

Long vowels in Mongolic loanwords in Tuvan

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Khabtagaeva, Baiarma 2004. Long vowels in Mongolic loanwords in Tuvan. *Turkic Languages* 8, 191-197.

The paper presents results of an investigation of Mongolic loanwords found in Tuvan, attempting to establish at what time and from which Mongolic language the words have been borrowed. The loanwords can be divided into archaic, Oirat (including Kalmyk), Buryat and Khalkha layers, but a classification according to these layers sometimes encounters difficulties. The author shows that the long vowels of the Mongolic loanwords in Tuvan can help solve the problems concerning the different layers.

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Although the Tuvan language is one of the most archaic of the Turkic languages, a powerful and sustained Mongolic cultural influence has resulted in this language containing the highest number of Mongolic loanwords. Research by Rassadin (1980: 58) indicated that there are more than 2,000 such loanwords, while Tatarincev (1976: 110) stated that one-third of the Tuvan vocabulary is Mongolic in origin. My dissertation on the Mongolic loanwords in Tuvan deals with about 1,500 words.

Attention was first paid to the Mongolic loanwords in Tuvan by Katanov in his famous work published in 1903. The topic was later dealt with by Tatarincev in 1976, and by Rassadin in 1980. The first volume of the etymological dictionary of Tuvan appeared in 2000. Its author, Tatarincev, briefly gives the origin of the Tuvan words, specifying the Mongolic origin of the loanwords too.

The aim of my dissertation is to present and characterize the Mongolic loanwords in the Tuvan language. I examine these words from etymological, phonetical and morphological points of view, and attempt to establish when, and from which Mongolic language the loan was taken.

The loanwords can be divided into archaic, Oirat (including Kalmyk), Buryat and Khalkha layers, but a distinction between these layers sometimes encounters difficulties.

In this paper, I would like to demonstrate how the long vowels of the Mongolic loanwords in Tuvan help in resolving the problems concerning the layers.

The development of long vowels in the Mongolic and Tuvan languages

All the long vowels in Tuvan are secondary. They developed by the contraction of a former *Vowel-Consonant-Vowel* (*VCV*) conjunction, but this contraction could have happened either earlier in the Mongolic, or later, after the word had entered the Tuvan language.

The fate of the VCV conjunction in Mongolic

It is a rule that the quality of the long vowel which develops from the *VCV* conjunction in Mongolic languages depends on the quality of the second vowel of the conjunction, unless the first vowel of the conjunction is labial, in which case, according to the vowel harmony, a long \bar{o} or $\bar{\delta}$ replaces the *VCV* conjunction.

LM *jīga-* ‘to demonstrate, to instruct’ ~ Khalkha *jā-*, Buryat, Oirat *zā-*;
 LM *sige-* ‘to urinate’ ~ Khalkha, Buryat, Oirat *šē-*;
 LM *aġula* ‘mountain’ ~ Khalkha *ūl*, Buryat *ūla*, Oirat *ūlʰ*;
 LM *ebčigü* ‘sternum, sterna’ ~ Khalkha *öwčü*, Buryat *übsü*, Oirat *öptsü*;
 LM *maġu* ‘bad’ ~ Khalkha, Buryat, Oirat *mü*;

The Oirat language is an exception to the rule. In this language in contrast with the long vowels in the first syllable, the quality of the long vowel in a non-initial syllable always depends on the second vowel of the conjunction (Poppe 1950; 1955: 60-71; 1964: 36-37). However, according to the examples we can observe that the quality of the long vowel is the result of an illabialisation of word-final long vowels:

LM *bögere* ‘kidneys’ ~ Khalkha *bör*, Buryat *böre*, Oirat *bör̄^δ*;
 LM *kirüge* ‘saw’ ~ Khalkha *xörö*, Buryat *xyürö*, Oirat *körē*,¹
 LM *jiloġa* ‘rein’ ~ Khalkha *jolō*, Buryat *žolō*, Oirat *džolā*.

The fate of the VCV conjunction in the Tuvan language

In contrast with the above, in the words of ancient Turkic stock, in accordance with the rules of Tuvan phonetics, the quality of the long vowel which developed from the conjunction *VCV* depends on the first vowel (GTJa 33-37):

Old-Turkic *aġir* ‘hard’ ~ Tuvan *ār*;
 Old-Turkic *baġir* ‘liver’ ~ Tuvan *bār*;
 Old-Turkic *oġul* ‘boy’ ~ Tuvan *ōl*;
 Old-Turkic *soġıq* ‘cold, frost’ ~ Tuvan *sōk*;
 Old-Turkic *yoġün* ‘thick’ ~ Tuvan *čōn*.

¹ **kirüge* > **kirö* > **körö* > *körē*.

The layers of the Mongolic loanwords in the Tuvan language

The long vowels of the Mongolic loanwords in Tuvan can be divided into an early and a late layer.

Early layer

1. This includes those cases when the long vowel of the Mongolic word which entered Tuvan developed in accordance with the phonetical rules of Tuvan, which means that the word entered at a time when the Mongolic still preserved the conjunction: $\bar{V}^1 \leftarrow V^1GV^2$:

$\bar{A} \leftarrow AGU$:

Tuvan *čalgā* 'lazy' \leftarrow LM *jalqaǵu*, cf. Khalkha *jalxū*, Buryat *zalxū*, Oirat *dzalxū*;

Tuvan *elēr* 'steady' \leftarrow LM *elegür*, cf. Khalkha, Oirat *erül*, Buryat *elür*;

Tuvan *kežē* 'hard' \leftarrow LM *kečegü*, cf. Khalkha *xecū*, Buryat *xesū*, Oirat *ketsū*;

Tuvan *torgāl* 'penalty' \leftarrow LM *torgaǵuli*, cf. Khalkha *torgül'*, Buryat *torgūli*, Oirat *torgū*;

$\bar{I} \leftarrow IGU$:

Tuvan *ayıl* 'danger' \leftarrow LM *ayigul*, cf. Khalkha, Buryat, Oirat *ayül*;

Tuvan *ergī* 'absentminded' \leftarrow LM *ergigü* 'dull, dumb', cf. Khalkha, Oirat *ergū*;

Buryat *er'yū*;

Tuvan *xarī* 'answer' \leftarrow LM *qarigu*, cf. Khalkha *xariu*, Buryat *xaryū*, Oirat *xār'ū*;

Tuvan *serīn* 'cool' \leftarrow LM *serigün*, cf. Khalkha, Oirat *serīn*, Buryat *heryūn*.

2. It also includes those cases when, although the *VCV* conjunction was preserved in Mongolic, a long vowel developed when the word entered the Tuvan language:

$\bar{V}^1 \leftarrow V^1GV^2$:

Tuvan *ūlza* 'ornament' \leftarrow LM *uǵalja*, cf. Khalkha *uǵalj*, Buryat *uǵalza*, Oirat *uǵ^hlza*;

Tuvan *xūsā* 'duration, period' \leftarrow LM *quǵačaǵa*, cf. Khalkha *xuǵacā*, Buryat *xuǵasā*, Oirat *xuǵ^htšā*;

$\bar{V} \leftarrow VGV < VngV$:²

Tuvan *tālay* 'palate, roof of the mouth' \leftarrow **tañalai*, LM *tanglai*, cf. Khalkha *tagnai*, Buryat *tangalai*, Oirat *tañnā*;

Tuvan *mōl* 'Mongolian' \leftarrow LM *mongǵol*, cf. Khalkha, Buryat *mongol*, Oirat *moñg^ol*;

$\bar{V} \leftarrow VbV$:

Tuvan *xū* 'division, part, percentage' \leftarrow LM *qubi*, cf. Khalkha *xurw'*, Buryat *xubi*, Oirat *xōw^l*;

Tuvan *xūlgān* 'religious reborn, Living Buddha' \leftarrow LM *qubilǵan*, cf. Khalkha *xuwilgān*, Buryat *xubilgān*, Oirat *xüwlǵan*;

Tuvan *xūrak* 'religious novice' \leftarrow LM *qubaraǵ*, cf. Khalkha *xuwrag*, Buryat *xubarag*, Oirat *xuwrg*;

² In these examples the phenomenon of denasalisation can be observed.

Tuvan *sūrga* ‘stupa, pagoda; tomb’ ← LM *suburġan*, cf. Khalkha, Oirat *suwrāga*, Buryat *subarga*.

3. There are sporadic cases when the conjunction *VCV* was preserved in Tuvan too, but there is not a rule for these cases:

Tuvan *dovurzak* ‘tyubetyka (embroidered skull-cap worn in Central Asia)’ ← LM *toġurġaġ* ‘bud or calyx of a flower; small cap with a button on top’; cf. Khalkha *tōrcog*; Buryat *tōrsog*, Oirat *tōrtsaG*;

Tuvan *keʹžigün* ‘member, fellow’ ← LM *gešigün*; cf. Khalkha *gišün*; Buryat, Oirat *gešün*;

Tuvan *kōdege* ‘village’ ← LM *kōdege* ‘countryside’; cf. Khalkha *xōdō*; Buryat *xūdō*, Oirat *kōdē*;

Tuvan *togana* ‘the frame of the opening in the top of a yurt’ ← LM *toġono* ~ *toġon-a*; cf. Khalkha; Buryat *tōno*.

4. In Tuvan, the stress is on the last syllable (Katanov 1903: 35; Ščerbak 1970: 115). In many cases there is a long vowel in the Mongolic loanwords in place of an original Mongolic short vowel. In these cases, it is quite certain that, at the time the loanword was taken over, the Mongolic still preserved the vowels in the auslaut position:

Tuvan *barimdā* ‘fact, proof’ ← LM *barimta*, cf. Khalkha *barimt*, Buryat *barimta*, Oirat *bārm̄t*;

Tuvan *šidarā* ‘chess’ ← LM *šitar-a*, cf. Khalkha, Buryat *šatar*, Oirat *šatr*;

Tuvan *xayirān* ‘pitiable, regrettable’ ← LM *qayiran*, cf. Khalkha, Buryat *xairan*, Oirat *xārn̄*;

Tuvan *xuviskāl* ‘revolution’ ← LM *qubisqal*, cf. Khalkha *xuw’sgal*, Buryat *xubisxal*, Oirat *xūwūsġal*.

Late layer

1. This includes those words in which the long vowel of the Mongolic word is identical to the long vowel of the word which entered Tuvan. In these cases, therefore, the contraction occurred earlier in the Mongolic language: $\bar{V}^2 \leftarrow V^1GV^2$:

$\bar{U} \leftarrow AGU$:

Tuvan *būdū* ‘closed, obturated’ ← LM *bitegü*, Khalkha *bitū*, Buryat, Oirat *bütū*;

Tuvan *surgūl* ‘school’ ← LM *surġaġuli*, Khalkha *surgūl*, Buryat *hurgūli*, Oirat *surġūli*;

Tuvan *ūrgay* ‘cave’ ← LM *aġurqai* (<**aġur+Kai*), Khalkha, Buryat *ūrxai*, Oirat *ūrxā* ← Old-Turkic *aġiz* ‘mouth’ (~ Tuvan *ās*);

Tuvan *ūrge* ‘load’ ← LM *egürge*, Khalkha *ūreg*, Buryat *ūrge*, Oirat *ūr^ρG* ~ *ūr^uG*.

$\bar{U} \leftarrow IGU$:

Tuvan *božū* ‘fast, quick, rapidly’ ← LM *bušigü*, Khalkha, Buryat, Oirat *bušū*;

Tuvan *čörü* ‘crabby, intractable, obstinate’ ← LM *jörigüd*, Khalkha *jörüd*, Buryat *züryü*, Oirat *zörüD*;

Tuvan *dülgür* ‘key’ ← LM *tülgür*, Khalkha *tülxür*, Buryat *tülxür*, Oirat *tülkür*;

Tuvan *šüdak* ‘wrestlers’ shorts’ ← LM *šigudag*, Khalkha *šudag*.

2. There is a separate group including those words which are of definite Oirat origin. As stated above, if the first vowel of the *VCV* conjunction in Mongolic languages is labial, then we find a long *ō*, or *ō̄* in its place. The Western Mongolic languages are exceptions to this rule. Here, the quality of the long vowel in non-initial syllables depends on the second vowel of the conjunction:

Ā ← *WGA*:

Tuvan *nogān* ‘green’ ← Oirat *nogān*, cf. LM *noḡoḡan*, cf. Khalkha, Buryat *nogō(n)*;

Tuvan *ovā* ‘cairn’ ← Oirat *owā*, cf. LM *oboḡa*, cf. Khalkha *owō*, Buryat *obō(n)*;

Tuvan *örēl* ‘room’ ← Oirat *örē*, cf. LM *öröge*, cf. Khalkha *örō̄*;

Tuvan *šölē* ‘liberty’ ← Oirat *tšölē*, cf. LM *čilüge*, cf. Khalkha *čölō̄*; Buryat *sülō̄*.

3. In one group of loanwords from the Mongolic, a long *ū* in the initial syllable becomes a long *ō*. This phenomenon is possibly due to sound-replacing: for the non-Mongolic speaker, the Mongolic *u* sometimes sounds like *o*, or the loan was taken at a moment, when the spirantisation of the Mongolic guttural had just begun.

Tuvan *čōžay* ‘counter of a boot or shoe’ ← LM *jaḡuḡai*, Khalkha *jūjai*, Buryat *zūzai*, Oirat *zūzā̄*;

Tuvan *mō* ‘misadventurous’ ← LM *maḡu* ‘bad’, Khalkha, Buryat, Oirat *mū*;

Tuvan *tōl* ‘fable, tale’ ← LM *tuuli*, Khalkha *tūl*, Oirat *tūl’i*

Tuvan *tōlay* ‘hare’ ← LM *taulai*, Khalkha, Buryat *tūlai*, Oirat *tūlā̄* ← **tabiš*: cf. Old-Turkic *taβišgān*;

Tuvan *xōčün* ‘old, ancient’ ← LM *qaḡučin*, cf. Khalkha *xūč(in)*, Buryat *xūšan*, Oirat *xūtšn*.

4. There is a sporadic phenomenon in loanwords for the labials from the upper position of the tongue to become *ī* or *i* through illabialization:

Tuvan *barīn* ‘from the right side, Western’ ← LM *baraḡun*, Khalkha, Buryat, Oirat *barūn*;

Tuvan *kaḏīr* ‘sickle, scythe’ ← LM *qadaḡur*, Khalkha, Oirat *xadūr*, Buryat *xadūr* ~ *xažūr*;

Tuvan *xalī(n)* ‘warmth, fervour’ ← LM *qalaḡun*, Khalkha, Buryat, Oirat *xalūn*;

Tuvan *samīn* ‘confusion, disorder’ ← LM *samaḡu*, Khalkha *samūn*, Buryat *hamū*, Oirat *samū*;

Tuvan *yančīr* ‘cigarette’ ← LM *yangjuur*, Khalkha *yanjūr* ← Chinese *yānjuānr*.

5. In the Mongolic languages secondary long vowels sometimes appear in place of earlier short vowels. On entering Tuvan, these words continue to show this secondary long vowel:

Tuvan *agār* ‘air’ ← LM *ağar*, Khalkha, Buryat *agār*, Oirat *ağar*;
 Tuvan *surgāl* ‘doctrine, lore’ ← LM *surğal*, Khalkha *surgāl*, Buryat *hurgāl*;
 Tuvan *selgūste-* ‘to walk, to go about’ ← LM *selgüče-*, Khalkha *selgūce-*;
 Tuvan *xödelgēn* ‘revolt’ ← LM *ködelgen* ‘movement, traffic’, Khalkha *xödölgö(n)*,
 Buryat *xüdelgōn*, Oirat *ködälgān*.

6. In Mongolic loanwords of Chinese origin in Tuvan, a secondary long vowel appears in place of an original Chinese stress:

Tuvan *mōgū* ‘mushroom’ ← LM *mögü*, Khalkha *mōg*, Buryat *mōge*, Oirat *mōg^o* ← Chinese *mógu*;
 Tuvan *tāliñ* ‘saddle-bag’ ← LM *daling*, Khalkha *dāliñ*, Buryat *dālin*, Oirat *dāl’ñ* ← Chinese *dā lián*.

After this account of the individual cases, we can summarize the results in the following table:

*VCV	Position	Early layer	Late layer		
		Development according to Tuvan phonetics	Development according to Tuvan phonetics	Khalkha-Buryat	Oirat
*a <u>g</u> u	\bar{V} -, $C\bar{V}$ -	-	* \bar{u} → \bar{o}	\bar{u}	-
	- \bar{V} -, - \bar{V}	\bar{a}	* \bar{u} → \bar{i}		
*e <u>g</u> ü	\bar{V} -, $C\bar{V}$ -	-	* \bar{u} → \bar{o}	\bar{u}	-
	- \bar{V} -, - \bar{V}	\bar{e}	* \bar{u} → \bar{i}		
*i <u>g</u> u	\bar{V} -, $C\bar{V}$ -	-	\bar{u}		
	- \bar{V} -, - \bar{V}	\bar{i}			
*i <u>g</u> ü	\bar{V} -, $C\bar{V}$ -	-	\bar{u}		
	- \bar{V} -, - \bar{V}	\bar{i}			
*o <u>g</u> a	\bar{V} -, $C\bar{V}$ -	-	\bar{u}		
	- \bar{V} -, - \bar{V}				
*ö <u>g</u> e	\bar{V} -, $C\bar{V}$ -	-	\bar{o}		
	- \bar{V} -, - \bar{V}				

The aim of this paper was to demonstrate that a given sound conjunction behaves in different ways in the Mongolic loanwords in the Tuvan language, depending on the time of loaning and on the transmitter language. Accordingly the precise mapping of such loanwords facilitates a decision as concerns the layer to which a certain loanword belongs.

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Acknowledgement

This work has been carried out in the Research Group of Turkic Linguistics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the University of Szeged.