

ONCE AGAIN ON THE ETYMOLOGY OF TURKISH *ÇOCUK* 'CHILD'

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Abstract: This paper offers a discussion of a paper published by M. Adamović in this journal in 2008 (issue 1, p. 3-7). The conclusion arrived at here is that at least one element of Adamović's etymology can be used for modifying some earlier suggestions. A possible combination of this element with an old etymology by Stachowski seems to somewhat expedite the establishing of the correct, albeit entangled, etymology of this extremely interesting Turkish word.

Keywords: Turkish, etymology, lexis, dialectology.

Yeniden Türkçe çocuk Sözcüğünün Kökeni Üzerine

Özet: Bu çalışma, Milan Adamović'in 2008 yılında Türkbilig dergisinin 15. sayısında (s. 8-12) yayımladığı yazıyı tartışmaktadır. Bu çalışmada Adamović'in teklif ettiği etimolojinin bir unsurunun en azından daha önceki teklifleri değiştirme açısından kullanılabileceği sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Bu unsurun, Stachowski'nin eski bir etimoloji denemesi ile olası bir birleşimi, oldukça tartışmalı bu ilginç Türkçe sözcüğün kökenini doğru bir şekilde tesis etmede işleri bir dereceye kadar kolaylaştıracağı düşünülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Türk Dili, Kökenbilgisi, Söz Varlığı, Ağzibilimi.

In our paper published more than twenty years ago (Stachowski 1985) we suggested that neither is Turkish (= Trksh.) *çocuk* 'child' an altered version of Turkic (= Tk.) *çoçka* 'piglet' nor did the meaning 'child' derive from 'piglet', but rather they are both derivatives from a Proto-Tkc. stem $*\sqrt{\text{çöl}}$ 'young(er), small(er)'.

The newest study on Trksh. *çocuk* is that by Milan Adamović (2008), who does not mention our old paper among etymologies discussed but suggests his own etymology – a very interesting one which is, to boot, quite different from anything proposed so far: Trksh. *çocuk* 'child' < $*\text{çö}^w\text{cuk}$ < $*\text{çawcık}$ < $*\text{çağcık}$ < $*\text{çağacık}$ < Trksh.dial. *çağa* 'child' (Ad. 6).¹

Adamović's objection to the traditional semantic derivation ('child' < 'piglet') – which is actually the only objection he gives to justify his quest for another etymology – concerns the possibility of such a shift (or, maybe, even such an association) in general and, especially, in a language of a Muslim society. His arguments deserve to be cited *in extenso*:

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¹ Incidentally, Adamović does not use asterisks. However, only *çocuk* and *çağa* are really attested. – The letter <w> probably stands for a labial *v* here.

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“Bei einem Volk, das keine Schweine hält und auch vor der Islamisierung keine gehalten hat, fehlt der ethnographische Rückhalt für einen semantischen Prozess dieser Art [the ‘piglet’ > ‘child’ shift – M. S.]. Ferner ist zu bedenken, dass nicht einmal schweinezüchtende Völker den Begriff ‘Ferkel’ im positiven Sinne benutzen, sondern mit diesem Wort metaphorisch ‘ein schmutziges oder unordentliches Kind’ bezeichnen.” (Ad. 5).

The objection does not seem to be a real obstacle, or to be more precise, it does not seem to be substantiated in any serious way at all. For one thing, the fact that the Old Turks were perfectly acquainted with Chinese culture (which also includes Chinese cuisine and thereby pigs) renders the first sentence in this passage unconvincing. Secondly, a semantic change may also be indirect, e.g. ‘piglet’ > ‘piggy’ > ‘child’ – also English *little piggy*, as used of children, does not necessarily have a negative connotation, which renders the second sentence in this passage unconvincing. Finally: It is true, the Turkic word *çoçka* generally means ‘piglet’. However, its Karaim reflex *çoçha* means ‘young man, youth’ (KRP 631). Can it really be divorced from, for instance, Karachay *çoçha* ‘piglet’ (KW 98)? Furthermore, Azerb. and Trksh.dial. *çoçka* (İzmir, Amasya) means exactly ‘bebek, çocuk/ baby, child’ (DS 1034). Also Ottoman *çocuk* ‘child’ and Chagatay *çoçuk* ‘piglet’ cannot possibly be entirely unrelated. These examples should suffice to show that a combination of both meanings: ‘piglet’ and ‘child’ in one and the same word family (or even one and the same word) is easily possible. Which means that Adamović’s objection is groundless.

Also the fact that *çocuk* and dial. *çacuk* or their possessive forms may, in some Turkish dialects, be initially stressed, does not necessarily point to a “vormalige Kontraktionslänge” (against Ad. 6) because:

- there are many “Kontraktionslängen” in Turkish which, however, never influence the stress;
- the initial stress can also result from the Turkish vocative intonation, which cannot be identified on the basis of a dictionary item without a broad textual context;
- the initial stress fairly often occurs in designations of relatives like *'hala* ‘aunt = the sister of one’s father’, *'teyze* ‘aunt = the sister of one’s mother’, and the word *çocuk* surely belongs here semantically, so that its stress might have been shifted in some dialects by analogy with other words in this group.

Adamović’s evolutionary chain of phonetic and morphological variants (*çocuk* << *çağā*, see above), too, is not readily acceptable. Some words are omitted in his paper, even if they look very much like serious candidates for membership in the same word family, e.g. Uzbek *çoçaq* ‘penis (only of children)’ (UAT 183); Trksh.dial. *čucuk* (Artvin) ‘civciv/ chick’ (DS 1023) ~ *cūçik* (Hakkâri) ‘serçe /

sparrow' (ibidem). It would not be an easy task, indeed, to derive all of them from *çağa* 'child' or to show that none of them is etymologically connected with *çocuk* 'child'. What is still worse, Adamović does not even mention another important word, viz. *çoluk* – one which was first attested in Old Turkic with the collective meaning 'family; children; helpers' (Ajdarov 1971: 365) and is being combined, in modern Turkish, with *çocuk* into a hendiadys *çoluk çocuk* 'home-folks, family'. The phrase closely resembles another Turkish syntagm, namely *delik deşik* 'full of <riddled with> holes' which clearly is a combination of two phonetic variants of one and the same word. One cannot but wonder whether the same could be said of *çoluk çocuk*, even if *-c-* in *çocuk* in lieu of an expected **çoşuk* (like *deşik*) would then require an additional explanation.

The fourth problem connected with Adamović's evolutionary chain is the **-ağ-* > **-aw-* > **-o^w-* > **-ō-* > *-o-* shift. It is true, there exist some examples for the *-ğ-* > *-v-* and the *-v-* > *-ğ-* changes in Ottoman Turkish linguistic history. Both shifts seem to have begun in the 14th century. However, it has never been anything more than a tendency and therefore not in a position to develop into an exceptionless phonetic law. The result is that *-ğ-* variants constantly appear alongside their *-v-* alternatives which, however, never evolve into *-o-* ~ *-ō-* variants.² Two examples:

- Ott. *düvlek* (14th c.) 'small or unripe melon' (DKK) = *düglek* ~ *düylek* (16th c.) id. (GHP 281, 282);
- Ott. *üveyik* (1668) 'wild turtle dove' (TSU 203) = *ögeyik* (1680) id. (Men. 535) = *ögeyik* ~ *öveyik* (1838) id. (Hind. 84b) = modern Trksh. *üveyik* id.

Unlike these examples (all being really attested in philological sources) the alleged *-w-* variants of **çağcık* seem to be unknown to any Ottoman author. On the other hand, the words *düvlek* and *üveyik* have, unlike Adamović's **çağ(a)cık*, never yielded an *-o-* ~ *-ō-* variant (like *çocuk*). Let us sum up:

		<i>*çağ(a)cık,</i> <i>*çawcık</i>	<i>düglek, düvlek</i>
1.	The <i>-g-</i> variant	non-attested	attested
2.	The <i>-v-</i> variant	non-attested	attested
3.	The <i>-o-</i> variant	attested	non-attested

² There are many Turkish words with *-ağ-* and *-av-* like *çağanoz* 'carcinus (a genus of crabs)', *tavuk* 'chicken, hen' and so on but they never yield *-o-* variants (no **çonoz* or **tok* arose out of *çağanoz* and *tavuk*). Even words with a labial vowel like *boğa* 'bull' and *Boğacık* (name of a village in Çorum Province) do not yield *-o-* forms like **bo* or **Bocuk* and so on.

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As can easily be seen, the postulated evolution of an unattested **çağacık* into *çocuk* has little in common with the attested $g > v$ shift. It is rather an *ad hoc* idea, valid for one word (*çocuk*) only.

And here we come to still another problem connected with the etymology under discussion. We have the form *çocuk* in modern literary Turkish and a form like *çacuk* in Anatolian Turkish dialects. But there is no place for *çacuk* in Adamović's chain, in which the rounded suffix vowel *-u-* is explained by the labialization of the stem vowel (*ço-* < **çağ-*).

In other words, we actually have three main forms at our disposal: *çağa*, *çacuk* and *çocuk*, all three with the same meaning 'child'. Adamović constructs a relatively long chain (as many as five links) of unattested variants in order to connect *çağa* to *çocuk*, without allowing for *çacuk* and – worse still – for words like *çoluk* 'children', *çucuk* 'chick' or *cüçik* 'sparrow' (see above).

In addition, Adamović's formulations are sometimes at odds with each other, cf. the following statements, both on the same page:

"In den Mundarten, in denen sich \check{g} zu w wandelt, kommen kontrahierte Formen mit Labialvokal wie *çova*, *çoa*, *çoğa*, *çoğ* u.dgl. zustande. [...] Eine von den kontrahierten Formen hat in Verbindung mit dem Diminutivsuffix *-cuk* das Wort *çocuk* 'Kind' ergeben.

Den phonetischen Entwicklungsweg des Wortes *çocuk* 'Kind' kann man sich im Prinzip folgendermaßen vorstellen: *çağacık* → *çağcık* → *çawcık* → *ço^ocuk* → *çöcuk* → *çocuk*." (Ad. 6).

The former part of this quotation calls a **çova+cuk* (or the like) the etymon of *çocuk*. The latter part (following immediately after the former one) calls **çağacık*, i.e. a diminutive form < *çağa* the etymon. None of them explains forms like *çacuk* or *çoluk*.

Besides, the existence of phonetic variants like *çoğa* and *çoğ* shows that the rounded stem-vowel can also appear without the prior $\check{g} > w$ shift, contrary to what is suggested in the latter part of the quotation.

Nevertheless, the idea of *çağa* being involved in the evolution of this word family still seems reasonable and worthy of consideration since it probably offers the best solution to the problem of why some members of this family have *a* instead of the prevailing *o* (or *u*) in the stem syllable.

Let us try to outline an evolutionary scheme thus:³

[A] The derivational basis was a Proto-Tkc. stem **çöl'*, meaning 'little, small; young'.

³ For comments concerning the specific phases see below.

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[B] In the course of time two phonetic variants showed up: $*\zeta\bar{o}\zeta^4$ and $*\zeta\bar{o}r$ (or $*\zeta\bar{o}r'$?).

[C] As a result of a $*\zeta - \zeta > * \zeta - \zeta$ assimilation⁵ the variant $*\zeta\bar{o}\zeta$ appeared whose reflexes are Turkish dialectal verbs: $\zeta o\zeta et-$ ~ $\zeta o\zeta ka-$ ~ $\zeta o\zeta li-$ (Artvin) ‘çocuk emeklemek, sürünmek, yürümeğe çabalamak / to crawl on all fours’ (DS 1256).

[D] In some reflexes of $*\zeta\bar{o}\zeta$ (e.g. $\zeta o\zeta$, $\zeta o\zeta$, $\zeta u\zeta$, $\zeta u\zeta$) the vowel – surrounded by two palatal consonants – sporadically became palatal, as in Trksh.dial. $\zeta\bar{o}c\bar{i}k$ (Balkan dialects) ‘enfant, fils’ (Kakuk 1972: 274; Hazai 1960: 187, 218); $\zeta\bar{i}c\bar{i}k$ (Afyonkarahisar) ‘meyve ve sebzelerin en küçüğü / the smallest fruit or vegetable’ (DS 1024).⁶

[E] The word $\zeta o\zeta uk$ ‘child’, being one of the derivatives of $*\zeta\bar{o}\zeta$, became associated with the Trksh.dial. $\zeta a\zeta a$ id. which led to the formation of the contaminated form $\zeta a\zeta uk$ id. in Anatolian Turkish dialects.

Now, phases [A] and [B] deserve some additional explanation:

ad [A]:

- The vowel length in $*\zeta\bar{o}l'$ is suggested by the Oghuz intervocalic consonant voicing, i.e. $\zeta o\zeta uk < * \zeta\bar{o}\zeta uk (< * \zeta\bar{o}\zeta < * \zeta\bar{o}\zeta < * \zeta\bar{o}l')$.

- The reconstructed meaning $*\text{‘little, small; young’}$ well matches numerous modern senses that purport to be quite different, like, for instance, MKaşgarî $\zeta o\zeta uk$ ‘suckling pig’ (DLT 94); Trksh.dial. $\zeta u\zeta uk$ ‘chick’ ~ $c\bar{u}\zeta ik$ ‘sparrow’ (see above); Uzb. $\zeta o\zeta a\zeta$ ‘penis (only of children)’ (see above); Tuvinian $\zeta\bar{o}l u\zeta$ ‘not very..., not really...’ (TvR 578) ~ $\zeta o\zeta uk$ (not $*\zeta\bar{o}l u\zeta$?) ‘little, small’ (TvR 577). Besides cf. Trksh.dial. $\zeta o\zeta$ (Ankara) ‘genç / young’ (DS 1003).

ad [B]:

- The emergence of $*\zeta\bar{o}\zeta < * \zeta\bar{o}l'$ can easily be explained as a reflex of sigmatism. On the other hand, the emergence of $*\zeta\bar{o}r$ (? $*\zeta\bar{o}r'$) remains unclear. Emotional variation? Anyway, we have at our disposal examples of $\zeta o\zeta r (< * \zeta\bar{o}r)$ meaning ‘small’, like the Trksh.dial. phrase $\zeta o\zeta r \zeta\bar{o}p$ (Amasya) ‘ufak tefek çöp, kırıntı / little sliver, small crumb’ (DS 1271). Cf. also Ott. $\zeta o\zeta r \zeta o\zeta p$ [!; = $\zeta\bar{o}p$?] ‘wood shavings; bush’ and the syntagm $\zeta o\zeta r d a n \zeta o\zeta p t a n$ [!; = $\zeta\bar{o}p t e n$?] $o\zeta l a n e v$ ‘hut made of brushwood, wooden hut, chalet / (Italian:) baracca di frasche e spine’ (Men.

⁴ The question of the sigmatic ($*l' > * \zeta$) or lambdaic ($* \zeta > *l$) interpretation of the data is insignificant in our context.

⁵ There were no conditions for such an assimilation in $d e\zeta i k$, attested in the above-mentioned hendiadys $d e\zeta i k$.

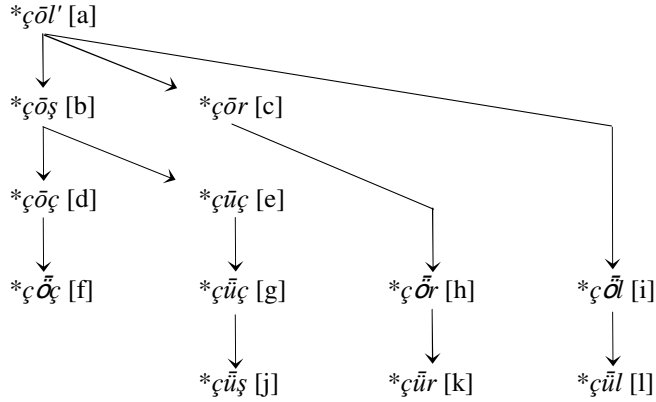
⁶ The fact that also $*\zeta\bar{o}l'$ produced palatal reflexes, e.g. Ott. $\zeta\bar{o}l p e$ ‘schwach, niedrig’ (RWb III 2044), points additionally to the palatal pronunciation of the Proto-Tkc. $*l'$.

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I 1674sq.) – both the morphological structure of the Ottoman phrase and its Italian explanation suggest a substantival meaning of *çor*, approximately ‘little branch, twig, wither, switch, brushwood’. Probably, also Kipchak *çor* ‘hastalık / illness, disease’ and *çorlu* ‘hasta / ill, sick’ (Caferoğlu 1931: 42, 46) belong to this word family.

• Moreover, this **çōr* makes it possible to connect *çocuk* with the Orkhon Turkic title *çor* ~ *çur* which also had another morphological variant, namely *çoçuk*. We postulated an original meaning ‘junior’ for this title (St. 85sq.).

The evolution of the phonetic variants of the stem seems to have been as follows:



Examples of reflexes:

[a] Trksh.dial. *çol çocuğ* (Kars) ‘çoluk çocuk / children, family’ (DS 1271); Orkhon Tkc. *çoluk* ‘family; children; helpers’ (Ajdarov 1971: 365).

[b] Trksh.dial. *çoşka* (Adana, İçel) ‘domuz yavrusu / piglet’ (DS 1274).

[c] Kipchak *çor* ‘hastalık / illness, disease’ ~ *çorlu* ‘hasta / ill, sick’ (Caferoğlu 1931: 42, 46); Trksh.dial. *çor çöp* (Amasya) ‘ufak tefek çöp, kırıntı / little sliver, small crumb’ (DS 1271).

[d] Trksh. *çocuk* ‘child’; Azerb. and Trksh.dial. *çoçka* (İzmir, Amasya) ‘bebek, çocuk / baby, child’ (DS 1034); Trksh.dial. *çoçet-* ~ *çoçka-* ~ *çoçli-* (Artvin) ‘çocuk emeklemek, sürünmek, yürümeğe çabalamak / to crawl on all fours’ (DS 1256).

[e] Trksh. dial. *cūçik* (Hakkâri) ‘serçe / sparrow’ (DS 1023).

[f] Trksh.dial. *çöçe* (İstanbul) ‘kümes hayvanlarının yavrusu, civciv / chick’ (DS 1023); *çöçük* (İsparta) ‘küçük çocuk / little child’ (ADM I 162)

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[g] Trksh.dial. *çüçük* (Afyonkarahisar) ~ *çüçük* (İçel) ‘meyve ve sebzelerin en küçüğü / the smallest fruit or vegetable’ (DS 1024) = *cüçük* (Maraş, Niğde) ‘küçük, körpe / little; young, fresh’ (DS 1021sq.) ~ (Sivas) ‘serçe / sparrow’ (ibidem) ~ (Gaziantep) ‘ufak boylu kuş / small bird’ (AD II 36) ~ (Burdur, Edirne, etc.) ‘tomurcuk / bud’ (DS 1023) ~ (Denizli, İzmir, etc.) ‘filiz, çil / sprig, sprout’ (ibidem) ~ (Ordu, Giresun, etc.) ‘meyve ve sebzelerin en küçüğü / the smallest fruit or vegetable’ (DS 1023); *cücü* (Denizli, Sivas) ‘kısık boylu, cüce / short, small-sized, midget’ ~ (Kars) ‘böcek / beetle, insect’ ~ (Sinop) ‘küçük cins darı / genus of small-sized millet’ (DS 1021); Ott. *cüce* (1603) ‘Zwerg’ (MThP II 103).

[h] Trksh.dial. *çörü* (Çorum, Maraş) ~ *çörüş* (Bolu) ~ *çörüşük* (Çorum) ‘hastalıklı, dertli, illetli / sickish’ (DS 1272).

[i] Ott. *çölpe* ‘schwach, niedrig’ (RWb III 2044).

[j] Ott. *cüje* (14th - 15th c.) ‘civciv, yavru / chick’ (TS 780)

[k] Trks.dial. *cürük* (İstanbul, Zonguldak) ‘kuş yavrusu / nestling, chick’ (DS 1023).

[l] Trksh.dial. *cülük* (Uşak, Çorum, Adana, İçel, etc.) ‘kümes hayvanlarının yavrusu, civciv / chick’ (DS 1023).

Although we certainly did not manage to collect all the lexical material possible either in the 1985 paper or here, and some elements of the scheme given above are less sure than the others, it is nevertheless possible to pose some questions on the basis of what we have collected:

- Some groups of reflexes are attested more sporadically than other groups, e.g. [i], [j], [k], [l]. Should this fact be explained by our insufficient knowledge of the lexis or by some other reasons, such as limited geographical range of a given phonetic variant (e.g. in [k] and [l]) or low productivity of some suffixes (e.g. in [i])?
- To what extent is the **çöl’ > *çör* change realistic?
- Does the Trksh.dial. *çala* (İstanbul) ‘bebek, çocuk / baby, child’ (DS 1033) result from a contamination of *çağa* ‘child’ with a reflex of **çöl’* or maybe rather with another Trkc. word with the same meaning, namely *bala* ?
- Is it possible to determine isoglosses connecting specific Turkic derivatives and their phonetic variants with specific areas?
- Does the long list of phonetic variants suggest that the etymon of Trksh. *çocuk* ‘child’ can probably be more easily found in a language beyond Turkic?

There can be no doubt, this word family still deserves our attention and will possibly be a cause of further discussion in the future.

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