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Mongolian Loanwords in the Figurative Words of the Yakut Language (Illustrated by Verbs of Body Parts)

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Abstract

The Yakut language is a Turkic language of the Uyghur group. It has a special place among the Turkic languages due to its archaic nature and unique characteristics of vocabulary and grammar. It is distinct from related Turkic languages by abundance of Mongolian parallels. Figurative verbs take a special place among Mongolian loanwords in Yakut due to their quantitative prevalence and specific nature as compared to other sections of Yakut vocabulary. It is of great importance to study Yakut-Mongolian contacts further to reveal the historical development of the Yakut language. The purpose of this study is to find common and specific semantic characteristics of Yakut figurative verbs and their Mongolian parallels. It is the first study to undertake this comparison. Verbs with figurative meaning borrowed from Mongolian are studied by example of verbs denoting parts of human body in comparison to their Mongolian parallels. Common and specific features are revealed in terms of semantics. 20 percent of linguistic units fully coincide. Concretization of word semantics in Yakut shows a high rate. It has also been revealed that Mongolian loanwords with figurative meaning are involved in description of practically all parts of body, thus forming a separate microsystem of somatisms in the Yakut verbal system.

Keywords: Figurative words, Somatism, the Yakut language, Yakut-Mongolian parallels.

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Introduction

The Yakut language is a Turkic language of the Uyghur group. It has a special place among the Turkic languages due to its archaic nature and unique characteristics of vocabulary and grammar. It is distinct from related Turkic languages by abundance of Mongolian parallels that were first revealed by Professor G.F. Miller. Since then they had been touched upon incidentally, now being the subject of special studies.

Wilhelm Schott, the author of the first research paper on the Yakut language (1843), stated that “the Yakut were separated from their Turkic relative tribes for a long time, having though very close contacts with the Mongol”. He also emphasizes both abundance of Mongolian loanwords and their “being most often used absolutely unchanged” (Schott, 1843, p.334). O.N. Boetlingk in “On the Language of the Yakut” concluded that Yakut is an ancient Turkic language that further borrowed a great deal of Mongolian words as well as some grammatical forms (Boetlingk, 1989, p.52). 452 (25,9%) out of 1748 indissoluble Yakut stems analyzed by V.V. Radloff are of Mongolian origin (Rassadin, 1980, p.14).

Phonetically, most Mongolian parallels in Yakut have kept characteristics of the medieval Mongolian language. This group of the Yakut vocabulary is considered as Mongolian loanwords, i.e. Yakut borrowings from Mongolic languages. Nevertheless, the question of the origin of loanwords is still open since most Mongolian loanwords in Yakut are neutral to modern Mongolic languages. Parallels to those words are represented in all Mongolic languages and are common Mongolic. However, some scholars note a number of Yakut-Buryat parallels (S. Kaluzhinskiy, V.I. Rassadin, N.N. Shirobokova).

In relation to verbs with figurative meaning in the Yakut language, V.I. Rassadin notes in his monograph “Mongolian-Buryat Loanwords in Turkic Languages of Siberia” that Yakut demonstrates a semantically specific group of figurative verbs that is very large (Rassadin, 1980, p.75). Stating that these verbs are generally characteristic for Mongolic languages, he specifies that among Turkic languages such verbs are only found in Yakut, Tuva, Tofalar, and Kyrgys, less in Altai, Khakass, Kazakh, Karakalpak, and a little in Uzbek, Tatar, and Bashkir, i.e. their presence is more pronounced in those languages that were strongly affected by Mongolian (Rassadin, 1980, p.75). E.I. Ubryatova points out the prevalence of Mongolian loanwords among Yakut figurative and onomatopoeic words. Their number in other sections of Yakut vocabulary is characterized as “isolated occurrences” (Ubryatova, 1960, p.261).

Thus, figurative verbs take a special place among Mongolian loanwords in Yakut due to their quantitative prevalence and specific nature as compared to other sections of Yakut vocabulary. It is of great importance to study Yakut-Mongolian contacts further to reveal the historical development of the Yakut language.

The purpose of this study is to find common and specific semantic characteristics of Yakut figurative verbs and their Mongolian parallels. It is the first study to undertake this comparison.

Methods

The study is based on general research principles: analysis, synthesis, induction, analogy, and comparison, the principle of system and comparative analysis. The study is illustrated by material from “Great Dictionary of the Yakut Language” (2004-2016) (further, GDYL) and “Great Academic Mongolian-Russian Dictionary” in 4 volumes (2001-2004) (further, GAMRD).

Discussion

Initially, Yakut figurative verbs were classified according to the parts of body they characterize. It was found that most examples are related to the head. The three thematic groups are: 1) figurative verbs

characterizing part of head; 2) figurative verbs characterizing other parts of body; 3) figurative verbs characterizing figure. Each lexeme is illustrated by a parallel from the modern Mongolian language.

1) Figurative verbs characterizing part of head:

Head

Лыхай 'have a stocky body with the head thrown back', compare Mongolian **лүхайх** 'stout, stocky; solid'.

Олодуй 'look all sides, holding one's head up', compare Mongolian **олийх** 'pull one's neck forward; hold one's head up'.

Hair

Арбай 'disheveled, ruffled, tousled (of hair)'. In Yakut it is considered a Mongolic loanword (Rassadin, 1984). Compare Mongolian **арвайх** 'spread apart (of fingers); bristle up, stand on end (of hair); be disheveled; be ruffled (of hair)'.

Будьуруй 'curl, form curls, tendrils (of hair, green), compare Mongolian **буржийх** 'curl, wave'.

Сохсой 'bristle, tousle, look like a furry mound (of hair), compare Mongolian **согсойх** 'bristle, become tousled (of hair)'.

Сэрбэй 'be, look disheveled (of short cut, standing upright hair of a little girl)', compare Mongolian **сэрвийх** 'stand on end, bristle; get tousled'.

Face

Болтой 'have a small face with jutting cheeks', compare Mongolian **болтайа** 'stick out, jut out' (GDYL), compare Mongolian **бултга: бултга бултга хийх** 'keep leaning out, peep out (e.g. of a mouse) (GAMRD)'.

Дарбай 'expand, swell, swell up (of face)', compare Mongolian **дарвайх** 'have thick lips, big mouth'.

Малай 'stand out, catch the eye by a too wide, stout face', compare Mongolian **малийх** 'become, be broad-faced, with prominent cheekbones; be full-faced'.

Мардбай 'flabby, wide, fat (of face)', compare Mongolian **марзайх** 'smile, break into a smile' (GDYL), compare Mongolian **марчийх** 'be, become speckled', **марчийчихах марчийх-ийн нэгэнтээ** 'become speckled', **царай чинь марчийчихаж** 'your face became speckled' (GAMRD).

Мордой 'be ready to fight back being insulted or offended, look angry', compare Mongolian **морцгонох** 'screw, become wry (of face)'.

Мочой 'be chubby, smooth, oval, small (of face)', compare Mongolian **молцойх** 'of salient objects, e.g. a flower bud'.

Мэлтэй 'be, look round, wide (of face, full moon)', compare Mongolian **мэлтийх** 'overflow, be overflowed (with liquid); overflow, be filled with'.

Ньалбай 'be, look too flat, wide (of face)', compare Mongolian **нялхрах** 'become weak, tender, fragile', **бие нялхрах** 'become weak, tender (after giving birth or balneological treatment)'.

Ньяппай 'have a too flat face with thin eyes and flattened nose', compare Mongolian **навхайх** 'sink, get down, decrease'.

Ньоймой 'look unusually oblong in the lower part with lips rolled up into a tube and shallow cheeks (of one's face)', compare Mongolian **жомбойх** 'stick out, protrude (of lips)'.

Ньэлбэй 'swollen, puffy due to stress (of face)', compare Khalkha *нэли* 'get wide', Mongolian **дэлбийх** 'get wide, loose'.

Олой 'stand out by an elongated face with dumb, puzzled look', compare Mongolian **олийх** 'become squint-eyed'.

Холой 'having elongated face', compare Mongolian **голийх** 'become stout, fat, put on weight'.

Ears

Даллай 'be too big, wide, sticking out (of person's ears or animal's ears). compare Mongolian **дэлдийх** 'stick out, stand out; hang down (of ears)'.

Forehead

Лоппой 'swell, become swollen; have a bulged appearance, rise as a hill', compare Mongolian **томбойх** 'become bulged, rise above surface'.

Ньэлчэй 'having a wide and retreating forehead', compare Mongolian **няцлах** 'press, chop'.

Eyes

Бөлтөй 'protrude, buckle, bulge', compare Mongolian **бөлцийх** 'swell (of eyelids), bulge, stare (of eyes)'.

Nose

Лонсой 'large, big with the high bridge (of one's nose), compare Mongolian **лонхойх** 'be pot-bellied, look like a jug'. Divergent development of semantics occurs in the compared languages.

Сартай 'to be wide, flared, splayed on sides (e.g. nostrils)', **сартайх** 'flare (nostrils)'.

Сынтай 'turned up (of a nose). Compare Mongolian **шантайх**: 1) turned up (of a nose); snub one's nose; pull up; **шантайсан хамар** 'a turned up nose, a nose with a snout'; 2) wrinkle one's nose (e.g. when sneezing); 3) be angry, sulky.

Томтой 'be bulged, high (of nose)', compare Mongolian **томбойх** 'get bulged, stuck out, protrude'.

Cheeks

Хохой 'having hollow cheeks, look pinched', compare Mongolian **хонхойх** 'have a hollow; be hollow; get pinched; form a hollow; become hollow, sunken'.

Lips

Амчий 'have drawn-in lips (of a person with no front teeth), compare Mongolian **амцгар** 'with flat, thin lips, pressed, turned inside'; **амцгар амтай** а) 'with flat lips' б) 'incurved'; **амцгар ваар** 'flat tile (used for the hip put with the convexity down, forming a groove)'; **амцгар саахуу** 'flat-nosed tea pot, jug'.

Ньимий 1. 'press together, compress one's lips'; 2. *informal* 'stop talking, become silent, keep mum'; 'get quiet, calm down, die down (of nature)'; 3) *figurative* 'hide, seek shelter (of a person)'. Compare Mongolian **жимийх** 'press together, purse one's lips', Kazakh **жымыю** 'shrink', **жымы** 'become quiet, silent', Altai **тымы** 'keep silence, be silent; become quiet, calm down'.

Чорбой 'be sticking out (of lips)', compare Mongolian **жомбойх** 'sticking out, protruding; stick out, protrude (of lips)'; **жорбойх** 'bulged, stuck out; bulge, stick out (of lips)'.

Teeth

Ардьай 'show one's big and widely spaced teeth; have wide spaces, gaps', compare Mongolian **арзайх** 'show, bare one's teeth; be not smooth, rough; be coarse-haired'.

Орсой 'have a salient front tooth', compare Mongolian **орсойх** 'snaggle, irregular (of teeth)'.

2) Figurative verbs characterizing other parts of body:

Breast

Матай 'prominent due to bulging broad chest', compare Mongolian **матийх** 'bend, arch'.

Мэтэй 'stick out, protrude, bulge out (of chest)', compare Mongolian **мэтийх** 'bend, curve, arch' (GAMRD).

Belly

Лэскэй 1. 'stick out, protrude by a rounded shape (e.g. of a short person's belly)', 2. 'have a bulging belly'. Compare Mongolian **тэсгий** 'grow paunchy, stout; get swollen, blown'.

Fingers

Такый 'bend, hook (e.g. of fingers), compare Mongolian **тахийх** 'hog, bend, hook'.

Body

Огдой 'have a short body with raised shoulders, seem like that (of a long-legged person)'; 'be, look short (usually of clothes)', compare Mongolian **огдойх** 'be short, tight'.

Legs

Маадбай 'become bow-legged', compare Mongolian **майжийх** 'worn down at the heel, lopsided', compare Mongolian **майжгар** 1) 'crooked, bent'; 2) 'with legs curved due to old age, bow-legged' (GAMRD).

Ньяачай 'be, look crouched, with one's knees bent (e.g. under heavy weight), stand out by such look', compare Mongolian **налчийх** 'become short, stocky; flatten'.

3) Yakut figurative verbs characterizing one's body in general

Балбай 'get stout, widen (of an overweight person)'. In Mongolian **балхайх** 'get stout, overweight; grow wide, swell'.

Балтай 'look big, wide', compare Mongolian **балтайх** 'stumpy, stocky'.

Логлой 'rise as a hill', also describes appearance of a person 'stand out by a quite massive figure'. The dictionary of the Mongolian language gives just one meaning **логлойх** 'be plump, chubby'. However, native speakers also indicate the meaning 'rise as a hill' similar to Yakut.

Лысхай 'have a stout, stocky figure while being short', compare Mongolian **лухайх** 'plump, stumpy'.

Мохой 'shrink, contract, having a small stout, round figure', compare Mongolian **мохох**, Buryat **мохо**, Khalkha **моха**, Kyrgyz **мокко** 'become blunt'.

Мөлбөй 'fleshy, round, plump (of a woman)', compare Mongolian **мөлгөр** 'round, smooth'.

Ньалбай 'be or look swollen (of a person)', compare Mongolian **нялхрах** 'become weak, tender, fragile', **бие нялхрах** 'become weak, tender (after giving birth or balneological treatment)'.

Сэксэй 'dry up, become thin; wither, get old', compare Mongolian **сэгсийх**, Kalmyk **сегси** 'brush, stand on end (of hair)'.

Унньуй 'oblong, lanky (of a tall person)', compare Mongolian **унжих**, **унжийх** 'hang down'.

Ходьой ‘stand out by slenderness, hold oneself upright, become straight, draw oneself up’, compare Mongolian **годойх** ‘protrude, rise to a vertical position, erect (e.g. of a short tail); stick up’.

Хончой ‘stand erect tense, get straight (of a tall person)’, **хоруоба хончойбут** ‘he died, passed away’, compare Mongolian **гонзойх** ‘prolonged, oval. elongated, oblong’.

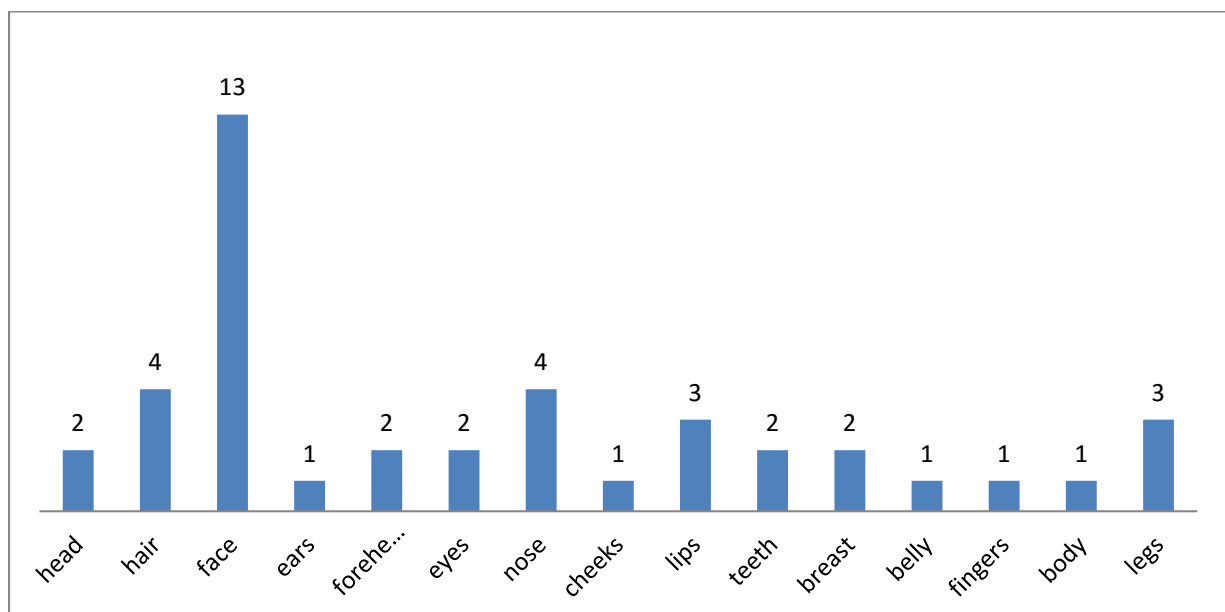


Figure 1. Body part words

Thus, 34 (64%) out of 53 analyzed figurative verbs refer to description of the head and its parts. Most figurative verbs characterizing parts of the head account for description of the face 13 (38%). It is the face that people first pay attention to as it reflects one’s personality. The face changes, transforms, gets older, reflects feelings and emotions.

It is noteworthy that figurative verbs borrowed from Mongolian are used to describe practically all parts of human body. One can say that they form a separate microsystem of somatisms in the verbal system of the Yakut language.

At the second stage of the research, the given figurative verbs of the Yakut language are compared with their parallels from Mongolian. Common and distinctive features are revealed in terms of semantics. When comparing, it is necessary to take into account a different phonetic aspect of Mongolian words in comparison to Yakut. Since the borrowing occurred orally, some sounds were substituted in the course of adaptation of loanwords due to specifics of the phonological system of the borrowing language, e.g.: *дьапсаан* ‘fortune’, compare Mongolian *jabsiyan*, Khalkha *жавшаа(н)*, Buryat *зabшaaн*, Mongolian *jabsi-* ‘succeed’ (Rassadin, 1980: 173), Mongolian *жавшаан* ‘good luck, success; benefit; opportunity, occasion’ (Mongolian-Russian Dictionary, p.176).

The analysis of Yakut figurative words and their Mongolian parallels showed convergent and divergent development of semantics in the languages under consideration. In convergent development of semantics of Yakut figurative verbs, linguistic units characterizing parts of body coincide fully and partially. The following parallels demonstrated full coincidence:

Балбай - балхайх

Даллай - дэлдийх

Логлой - логлойх

Лысхай - лухайх

Лэскэй - тэсгий

Малай - малийх

Мохой - мохох- мохо- моха- мокко

Сартай - сартайх

Сохсой - согсойх

Чорбой - жомбойх - жорбойх

Instances of partial coincidence were found when linguistic units partially differ in form and semantics. The analysis of semantic development of the given linguistic units enabled to classify Yakut figurative verbs into two directions: generalization and concretization of semantics. Concretization prevails among figurative verbs of the Yakut language:

Амчый - амцгар (амцгар амтай, амцгар ваар, амцгар саахуу). In Yakut, along with narrowing of semantic capacity of the Mongolian word, concretization in describing person's appearance occurs.

Ардый - арзайх. The first two meanings partially agree. In Yakut, qualitative and quantitative condition on teeth is added to the common seme "show one's teeth". Narrowing of semantic capacity is observed in the Yakut language.

Болтой - бултга: бултга бултга хийх. In Yakut, the meaning is concretized.

Будьуруй - буржийх. In Yakut, this word is represented as a somatism and a phytonym.

Лыхай - лухайх. The common seme "have a stocky body" is specified in Yakut.

Матай - матийх

Мөлбөй - мөлгөр. In Yakut, semantics is specified in terms of gender and age.

Мэтэй - мэтийх.

Ньяачай - налчийх.

Ньоймой - жомбойх

Ньэлбэй - дэлбийх. In Yakut, the meaning is specified, characterizing emotional and psychological state of a person.

Ньэлчэй - няцлах

Орсой - орсойх. While in Mongolian all teeth are described, the Yakut verb indicates the special position of one tooth.

Сэрбэй - сэрвийх. In Yakut, concretization of meaning occurs in terms of gender and specific age. Also, the type of hair (short) is specified.

Такый - тахийх

Томтой - томбойх

Холой - голийх

Хончой - гонзойх

Хохой - хонхойх. Resulting from narrowing of the semantic capacity, coincidence is only observed in a somatism.

Concretization in Yakut features gender, age, and psychological characteristics of a person.

Generalization is observed in the following words:

Бөлтөй - бөлцийх

Бүлтэй - бүттийх

In Yakut, these words can be used in respect of almost any object, whether in Mongolian they are used in respect of somatisms.

Divergent development of semantics occurs, when the formal and semantic structure and of analyzed languages does not agree.

Балтай - балтайх

Дарбай - дарвайх

Лонсой - лонхойх

Маадьай - майжийх

Мардьай - марзайх - марчийх (марчийчихах марчийх-ийн нэгэнтээ, царай чинь марчийчихаж)

Моччой - молцойх

Divergent development shows in expressing different artifacts. In Yakut, a face is described, whereas in Mongolian protruding objects, e.g. a flower bud, are described.

Мэлтэй - мэлтийх

Ньяппай навхайх

Няхчай - нагжайх

Огдой - огдойх

Олой - олийх

Сэксэй - сегси

Уннуй - унжих, унжийх

Ходьой - годойх

The analysis of semantic categories of the verbs under consideration suggests that the studied linguistic layer demonstrates the semantic category of polysemy. The Yakut language demonstrates either narrowing of extension of the semantic capacity of a word. Semantic capacity of Mongolian words is narrowed in the following Yakut verbs:

Арбай is considered to be a Mongolian loanword (Rassadin, 1980, p.75), compare Mongolian **арвайх**. The Mongolian verbs refers to both finders and hair, whether the Yakut figurative words is only used to describe hair.

In the following words meaning coincide but the meaning in Mongolian is wider:

Амчий - амцгар (амцгар амтай, амцгар ваар, амцгар саахуу)

Ардьай - арзайх. The first meanings partially agree.

Будьуруй - бүржийх. In Yakut, this word is represented as a somatism and a phytonym.

Сынтай - шантайх (шантайсан хамар)

Хохой - хонхойх. As a result of narrowing of the meaning capacity, agreement is only observed in the somatism.

Extension of the meaning capacity in Yakut is observed in the following words: **Ньалбай - нялхрах (бие нялхрах).** This verb is polysemantic in Yakut, in contrast to Mongolian, and shows four directions of semantic development: 1) spread, run, getting out of shape (e.g. during thawing); 2) of an artifact, be, look flattened, crushed, spread out (of something large); 3) description of person's physical condition – be, look too flat, wide (of face), stout (of a person); 4) description of the emotional and psychological condition of a person - become sentimental, be deeply moved, touched (e.g. due to excitement, playing up).

Ньимий - жимийх. The first meanings are equivalent.

Олодуй - олийх.

Conclusion

The focus of this paper was figurative Mongolian loanwords illustrated by verbs denoting part of body as compared to their parallels in Mongolian. Divergent development is observed in 14 words, while convergent development is found in 31 lexemes (full agreement in 10 words, concretization in 19 words, and generalization in 2 words).

Although being a small part of Yakut figurative verbs with Mongolian parallels, they still reveal some regularities: 1) Convergent development of semantics is observed in two thirds of the words analyzed, with one third showing divergent development of semantics. 2) In convergent development of semantics the instances of partial agreement of linguistic units are found twice as often as those of full agreement. 3) The instances of partial semantic agreement are divided into two groups dependent on the direction of semantic development in Yakut concretization and generalization. Concretization shows clear prevalence among Yakut figurative verbs, with 19 words (86%) out of 21 units with partial agreement undergoing concretization. Concretization of semantics is based on gender, age, and emotional-psychological characteristic of a person. The high rate of concretization of semantics in the Yakut language is confirmed by E.I. Ubryatova: "in the Turkic language of Yakut ancestors imaginative thinking was well developed which determined those borrowings" (Ubryatova, 1960, p.261). 4) It is worth mentioning that figurative verbs borrowed from Mongolian characterizing parts of human body represent a separate microsystem of somatisms in the Yakut language.

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