively analyse three pairs of related word words “bilig, bölög, keseg” in Mongolic and “bil- , bøl- , kes-” in Turkic as well as some other related words. We also provide some language materials and personal opinions. The method of root analysis is efficacious for agglutinative languages, but not omnipotent. If we use the method of root analysis without obtaining the abundant and reliable materials regarding comparative language analysis, our conclusion will often be invalid. Therefore it is imperative for us to base our research on the abundant and reliable materials regarding comparative language analysis when we use the method of root analysis.

Key words: three pairs of related word words, Mongolic, Turkic, method of root analysis.

Moğolca ve Türk Dillerinde Birbirleriyle İlişkili Üçlü Sözcük Grupları Üzerine

Özet: Bu çalışmada Moğolca'daki birbirleriyle ilişkili “bilig, bölög, keseg” ve Türk dilindeki “bil- , bøl- , kes-” üçlüleri ve diğer bazı ilişkili sözcükler karşılaştırmalı olarak çözümlenmekte; bu bağlamda bu dillerden seçilmiş ilgili örneklere dayanarak kişisel görüşler sunulmaktadır. Ek-kök yapısı çözümlenmesi yöntemi eklemeli diller için yararlı bir yöntemse de, her bakımdan yeterli olmayabilir. Bu yöntemi, çok sayıda ve geçerli dil örneklerini bir araya getirip, bunların karşılaştırmalı çözümlenmesine dayandırmadan kullanırsak, varılacak yüzeysel sonuçlar pek de güvenilir

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olmayabilir. Bu nedenle, karşılaştırmalı ek-kök çözümlemesi yönteminin çok sayıda ve geçerli dil örneklerine dayandırılarak yapılması büyük önem taşımaktadır.

Since Altaic Family Theory was proposed, its comparative phonetics, morphology as well as lexics have gained great achievements through the hard work of scholars within several generations from different countries.

As is known to all, all languages in Mongolic and Turkic groups belong to Altaic family. As a result of persistent efforts, researchers have found many relative words between Mongolic and Turkic. Then a thorough study has been made in order to reveal which of them have their roots shared by original Altaic languages, which of them are the results of the contact and interaction between these languages. It is highly necessary to distinguish between the relative words shared by the Altaic languages and the loanwords borrowed from one another later. Our comparative research will be worthless if we do not distinguish original common elements from the loanwords and do comparative studies of them. Therefore, researchers on Altaic family have put forward some relatively effective methods to identify and confirm a loanword during the process of comparative study on vocabulary, one of which is the method of root analysis.

The method of root analysis is an approach for revealing in which language evidence of the origin of a relative word exists, in Mongolic or Turkic, so as to make sure whether a relative word is a loanword or not. In other words, if its origin can be explained with materials of Turkic, but not those of Mongolic, the relative word will be proved to be a loanword borrowed from Turkic. On the other hand, if its origin can be explained with materials of Mongolic, but not those of Turkic, it will be recognized as a loanword borrowed from Mongolic. Using the very method of root analysis, pioneers on the research of Altaic family drew a conclusion that the words “bilig , bölög , keseg” in Mongolic originated from the words “bil-, bøl- , kes-” in Turkic. Majority of researchers on Altaic family accepted this conclusion, while a few scholars like Salbayev claimed that it was risky to regard the words “bilig , bölög, keseg” in Mongolic as loanwords borrowed from Turkic, simply because their origin could be explained with materials of Turkic. The method of root

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analysis is more practical for non-related languages , as compared with related languages. (1).

At the start of comparative research of Mongolic and Turkic, we accepted the view that the words “bilig、 bölöğ、 keseg” in Mongolic might have originated from the words “bil- 、 bøl- 、 kes-” in Turkic (2). With the enrichment of language materials, the depth of comparative research and the improvement of the research methods, some changes have taken place in our view points. Here we are going to analyze the three pairs of relative words in Mongolic and Turkic again, employing the method of root analysis.

The key to the method of root analysis is to seek out in which language the common root of the relative words exists. If the common root is not existent or used in Mongolic, but in Turkic, we can conclude that the very words in Mongolic are borrowed from Turkic. On the other hand, the conclusion will be the opposite.

In Mongolic, there are words such as “bilig” (wisdom、 intelligence、 talent), “biligtei” (wise、 intelligent、 talented), and “biligtü” (wise、 intelligent、 talented), biligten (a man of wisdom, an intelligent man, a talented person). It is obvious they have formed cognate words with “bilig” as their root. In addition, there are words such as “bil-” (to know, understand), “bilim” (knowledge, talent) and “bilig” (wisdom, wit) in Turkic. Obviously they are also cognate words with “bil-” as their root. Through the comparative analysis of the two sets of cognate words, conclusion can be drawn that their common root is “bil-” instead of “bilig”. However, the common root cannot be explained with materials of Mongolic. That is to say, there is no root like “bil-” in Mongolic. But the root- “bil-” is in existence in Turkic. In other words, it can be explained with language materials in Turkic. Regarding the relation between their meanings, “knowledge” and “wisdom” cannot be separated, for the fact that the more knowledge one obtains, the wiser one becomes. Therefore, according to their form and meaning it can be concluded that the two groups of words are cognate words. Considering that the origin can be explained with materials of Turkic, but not those of Mongolic, we have to reckon that the word “bilig” in Mongolic might have originated from “bil-” in Turkic or have been borrowed directly from Turkic.

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We think the method of root analysis has played its effective role in analyzing comparatively the two groups of words. And the conclusion of the analysis is correct.

In Mongolic, there are words such as “bölög” (section, group, type), “bölögten” (clique, faction) “bölögči” (inclined to set up a faction), “bölögleku” (form a clique or a group), and “bölögrekü” (form a clique or a group automatically). These words form a group of cognate words with “bölög” as their root. While in Turkic, there are also a group of cognate words such as “bøl-” (divide), “bølek” (section, part), and “bølym” (department), with “bøl-” as their root. Concerning both form and meaning, the words in the two groups are related and can be considered as cognate words. Through comparative analysis, it is easily found that their common root is “bøl-” instead of “bölög”.

Realizing the phenomenon of the common root “bøl-” of the two groups above being widely used in Turkic, most of the scholars on comparative research of Altaic family believe that the word “bölög” in Mongolic is a loanword borrowed from the Turkic “bøl-”.

We consider it inadvisable to reach a conclusion without abundant language materials and due consideration that the word “bölög” in Mongolic is a loanword borrowed from Turkic. This is because its origin can be tracked down with materials of Mongolic thoroughly. Below is the analysis of the materials:

Take this for instance: there are words like “bölög” (section group sort), “böli” (family), “bølköm” (group, organization, team), “bølte” (break, break out) in Mongolic, which, we think, should be seen as cognate words with sufficient reasons.

With regard to meaning, “bölög, böli, and bølköm” all refer to [an independent unit made up of people and things or units that are formed by parts that separated from the original units]: “bølte” means [to separate from an object]. Clearly, they are related in their semantics.

In terms of its structure, “bölög” consists of “bøl-” and “-g”. “-g” is a formative suffix for deriving nouns from a verb. For instance, “jori-” (attempt, desire, expect,

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run toward) + “-g” = “jorig” (courage, will, moral integrity); “biči-” (write) + -g = “bičig” (script, document, letter, book). Besides, the word “böli” can be analyzed into “böl-” and “-i”. That is to say, “böli” is made up of “böl-” and “-i”. And “-i” is a suffix for deriving other word types from a verb. For instance, “yar” (go, set out, surpass) + “-i” = “yari” (more than, over). The word “bölköm” consists of “böl-” and “-köm”. “-köm” is a formative suffix for deriving words of other parts of speech from a verb. For instance, “törö-” (give birth to, produce) + “-köm” (married woman’s parents’ home). Therefore, we confirm that “bölte” is made up of “böl-” and “-te”. And “-te” is a suffix for deriving words with some characteristics of a verb from verbs words. For instance, “bilte” (trample, tread) = “bil-” + “-te”, “nilte” (break sth into pieces, make sth flat) = “nil-” + “-te”.

From the above, we see that a reasonable explanation has been given to the origin of the word “bölög” using the materials of Mongolic. Also we learn that “bölög, böli, bölköm, and bölte” are cognate words, whose root is “böl-”. As we know, there are two types of roots in Mongolic. One is the root that can be used independently; for example, the root “ire-” in the words “irekü, iregsen, and irelte”. The other is the root that cannot be used independently; for example, the root “qoyi” in the words “qoyina, qoyisi, and qoyitu”. In the case of the words “bölög, böli, bölköm, and bölte”, “böl-” is their common root that cannot be used independently. Therefore it is wrong to consider “bölög” is a loanword borrowed from Turkic.

Taking into consideration that both Mongolic and Turkic language materials provide explanations to the two groups of relative words above, we have to say that they are from original Altaic languages and are shared by both Mongolic and Turkic, which tallies with the reality of both Mongolic and Turkic.

In this, the method of root analysis, which in itself shows no defects, plays an important role. However, whether the conclusion we have reached using the method is right or not depends on how reliable and abundant the language materials possessed by the root analyzer are.

If we use the method without obtaining sufficient materials, the result will be often undependable. It was precisely because of such pitfalls that the majority of scholars on Altaic languages have come to incorrect conclusion that the word

“bölg” originates from the word “böl-” in Turkic. In order to base our comparative research on plentiful and dependable language materials, we should attach great importance to collecting and mastering them.

“Keseg” is a word in Mongolic, which has derivative words, such as “kesegtei” (agglomerate), “keseglekü” (divide, cut sth into pieces), and “kesegčekü” (partition), with “keseg” as their root. We also find that there are some cognate words in Turkic, such as, kes- (cut divide), kesim (part passage), and “keseg” (section, part), with “kes-” as their root. They are related to each other in both meaning and form. Analyzing comparatively, we find easily that the common root of these two sets of cognates is “kes-” instead of “keseg”. According to the fact that the common root “kes-” (of the two groups of words) is in general use among Turkic languages, scholars on Altaic family reckon that the word “keseg” in Mongolic comes from the word “kes” in Turkic. In our opinion, this is an incorrect conclusion which has been reached using root analysis without sufficient mastery of materials and not with all of the possibilities taken into consideration.

We find other words in Mongolic and Turkic showing a connection in meaning with those mentioned above. For example, we found “qasu” (cut down, cut off, delete), “qusu-” (cut, scratch, peel, shovel, feel sick) in Mongolic, and “qus-” (throw up, feel noxious) in Turkic. Both “qasu-” in Mongolian and “kes-” in Turkic mean [to cut something into pieces or cut off]. Furthermore, the word “qusu-” in Mongolic is connected with qasu- (in Mongolic) as well as kes- (in Turkic) in the sense [cut something into pieces] and with “qus-” in the sense [feel sick]. In short, these words are connected closely in regards to meaning. In spite of some differences in sense, we think it is the result of development and evolution of the original meaning [divide, cut, peel].

As to form, it is evident that the words above lie within alternated relation of root vowels. Both in Mongolic and Turkic, there are phenomena that root vowels alternate, which refer to producing cognate words related in sense, but with some slight differences after root vowels’ alternation. For example: “basa” (also, again, too, either), “bisi-” (note, else) “busu” (note, else, non-) in Mongolian; “mal”(cattle) “mol” (wealth) “ayaq”(foot, leg), “uyaq~uyuq” (socks) in Turkic. We can see they

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are cognate words which are the results of the alteration of vowels “a~e~u” and shared by both Mongolian and Turkic .The only difference is that there are three kinds of forms in Mongolic, such as, “qasu--kese--qusu-”, while two forms in Turkic, such as, “kes- qus-”. Consequently, we have no reason to consider the word “keseg” in Mongolic is borrowed from Turkic.

We have just analyzed comparatively the words “bilig 、 bölöğ、 keseg” in Mongolic and “bil-、 bøl- 、 kes-” in Turkic as well as some other relative words. In addition, we have provided some language materials along with our personal views. We have learned that the method of root analysis is efficacious for agglutinative language, but is not an all-purpose tool. If a comparative analysis is made with inadequate language materials, its conclusion will be invalid. Therefore, it is advisable to base our research on reliable and abundant language materials while using the method of root analysis.

Notes

- (1) Salbayev: Problems Concerning the Relative words in Khazak and Mongolian languages, minzuyuwenqingbaoziliaoji, beijing, minzuchubanshe, 1984.
- (2) G·Jorigt: Various Ways to Identify Loanwords in Mongolian, Journal of Inner Mongolia University (Humanities and Social Sciences), P.38—40 , Vol.32 , No.1, 2000.