ELEMENTS COMMON TO TURKISH AND MONGOLIAN AND THE PLACE OF MONGOLIAN IN TURKISH LANGUAGE STUDIES

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It is commonly admitted that, there are close affinities between Turkish and Mongolian as regards the structure, phonology, morphology and vocabulary of the two languages which, in fact are the two closely related branches of the Altaic Language family. Whether this kinship between the two languages be that of origin\(^1\) as pointed out by G. J. Ramstedt and N. Poppe, or whether it be related to the cultural kinship\(^2\) which as W. Kotwitz, G. C. Clauson and G. Doerfer have asserted, derives from the mutual vocabular influences through inter actions, the end-product is the same. Indeed when we look at the issue in terms of cultural interactions and vocabular exchanges, what is significant are the close affinities between the two languages, which have emerged as a result of hundreds of years of interaction between Turkish and Mongolian.


The affinities between Turkish and Mongolian could be studied with regard to two different periods or, better to say, on two different Levels.

One is the similarity between Turkish and Mongolian, the two branches of the Altaic language family, which are supposed to have certain features in common. These similarities and common features between them go back to the period of the Altaic linguistic unity much earlier than the old Turkish and Proto-Turkish Periods.

The other is the similarity which is the result of the Mongolian invasion of Anatolia in the thirteenth century. The political supremacy achieved by the Mongolians in areas of Turkish settlements and also the process whereby these areas became Turkish played a significant and fruitful part in the way the two languages influenced each other mutually as linguistic borrowing became possible.

According to a view widely accepted in the Altaistic studies, the first period, that is, the period of the Altaistic linguistic unity, way a period during which a great of linguistic material passed from the Turkish language into the Mongolian. This linguistic material was composed of words and affixes.¹

During the second period, this interaction between the two languages worked both ways; Turkish and Mongolian borrowed a lot from each other. Still today it is a fact that there are many Mongolian linguistic elements in various Turkic dialects including the Chouvash, Yakut, Abakan, Shor, Lebet, Azerbajiani, Cossack, Kirghiz, Uzbek and Turcoman dialects. However, these borrowings are mostly words, and the affixes have passed to Turkish together with the words themselves, It is already known affixes by themselves have passed to Turkish.

Of course, Turkish has also borrowed many words affixes from other languages such as Arabic, Persian and French; Yet while the borrowings from these languages have always been considered strange and they have often obstructed the development of Turkish because of many structural and functional differences, the same cannot be claimed as regards the words and affixes borrowed from Mongolian. The structural and functional parallelism between the two languages has made it easier for Mongolian words and affixes to be adopted into Turkish.

In fact, a great deal of research has been made to demonstrate the linguistic kinship between Turkish and Mongolian in the first period, and thus,

the influences Turkish had Mongolian have roughly delineated. However, the studies concerning the mutual influences of the two languages on each other, especially the words and affixes borrowed by Turkish from Mongolian, during the Mongolian rule of Anatolia are not satisfactory and have been in adequate.4

2 - It is possible to classify the elements, which are common to both Turkish and Mongolian and which can be considered as the subject matter of a comparative study, in to three main categories from point of view of phonology, morphology and vocabulary. But the common elements are mostly related to morphology and vocabulary. The similarities which are related to morphology reveal themselves in some inflectional affixes such as noun inflections (plural, possessive) and verb inflections, as well as in a certain group of derivational affixes.

Since the studies of G. J. Ramsteadt onwards many ideas have been put forward on the characteristics which are common to the structures of language of both Turkish and Mongolian. Here, we don’t want to add new ones. Yet, what is aimed at und emphasized in this article, is that, Mongolian carries a special importance for Turkic studies. The reason is, the comparative studies between Turkish and Mongolian illuminate not only the common points between these two languages and the other Altaic languages which have not been analysed yet, but illuminates also some problems of the structure of Turkish itself which needs to be solved. The fact that Mongolian, which has taken a large stock of linguistic material from Turkish, is a language which still keeps its older forms in currency is in fact can be taken as an advantage for us to understand the older periods of Turkish from which no written documents have been left. It is also being used as a criterion to investigate and specity the elements which have already entered in Turkish during Mongolian invasions.

Now we want to illustrate this point more concretely with some examples:

3 - As the phonetic structures of Turkish and Mongolian have been differentiated since the period when there was a linguistic unity between Turkish and Mongolian it is convenient to take the Mongolian Phonology as a guide to Turkic studies. However, from the point of view of the subject

which we study, there are in fact some really important factors to emphasize. One of these is the fact that both Chuvash and Mongol present the same kind of characteristics in regards to the phonemic changes $r/z$ and $l/s$ as it can be observed between Turkish and Mongolian. As it is already known the direction of this change between Turkish and Mongolian, that is to say, which one of these has primacy in occurrence, has been a matter of dispute between the Turcologists and the Mongolians. Because of this some scientists have given primacy to "zetacism" and "sigmatism"\(^5\) Which have taken $r > z$ and $l > s$ changes as their basic, while some others have given primacy to "rotasism" and "lamdaism"\(^6\) which have taken $z > r$ and $s > l$ changes as their basis. Yet today many of the Altaists support the idea, that the phonemes $r,l$ in Chuvash and Mongolian are older than the phonemes $z,s$ in Turkish. The supporters of this view claim that the phonemes $r,l$ have become common both in Chuvash (a very old branch of Turkish) and in Mongolian. Because of this, these linguists have accepted that the above mentioned fact is an evidence for the phonemes $r,l$ to be more archaic and basic phonemes in comparison to $z$ and $s$ general Turkish. Mongolian has been used as a vehicle in the analysis of Chuvash and the Bulgarian Turkish. The Altaists have supported the view that Turkish had the $r,l$ characteristics in the very old periods as it has served as a source language, which had given many linguistic elements to Mongolian, from which the Tungus language had borrowed in the Altaic period. Mongolian had served as a bridge between the Bulgarian Turkish and Chuvash which had the $r,l$ characteristics in its phonological structure and old Turkish. As a result of comparative phonetic studies made between Turkish and Mongolian and between Mongolian and Chuvash N. Poppe has claimed that there had been a Turkish-Chuvash unity in the past\(^7\) which had tied proto-Chuvash and Proto-Turkic to each other.

4 – When Turkish and Mongolian are studied from the point of view of morphology, it can be seen that there are many points in common between them. It is possible to classify and illustrate those elements with examples


(the ones which have already been pointed out above are excluded) into four groups presenting the similarities between the affixes which derive nouns from nouns, verbs from nouns, nouns from verbs and verbs from verbs. But as the time given is limited, we can give only a few examples. Let's take, for example, the plural suffixes:

**Plural Suffixes:** In old Turkish there are many plural suffixes which can also be found in Mongolian. These are the plural suffixes +lar/+ler, +t, +an/+en, +s and +z. It seems that the suffix +gün/+gün belong to old Turkish. Now let's examine them briefly:

a - The suffixes +lar/+ler: The plural suffixes, which are most commonly used in all branches of the Turkish language, and which have undergone in every dialect some phonetic transformations, are +lar/+ler. Yet, when we go back to old Turkish, we see much diversity in the plural suffixes. On the other hand, these +lar and +ler suffixes have a limited usage with some words which are of a particular significance. For instance, in Kök-Turkish texts these suffixes are used only with the words which signify kinship or nobility, as in the case of the words beg+ler (lords, a feudal superior), eke+ler+im (my elder sisters), őg+ler+im (my mothers) and kunçuy+larım (my princesses). The same is also true for the mongolian equivalents +nar/+ner. These suffixes are used in Mongolian to express only kinship or nobility. A. Von Gabain has pointed out that, since a word may indicate plurality without a plural suffix or since the plural suffix may appear in constructions in which there is also a modifier to express pluralism and finally since these suffixes are used with words which have a singular meaning to express reverence and respect, the +lar/+ler suffixes in üç oğrular (three thieves) and bodisawatlar (one bodisatwa) have a plural function which is secondary. It is interesting to note that in Uighur texts the suffixes are written separate from the word concerned. In old Turkish these suffixes are sometimes added to the adjective instead of the noun as it is in Mongolian, like, for example, ak+lar+bul ut. For Gabain, one cannot speak with certainty as regards the real meaning and function of the suffixes unless the problem of its origin is solved. Indeed, there is a vast difference of opinion concerning the etymology of the +lar/+ler suffixes; some argue that these suffixes derive from the amalgamation of a pronominal root and a plural suffix, while others assert that the suffixes a combinaion of the suffix +la-, which is used to make verbs out of nouns, and the simple present tense suffix +r. Also there are those who point out that the suffixes are related to a com-

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11 A. von Gabain, ibid p. 84, §. 168.
pound suffix which itself was the combination of two different plural suffixes. However, as far as I am concerned, the conclusions, which could contribute to the solution of the problem concerning +lar/+ler in Turkish, can only be reached through a comparative study of the historical development which these suffixes had in both languages.

b - The +t plural suffix:

The +t plural suffix, which corresponds to the +d+ud/+üd suffixes in Mongolian is to be found in the following old Turkish examples: oğlt (sons, children) < oğlıl, tartak (Tarhanlar) < Mong. Tarkan, yılpagut (herbes) < yılpagü ~ alpагü, bulт (clouds) < bulт, tigит (princes) < tigин, süt < Mong. sün (milk), tağšt (poems) < tağšu, uruňut (warriors) < uruňu.12 This suffix, which was used with various words in classical and pre-classical Mongolian e.g. Noyan/noyad (princes), kağan/kağad (kings), usun/usud: (fathers), elçin/elçit: (messengers), emçi/emçit (physicians),13 was an archaic suffix in old Turkish, seldom used and without any plural function.14 For instance, the use of this plural suffix in various Turkic words, which already have a plural suffix denotes not a plural but a singular meaning as can be illustrated by the double plural tigит+ler < tigіn, or the words er+et+ler: "men", hosun eretler: herbes, tüñür+üt+ter (mothers in law < tüñür, (inn+et+ter little sisters or brothers) < ini, in the Yakut dialect, or the word hadut+tar (women in Northern Turkish)15, or biget ‘bey’ in Chag., or bulut, kanat and süt in modern Turkish. These examples can be taken as an evidence for the plural suffixes which have become an inseparable part of the main word which later has to take the plural suffix for the second time when needed. Old Turkish specialists and Altaists share the view that the +t plural suffix in Turkish was originally borrowed from Mongolian. Yet, G. Doerfer, on the other hand, argues that it is impossible for the Turkish language, which has given Mongolian various cultural words, to borrow the +t suffix from Mongolian. He further argues that, even during the period of the Mongolian rule when many words were adopted into Turkish, only the +ğul suffix was taken by Chagatai from Mongolian. More over, it is out of question for the +t suffix to enter Turkish by means of various

12 Talát Tekin, ibid. p. 121, §. 2.211.4; A Von Gabain, p. 85, §. 172.
14 A. von Gabain, ibid p. 85, § 172; Talát Tekin, ibid p. 122, § 3.211.4;
Mongolian words for which we have no reliable evidence and criteria to prove that the words with the \( +^o t \) suffix in old Turkish are Mongolian.\(^{16}\)

Indeed, simply because the suffix has become a stereotype and hence, ceased to be used any longer, it does not necessarily follow that this suffix was borrowed from Mongolian. Therefore, in emphasizing that the \( +^o t \) suffix is essentially Turkish, we must also explain why the usage of this suffix is no more seen in Turkish itself while it has come to be widely in Mongolian. The usage of \(+lær/+ler\) was limited in Kök-Türkish but its usage was widened and generalized in a short time starting with the uighur period. Now, is it possible to accept this a a natural result of this fact? We will emphasise this point later, in the conclusion.

c – The \(+γun/+gün\) plural suffix: It is not certain yet whether there is any relationship between Mongolian and this plural suffix, which was originally used with some words in the Kök Turkish Inscriptions, signifying kinship or persons such as in \(Kelîn+gün+üm\) (my daughters-in law) \(<\) \(Kelîn,\)
\(tay-γun-ũnuz\) (your children) \(<\) \(tay\) (goal, cilt). \(ini-γi+gün+ũn\) (my little brothers and sisters) \(<\) \(ini\). The suffix appears in a few collective words in Uygur Turkish like, for instance, \(alku+γun\) (altogether), \(kamaγun+γun\) (altogethether, all.) A. Von Gabain has put a question mark about the plural meaning of the suffix; and from Mongolian, he has given only the word \(ada+γun\) (horse) as the example.\(^{17}\) Since the \(+γun/+gün\) suffix was never a fashionable suffix in classical and pre-classical Mongolian, there is a need for a full study of theses suffix, which has disappeared without ever coming into a popular use.

d – \(+an/+en\) plural suffix:

The \(+an+en\) plural suffix which has become similar with the \(+^o n\) plural suffix in Mongolian \((elçi/elçin\) (messengers), \(biçigeçi/biçigeçin\) (clerks) \(moritay/moritan\) (horsemen)\(^{18}\) is a rarely used and an archaic suffix which had been found in a few examples like \(oγlan\) (my sons) \(<\) \(oγl\) (son), \(er+en\) (men) and \(ört+en\) (flames) in old Turkish. There are some who accept that this suffix has a dimmunitive or emphatic functions in Turkish, while on the other hand, there are others who claim that there is a relationship between this suffix and the suffix \(+^o n\) which is found in certain locative adverbs which are archaic such as \(orun,\) \(kidin,\) \(üstün,\) \(ałın\).\(^{19}\)

\(^{16}\) G. Doerfer, Türkische und Mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen, B. 1 Wiesbaden 1963, p. 5, 6; II. Die mongolisch-türkischen Sprachbeziehungen.

\(^{17}\) Alttürkische Grammatik, p. 60. § 50,

\(^{18}\) N. Poppe, ibid. e. p. 72, § 270, 271.

\(^{19}\) A. von Gabain, ibid. p. 61, §. 56.; Talât Tekin ibid. p. 121, §. 3.211.3.
The +s plural suffix which is found in words denoting rank such as Īsbaras, Tūrkān (İsbara Tarhan) found in Köktürk Inscriptions and words such as Tōlis, Tardus, Tūrgis which are possibly the names of tribes is added to the words ending in vowels or in ai diphtong in Mongolian: eme/emes (women), eke/ekes (mothers), ere/eres (men)\textsuperscript{20} etc.

\textbf{f – +²z Plural Suffix:}

\( +²z \) suffix which can be compared to the suffix denoting things two in number: +ra/+re (iki+re: twins), müge+re+sün (cartilage) is a suffix which denotes things two in number has produced stereotype words. Köz (eye), köküz (breast), müyüz (horn), tiz, biz\textsuperscript{21} etc.

As it is seen, in the oldest written documents of Turkish, a parallelism is seen between Mongolian and Turkish from the point of plural suffixes.

But although these suffixes are still widely used in Mongolian, as can be observed in the above examples and explanations they are rarely used in Turkish and have undergone a loss of function. Since there are very few examples it is difficult to make a functional differentiation clearly between these plural suffixes. They were used widely in Mongolian although they were rare and had lost their function in old Turkish. The main reason was that, they had undergone a functional end categorical change in Turkish after the 9th century.

As we have seen in the examples, the plural suffixes\( °+t, +°n, +°s \) and \( +°z \) have become the inseparable parts of the independent nouns, stems functioning as their names, and as stereotypes in order to denote a meaning of plurality instead of being added to the end of the word so as to show plurality. Thus, their function of making the nouns in old Turkish has been lost. Perhaps, kana was a word which was used to indicate only of the feathers of the wing of the bird at the beginning, and Ḳanat denoted a large number of the feathers on the wing of the bird. But, through time, the word Ḳanat had lost its meaning of plurality and had been used for a single wing of a bird in the language. The same be said for the words sün “a drop of milk/süt: milk, beg/begit, er-/eren.

Such a comparison between Mongolian and Turkish leads us to the idea that before the period of becoming a stereotype, and an inseparable part of the noun, these suffixes had been used widely also in Turkish parallel to Mongolian and that, each one was added to different words as each had its own qualities.

\textsuperscript{20} Talât Tekin, ibid., p. 122, §. 2.211.5; N. Poppe, ibid. p. 70, §. 264.
\textsuperscript{21} Alttürkische Grammatik, p. 64. §. 71, s. 85, §. 170. §. 170.
It is possible that these suffixes have passed to Mongolian in a period long before they had undergone a functional change in Turkish. The some can be observed in certain inflectional suffixes which have similar counterparts in Mongolian. One of these is the dative-locative suffix.

5 - +a/+e dative-locative suffix:

It is an archaic suffix which makes the words to which it is added adverbs of manner as seen in the Mongolian magüi (bad mağüi+a in a bad way, badly), katuğüi (merciless), Katsuğüi+a (mercilessly).22

In Köktürk and Uighur texts together with the widely used +ka/+ke dative locative suffix, there is also +a/+e suffixes, which are rarely used. This suffix produces adverbs of place and time biri, biri (south) biri-ye in the south, yur (north/yur-ya (in the north), kuri (west/kuri-ya (in the west), üz-e (upstairs).23

The fact that there existed a very old archaic locative-dative suffix in the form of +a/+e together with the +ka/+ke dative locative suffix in Turkish, indicates that an independent +a/+e suffix kept on existing from the very beginning, parallel to the +a/+e suffix the formation of which is +ka/+ke +ga/+ge > +a/+e.

When looked at the subject from the point of view of functional branching, it is seen that this suffix being an inflectional case ending at the beginning had first taken the function of denoting direction (dative). One can also observe that its locative function has developed, as a characteristic of its forms on various usages a capacity of deriving adverbs of various kinds.

The following stereotype forms of language point out this fact more clearly: The Uigh. kün+kün+i+ne (everyday, (Alt. Gr. §. 427), Ottoman günü-gününe (everyday, at the very day), Ettuh. tüne (yesterday), Kary. Tuna, tuna gün, tüne gün (yesterday, kara. Text 269, KW 259 and Lehag. 127) which we come across in many branches of Turkish; düne (dün) > tüne+e gün in old Anatolian Turkish; Chag. Bab. ertesi ge (tomorrow); Kiçešige (in the evening), Yazağa (during the spring), Kišına (during the winter, Ost. Gr. §. 355 f.) Kask. ke, kırk. kecege, Barb., Tob. Kiške (in the evening).

Such a similarity between Mongolian and Turkish from the point of view of the dative-locative +a/+e suffix, which reveals itself in the form of adverbialisation or the derivation of adverbs strengthens the probability that the stereotype suffixes which have become an ‘inseparable part of the stem have not emerged quite recently but have emerged in an older period when there was a Turkish Mongolian language union.

22 N. Poppe, ibid p. 57, §. 206.
6 – In this respect various examples common to Turkish and Mongolian may be given as regards the morphology and affixes of both languages. However since our time is limitit, which have to leave aside further explanations and examples.  

Just to complete and make the subject clear it would be usefull to give some examples of vocabulary.

Here, the importance of Mongolian, Turkic studies lies in the necessity of consulting Mongolian once again in order to make an analysis of the words that have already entered into Turkish and have lost their original foreign characteristics. For example, in Ottoman there is a word *cilği* ~ *cilğa* which means “foot path” (Kamus Terc : TS II 769). This word occurs in Mongolian as *cilga* (trace, path, narrow rood) in Kalm. as *cilga* and in Mong. as *cilgas*. Furthermore, in Kirg. We can come across this word as *yılğa*, in Bar. *yılğa*, in Anatolian dialects as *yılğa* in Kazk. Kirg. as *cilğa*. According to the rules of Phonetic changes seen between Mongolian and Turkish, the *c*– in Altaic languages becomes *ç–* in Mongolian, while it becomes *y–* in Turkish. The *y–* in general Turkish becomes *ç–* in Kazk. and Kirg. dialects. With the analysis of these sound changes we can see that the word *cilğa* or *cilgi* has entered into Ottoman from Mongolian. 

The same can be said for the word *çidam* (patience, endurance) which had entered into the Ottoman vocabulary from the Alt., Tel, Kirg. dialects of Turkish. The counterparts of this word in Mongolian appear as *cidăn* (endurance), *cidanyadan* (with great difficulty), *cidamağ*~*yadamağ* (has the same meaning with the previous one), *_CIDAL_~*küçün* (strength, power). This word can also been seen in the following forms : Tel. *çidim*, Tel. Leb. *şidam*, Kazk., shor. *şidam* Koyb. *sidim*. Because of the phonetic changes which extend their influence from Altaic to Turkish and Mongolian, The various forms of this word such as *tida–* (to endure), *ttd* (to resist, to endure), in old Turkish, *ttya–* in Kom., *dayan–* in Ott. *tiyin–* in Tel., Kazk. represent Turkish directly, while on the other hand, their forms with *ç–* represent Mongolian as they have entered into Turkish from Mongolian. The same can be said for *elasun* (young, brave), which is an old Anatolian Turkish word. The counterpart of this word in Turkish is *yaş* (young, youngman, youth). The *ç/y and l/s* sound changes between Mongolian and Turkish and the suffix –sun make it clear that this word has come from Mongolian. When the following words are compared to their counterparts in Mongolian it is easily understood that

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26 Osman Nedim Tuna, p. 221, 13.
they originally belonged to Mongolian: barçak (the handle of the sword), Kecim (an armour for horses), The piece of cloth put under the saddle), keleci (word, talk), keşik (turn of duty, quene), kurultay, maral (doe), sadaç (holster, a bag to put the arrows in), sicim (string), serin (cool, fresh air), chag. cağ-davul, candavul (night watchman, watchman), dapjur (the belt in the middle of a saddle), nöker (servant, friend, wife), soyurğal (donation) in Chag. tonğal (fire outside), kürek (bride, groom), nemer (reward, gift), sile (solid rice soup), cuda (spear) in Azerb.; alağa, alğa (hammer) in Alt. which is one of the siberion Turkish dialects; alağa (small mirror), abida (a horse with white tail and mane), in Alt., Tel. Barb. cağazın (paper), in Alt. Tel. Kilincek (câ’ime, sm), münün (silver), Alt., Tel. sabar (finger), peley (glove), Tel. sülüzin (lynx).

As it is seen, the comparative studies between Mongolian and Turkish are necessary not only to understand the nature of the kinship relations between these two languages but also are necessary to solve the problems and to analyse the linguistic materials related to the history of Turkish language.

27 A. Çafaroğlu, “Azeri lehçesinde bazı Moğol unsurları”, Azerbaycan Yurt Bilgisi Mecmuası C. I/6-7 (1932), III (1933); Osman Nedim Tuna, ibid., p. 215-246.