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Dominancy in Yakut an Historical Approach

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Abstract: Although dominancy is not a characteristic feature of Turkic, traces of this phenomenon can already be observed from the Old Turkic period. It is also represented in modern Yakut in a great number of cases, see e.g. *-Ān*, *-ĀhXn*, *-X̄r*, *-X̄*, etc. In present paper these derivational elements will be discussed from a historical point of view in order to present how dominancy could be developed and gained ground in modern Yakut.

On the base of the analysed Yakut material, a possible explanation for the dominancy of the Old Turkic derivational elements *-X̄s* and *-Xn* also will be outlined.

Key words: Turcology, Yakut language, historical linguistics, morphology, dominant suffixes

1. Introduction

It is a general statement in Turcology that in derivation or inflection stems do not undergo a change, and there are practically no morphophonological rules that could induce such changes. In sources from the Old Turkic period, only some exceptions to this rule can be observed. For example, the oblique stem of the demonstrative/personal "pronoun *ol* 'that; he, she, it' is *an*^o,¹ cf. *anda* 'there (Loc.)', *aŋa* 'to that; to him/her/it (Dat.)'. In the case of the Old Turkic morphological system, the same can also be seen: the regular correspondences are the majority. The derivational elements, for instance, join the stem with or without a so-called linking sound,² and do not cause any change in it.

¹The sign ^o is used for both any possible segment of a word and a highly reduced, uncertain vowel.

²The term "linking sound" is considerably misleading, implying that the sound in question is not an organic part of the suffix, which is, in most cases, not true for native Turkic elements. Despite this ambiguity, this term perfectly describes the function of this sound (binds the suffix to the stem) and will be used

See the following examples:

(1) *-(X)m*

ölüm ‘death’ ← *öl-* ‘to die’

yem ‘food; animal fodder’ ← *ye-* ‘to eat’

(2) *-(X)g*

katig ‘hard, firm, tough’ ← *kat-* ‘to be hard, firm, tough’

yamag ‘a patch’ ← *yama-* ‘to patch (something *Acc.*)’

(3) *-gA*

bilgä ‘a wise man’ ← *bil-* ‘to know’

kis°ga ‘short’ ← *kis°-* ‘to compress, squeeze, pinch’

(4) *-mA*

ägmä ‘the arch, or vault, in a house’ ← *äg-* ‘to bend (something *Acc.*); to bow’

kalıma ‘balcony’ ← *kalı-* ‘to rise in the air; to jump’

On the other hand, some suffixes, which behave “irregularly” at first sight, appear in the Old Turkic corpus as dominant: the initial sound of the given suffix replaces the stem-final one.³ Here, not the entire system of dominancy in Old Turkic, but only some common and well-known examples are cited:

(5) *-Xn*

uzun ‘long’ ← *uza-* ‘to be, or become long, or long drawn out’

tükün ‘sterile’ ← *tükä-* ‘to come to an end, finish’

(6) *-Xš*

alkış ‘praise; blessing’ ← *alka-* ‘to praise’

ülüş ‘share, portion’ ← *ülä-* ‘to divide (something *Acc.*) into shares and distribute (them to people *Dat.*)’

Although the phenomena presented under points (5) and (6) are well-known and the morphophonological rules of dominancy are clearly described in the Turcological literature,⁴ the possible background(s) and

throughout this paper. Cf. Erdal 2004: §2.51 for further notes. In the literature, “linking sound” is also referred to as “union sound”.

³The term “dominancy” was first used by Clauson 1972: xxxix, later on it was adapted by scholars, see e.g. Erdal 1979: 87, Erdal 1991: §3.103, but it has not gained ground in modern Turcology for its importance.

As for the signing method of dominancy in suffixes, I follow the method of Erdal *loc. cit.*

⁴Cf. Erdal 1991: §3.103, 3.107. Only 15 derivatives in *-Xš* and 5 in *-Xn* show the phenomenon of dominancy in the Old Turkic corpus (Erdal *op. cit.* 262, 300).

root cause(s) of them, in spite of all previous efforts, could not be convincingly outlined.

Besides Turkic, I will briefly present the phenomenon of Literary Mongol showing differences in certain points. Although it is also a characteristic feature of Mongolic that the stem does not undergo a change in derivation, there are a greater proportion of suffixes that behave dominantly. On the other hand, dominancy may appear in derivational elements with initial consonants, or in stems ending in a consonant. See the following examples:

(7) -gAn

utagan 'smoke' ← *uta-* 'to smoke'

idegen 'food' ← *ide-* 'to eat'

(8) -GAy

kajagay 'curved, oblique' ← *kajayi-* 'to bend'

butarkay 'dismembered' ← *butara-* 'to fall to pieces'

(9) -ltA

kasulta 'subtraction' ← *kasu-* 'to delete'

ergilte 'turn' ← *ergi-* 'to turn'

(10) +rkA-

čilegerke- 'to be ill' ← *čilegen* 'illness, ailment'

omorga- 'to be proud' ← *omog* 'pride'

2. Dominancy in Yakut derivational morphology⁵

Although dominancy is not a genetic feature of Turkic, the modern Yakut language presents a great number of suffixes where this phenomenon can be observed. Without completeness, I present here a list of the most well-known Yakut deverbal nominal derivational elements which behave dominantly. Dominant suffixes of Turkic origin being: *-Āk* (11),⁶ *-XAx* (5), *-Āk* (4), *-Ān* (9), *-Ār* (45), *-Ā* (178), *-Ās* (2); and of Mongolic origin being: *-Āl* (2), *-Ān* (30), *-ĀsXn* (22), *-Āt* (4), *-Ār* (10).

Since the system of verbs in Yakut differs from those of other Turkic

⁵Because of size limitations, I am only focussing on the deverbal nominal derivational system of Yakut with the indication that the following statements are valid not only in the field of derivation, but also inflection.

⁶The number of examples showing dominancy in the analysed corpus is indicated in brackets.

languages, I will describe it briefly before the explanation of dominance. The final segment of a Yakut verb is determined by strict rules, thus only the following cases are permitted: $^{\circ}C$ -,⁷ $^{\circ}\bar{A}$ -, $^{\circ}XA$ -. If a verb originally ends in a short vowel, an anorganic element /y/ is attached to it, see e.g. *utuy*- ‘to sleep’ ~ Old Turkic *udī*- id. and *xamīy*-, *xomuy*- ‘to collect’ ~ Literary Mongol *xamu*- id. From the point of view of phonology, these stems belong to the group of verbs ending in a consonant. However, they behave differently in derivation. A well-defined set of rules makes it easy to predict whether this anorganic /y/ falls off or remains intact in derivation.⁸

In a general overview of the Yakut deverbal nominal derivational system, one can detect significant differences in the historical development of certain elements: suffixes going back to the same phonetic shape may behave differently from the point of view of dominance. For instance, while some suffixes of Mongolic origin presenting the segment $-gA^{\circ}$ in their proto-form behave dominantly, others of the same kind are non-dominant.

2.1. Differing rules in suffixes of Mongolic origin

The original Mongolic suffix-initial segment $-gA^{\circ}$ is almost always reduced to a long vowel ($-\bar{A}^{\circ}$) in modern Yakut. In the following points, three such suffixes are cited throughout as examples of every possible way of joining:

- (11) $-(\bar{A})\check{c}\check{c}X \sim$ Mongolic $-gA\check{c}i$
ärdäččī ‘rower’ ← *ärt*- ‘to row by oar’
atīlāččī ‘salesman, merchant’ ← *atīlā*- ‘to sell; to trade’
kürüöččü ‘fugitive’ ← *kürüö*- ‘to run away, to depart’
jänjīyāččī ‘investigator, spy’ ← *jänjīy*- ‘to search, to inspect’
 (12) $-\bar{A}hXn \sim$ Mongolic $-gAsUn$
kigāhin ‘instigation’ ← *kik*- ‘to incline, to insist, to advice’
samsāhin ‘prefix, extension, insert’ ← *samsā*- ‘to put, to add’
bigāhin ‘feeling’ ← *bigiä*- ‘to feel, to perceive’

⁷ The verb-final consonant is also determined by strict rules, it can only be /y r n s t x/ or /l/.

⁸ These rules are listed throughout examples in Grigor’ev 1951. Although the description is precise, the author does not take certain diachronic aspects into consideration, thus his analysis remains incomplete.

kärčähin ‘a small cutting off’ ← *kärčiy-* ‘to chop (off), to chip’

(13) *-Ān* ~ Mongolic *-gAn*

kūrān ‘discord, noise, uproar’ ← *kūr-* ‘to rise; to be excited’

kükürdān ‘covering’ ← *kükürdā-* ‘to cover’

mārilān ‘chatterer, grouchy’ ← *māriiä-* ‘to chatter, to blab’

iädān ‘fuss, haste; confusion’ ← *iädäy-* ‘to fuss; to be disturbed’

saxsān ‘reasoning, interpretation’ ← *saxsiy-* ‘to be afraid of, to shake’

It can be seen from the examples in point (11) that the initial vowel of the suffix *-(Ā)ččX* is not dominant, namely the base verbs do not undergo a change in derivation. On the contrary, the examples of *-ĀhXn* and *-Ān* in points (12)–(13) clearly present the phenomenon of dominancy: the stem-final segments $^{\circ}XA-$, $^{\circ}Ay-$ and $^{\circ}Xy-$ fall off and are replaced by the initial vowel of the given suffix.⁹ According to the above-mentioned examples, it is worth raising the question: what causes the differences if the initial segment of the given suffixes can be traced back to the same phonetic ancestor; and what caused the appearance of dominancy?

The morphophonological differences between these suffixes can be interpreted from a historical point of view: the suffix *-(Ā)ččX*, not showing the phenomenon of dominancy, is one of the most productive deverbal nominal elements of modern Yakut. In my corpus, based on Pekarskij (1907–1930), there are 606 derivations. These words in *-(Ā)ččX* are, in most cases, recent derivatives fitting the modern Yakut grammatical system in a morphophonologically regular way. On the contrary, the derivatives in *-ĀhXn* and *-Ān* cannot be considered modern forms. They were formed in the past and developed their modern shape due to contraction. For instance, the modern Yakut word *iädān* ‘fuss, haste; confusion’ came into being from the Old Yakut form **igädägän*, which corresponds to Literary Mongol *egedegen* ‘sour, coagulated’ ← *egede-* ‘to turn sour, curdle, coagulate’ + *-gAn*. The Yakut verb *iädäy-* ‘to fuss; to be disturbed’ is a modern counterpart of the Literary Mongol verb *egede-*. On the other hand, there is no direct link between the modern Yakut words *iädān* and *iädäy-*; the history of the two words has

⁹Because it is identical to the suffix-initial vowel, the morphophonological processes cannot be investigated for verbs ending in $^{\circ}\bar{A}-$.

diverged. In addition, it is also plausible that they were borrowed from Mongolic independently, and thus *iädān* has to be deleted from the list of inner derivatives of Yakut.¹⁰ The relationship between the cited data can be summed up as follows:

Literary Mongol	<i>egedegen</i>	←	<i>egede-</i>	<i>-gAn</i>
	~		~	~
Old Yakut	<i>*igädügän</i>	←	<i>*igädä-</i>	<i>*-gAn</i>
Modern Yakut	<i>iädān</i>	←	<i>iädäy-</i>	<i>-Ān</i>

To complicate things a bit further, according to Pekarskij's dictionary, the suffix *-ĀhXn* was not a very productive element in the past, however it gained ground during the socialist period in several neologisms substituting the Russian suffixes *-hue* and *-ауця*. In these neologisms, the creators of the new forms naturally took the synchronic morphophonological rules of *-ĀhXn* and built up the derivatives according to the only "virtually" visible rules of dominance.

2.2. Dominancy in suffixes of Turkic origin

Similarly to the examples cited in point 2.1, suffixes of Turkic origin also present the phenomenon of dominance. The so-called aorist, well-known from all the other Turkic languages (c.f. *-(V)r* and *-yUr*), appears in Yakut in two morphophonologically different forms: after stems of the type *°C-* and *°Ay-* the short *-Ar*, and after *°Xy-*, *°Ā-* and *°XA-* the long *-Ār* with a dominant vowel. See the following examples:

(14) *-Ar*, *-Ār* ~ Old Turkic *-(V)r*; *-yUr*

biärär 'giving, gift, alms' ← *biär-* 'to give, to transfer'

kilär 'shining; smooth' ← *kiläy-* 'to be glossy, to shine by smoothness'

¹⁰It is very difficult to determine whether such a form, where the stem is also of Mongolic origin, is an inner Yakut derivation, or a simple borrowing of a word derived in Mongolic. Nevertheless, it must not be left out of consideration that the number of derivatives in *-Ān* és *-ĀhXn* in Pekarskij's dictionary is few (not more than 107 and 62 of each). On the other hand, there are clearly inner derivatives from stems of Turkic origin, see e.g. *bulāsīn* 'the impulse of mixing' ← *bulā-* 'to mix anything uniform, to stir slowly, to intermix, to mix up; to knead; to interfere (to disturb); to mix up (to lead into confusion)', and Old Turkic *bulga-* 'to stir (a liquid, etc.); to confuse, disturb (someone), produce a state of disorder'.

muḡūr ‘dull; completed; end’ ← *muḡā-* ‘to reach the limit, to end’

tölūr ‘payment, tribute’ ← *tölüö-* ‘to pay (out); to pay back’

bulkūr ‘mixing, shaking; confusion’ ← *bulkuy-* ‘to mix, to shake (up)’

The dominancy of the aorist, similarly to the above-mentioned suffixes of Mongolic origin such as *-Ān* and *-ĀhXn*, can also be interpreted diachronically. The aorist originally joined to stems ending in $^{\circ}Xy-$, $^{\circ}\tilde{A}-$ or $^{\circ}XA-$ in the long form $*.yVr$, which later resulted a dominant suffix in Yakut due to contraction. This phenomenon then became general in modern derivations, which was strengthened by the Mongolic, most strongly the Buryat, influence, where the contraction of certain segments of suffixes and the development of dominancy on the base of these contracted suffixes are also typical.¹¹

Accordingly, the long dominant vowel of the modern Yakut aorist has developed from $*\tilde{A}.yVr$, $*XA.yVr$ or $*X.yVr$.¹² The two fold representation of the aorist (short *A* : long dominant $\tilde{X}$) can be seen in the case of another formative, namely the converb in *-A* and *$\tilde{X}$* , which are etymologically related to the Old Turkic converbial endings *-A* and *-yU*.¹³ The possible joining variants being as follow:

¹¹See the morphophonological rules of Buryat in Poppe 1960: §1.16, and the following examples: a) *honīn* (~ Literary Mongol *sono-yin*) ‘of the gadfly’ ← *hono* ‘gadfly’ and genitive *+īn* (~ Literary Mongol *+yin*), where the long vowel of the genitive case marker developed from $^{\circ}yV$; and b) *xarūl* ‘sentry, watchman’ (~ Literary Mongol *karagul*) ~ *xara-* ‘to look’ + *-ūl* (~ Literary Mongol *-gUl*), where the long vowel developed from $^{\circ}gV$ (Poppe 1960: §4.13).

¹²For the examples in point (14), the base forms *muḡūr* < $*muḡā.yVr$, *tölūr* < $*tölüö.yVr$ and *bulkūr* < $*bulku.yVr$ can be reconstructed. Thus it would be logical to indicate the relationship between these words and the base verbs not by the sign ←, but ~.

¹³There is a third type of converbial ending, namely *-X*, that belongs here etymologically. It originated from the Old Turkic converbs *-I* and *-yU*. See e.g. *bütāri* ‘to the end’ ← *bütār-* ‘to end, to finish, to conclude; to work off; to manage, to succeed; to help to do a service; to destroy; to strike, to conquer’ and *bičigili* ‘separately’ (< $*bičigilī$ < $*bičigilā.yV$) ← *bičigilā-* ‘to make a pattern, decoration; to pay attention, to examine attentively’. This converb is not productive in modern Yakut, and can only be found in petrified forms. The difference between *-X* and *$\tilde{X}$* (if both come from *-yU*) are diachronic in nature:

(15) -A, - $\tilde{X}$ ~ Old Turkic -A, -yU

bisa ‘across; directly; excellently’ ← *bis-* ‘to cut (off); to harvest; to cut (dress)’

tiliyä ‘continuously, together’ ← *tiliy-* ‘to connect; to counterfeit’

liglaya ‘short; low’¹⁴ ← *liglay-* ‘to be low growth, with a short neck’

xolbū ‘together, in general; as a group’ ← *xolbō-*, *xolbuo-* ‘to connect, to attach; to include’

In point (16), the possible joining variations of another suffix of Turkic origin are represented by examples. The phenomenon of dominance also can be observed here, although in a different way. The long dominant vowel of the suffix has developed from the original -(X)g due to regular weakening of the guttural.

(16) - $\tilde{X}$ ~ Old Turkic -(X)g

bulū ‘finding; profit, income’ ← *bul-* ‘to find; to obtain’

irdī ‘study, research’ ← *irdä-* ‘to investigate, to search for’

ärbī ‘sawing; saw’ ← *ärbü-* ‘to saw (in two)’

in̄kiyī ‘search’ ← *in̄kiy-* ‘to search’

3. Conclusion

It is evident from the examples cited in points (14)–(16) that the development of dominance in the derivational system of modern Yakut can be interpreted diachronically as the contraction of the joining segments. In the following table all the possibilities are summed up:

original form	contracted form
°A-gA	° $\tilde{A}$
°A-gX	°XÓ
°XA-gA	°XA/ $\tilde{A}$
°XA-gX	°XA/XÓ
°X-gA	°XA/XÓ
°X-gX	°XÓ
°A-g	°XÓ
°XA-g	°XÓ
°X-yX	°XÓ
°XA-yX	°XÓ
°X-yX	°XÓ

the older derivatives show the shortening of the word final *° $\tilde{X}$ to °X.

¹⁴Semantic change from adverb to adjective can be seen frequently in Yakut.

Accordingly, it can be presumed that the phenomenon of dominancy in the Old Turkic morphological system is also “virtual” and can only be understood historically from a former, Proto-Turkic point of view; and this ambiguity is simply because, similarly to Yakut, words of different strata are compared. Finally a possible developmental pathway in Old Turkic is outlined:

(17) Old Turkic X ($\tilde{X}$?) <Proto-Turkic *A-CX

uzun < **uza-Cin*(V) ← *uza-*

ülüş < **ülä-Ciš*(V) ← *ülä*-¹⁵

(18) the origin of the derivatives

-*Xn* < *-(C)*Xn*(V)

(19) -*Xš* < *-(C)*Xš*(V)

¹⁵The duality of certain words in the historical corpus, namely that both *ülüş* and *üläš* can be observed in Old Turkic, clearly show the cohabitation of the old and recent derivatives.

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