ON SOME MONGOLIAN LOAN WORDS IN EVENKI

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The Manchu-Tungus languages, like any other language group, have numerous loan words from other languages. There are borrowings in Manchu from Chinese,¹ Turkic,² and Mongolian,³ and there are numerous borrowings in Lamut and Evenki from Mongolian and Yakut which have not yet been studied thoroughly.⁴ And yet, the Mongolian and Yakut loan words in Lamut and Evenki deserve attention as an important material for the study of the history of both the borrowing and lending languages in question.

In the present article, the preservation of some old features and the development of some sounds in Mongolian loan words in Evenki will be discussed.

1. The preservation of -*g-*

The preservation of intervocalic *g* in Tungus loan words taken from Ancient Mongolian (AMo.) has already been demonstrated in another article of the author of these lines.⁵ Here some examples of Evenki *k = AMo. *g* will be given.

Ev. E, Tkm.* okurga “snare, sling (for catching birds)”, Brg.

⁵ Poppe, op. cit., pp. 189ff.
⁶ G. M. Vasilyev, Evenkijäko-russkij slovar’, Moskva, 1958. All examples of Ev. words have been taken from here if not specified otherwise. The abbre-
Ev. Tkm., V-L yadaku “poor, pauper” < Amo. *yadagą > Mo. yadavu “poor, unable to do anything,” Kh. yad’ę id. Cf. AT yaday “pedestrian, on foot.” Mo. yadavu is a noun formed with the suffix -y from yada- < Amo. *yada- “to be unable, to be exhausted.” Cf. Trkm. yada- “to be tired, to be exhausted.”

Ev. Tkm. činnukai “wolf” < Amo. *činnuğą > *činnuwa(i) > Mo. činua “wolf,” Sh. čin ę id.13 Mo. čin ă ě id.13 Kh. čon ę id.10

Mo. γ- (-g-) is represented by -k- in older borrowings from Ancient Mongolian whereas Tung. -g- corresponds to Mo. γ- (-γ-) in loan words taken from Ancient Mongolian at a later period, probably at the end of the Ancient Mongolian period. Examples of Tung. -g- are given in another article by the author of these lines.11 It is known that Mo. γ- (-g-) goes back, in many cases, to *p or *b, e.g., Mo. qaqa- < *kapi- “to close, to lock up” = At qaqa- id.; Mo. qaryal- < *kabal-, Kh. xul- “to skin, to peel off” = Usman qawla- “to bark a tree.” In these cases, Evenki has -w- ( = Mo. -b-), cf. Ev. kesver “open space, steppe, marshland” < Amo. *keber > Mo. keger, Kh. xër “steppe, desert.”

Evenki material evidences that the suffix Mo. γur- (-yur-) of the names of tools goes back to *γur-, cf. Ev. E. I, Brz. gupšwain “seine” < Amo. *gupšibąr > Mo. gubšyur “seine,” Kh. gusbię id.; Ev. P-T, I, S, Uč. tuluśwain “a pole for pushing the boat off the bank” < Amo. tuluşbąr > Mo. tuluşyur “pole, prop, support,” Kh. tuluşr id.; Ev. Urm., Sx. olšwain “a hanger for drying meat or fish” < Amo. *elšibąr > Mo. elšyur “hanger,” Kh. olšur id.


Ev. Tkm. učča “beard” < Amo. *ucça- > Mo. učća “beard,” Kh. učča id. (Cf. Hit. učča “beard.”)

Ev. Tkm. yadakay “chief” < Amo. *yadagą- > Mo. yadakav “chief,” Kh. yadač id. (Cf. Hit. yač “leader.”)
Evenki evidence is important for reconstruction of Ancient Mongolian forms. Thus, the suff. -yun in Mo. yewun, Kh. yê “what” is easily reconstructed as AMo. *ɣun on the evidence of Ev. škan “who, what.”

2. The preservation of initial h

Middle Mongolian had, at the onset of many words, the fricative h which goes back to *p- or *f-, and which is still preserved as x in Taisitkar Dagur and as z, f, ž in various positions in Monguru. On the other hand, in some Tungus languages, ancient *p- or *f- has yielded h, namely, in some dialects of Evenki and Lamut = Negidal x*h, Oroći z*h, and Udehe x*z.*

The occurrence of initial h both in Middle Mongolian and Evenki enabled the speakers of the latter language to borrow the respective words from Middle Mongolian without changing the initial consonant. Indeed, there are Evenki words with h- which are Mongolian loan words. In Mongolian languages spoken at the present time in areas adjacent to the territory occupied by speakers of Evenki, h- < *p- disappeared long ago. There is no h- < *p- in Buriat, Khalkha, and other languages from which the Evenki might have borrowed the words in question in relatively recent times. Consequently, the loan words concerned should be regarded as old borrowings. They are borrowings from Middle Mongolian.


Ev. Brč. ḧeč- “to be tired,” Lam. ḧeč- “to be at the end of the strength” < MMO. ḥeče- “to be tired,” cf. Mu. ḥečebe “was tired,” Mo. ḥeče “to be tired,” Kh. ḥeče id.


Ev. P-T, I, E, Tng., Z, Učr. hulū “to perforate, to tear” < MMO. *hulū > Mo. iltū “to crumble,” Kh. iltū “to crumble, to pieces;” Ev. P-T, N, I, S, Tng., Z, Učr., Urm. hūlīrge “to be torn, to wear out, to crack” < MMO. *hulūrge > Mo. iltūrge- “cause of death” < iltūrge- “to fall to pieces,” Kh. iltūr- id.


Some words with initial h are obvious borrowings from Ancient Mongolian. It is possible that Ancient Mongolian had dialects in which *p- had yielded h-. On the other hand, Evenki may have borrowed the words discussed in the first paragraph from an Ancient Mongolian dialect which had *p- or *f-. In this latter case *p(f)/ must have developed into h in Evenki in which Common Manchu-Tungus *p- yielded h. The two Ancient Mongolian forms with h- in Evenki are the following.

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27 Cincius-Rišon, op. cit., p. 203.
28 Dremetjurkskij slovar’, p. 209.
29 Rišon, op. cit., p. 338.
30 Dremetjurjskij slovar’, p. 236.
31 Cincius-Rišon, op. cit., p. 233.
33 N. N. Poppe, Materialy dlia izmëdeleniya tungusskogo jazyka, Narčie burjuzinskih tungsow, Leningrad, 1927, p. 58.
34 Poppe, Mongol’skij slovar’ Mukaddimat al-Adab, p. 438.
Ev. ṭyn "red" < AMo. *hulagān (or *pulagān) > MMo. ṭyūn id. > Mo. ulayan id., Kh. ulūg id.


It is interesting to note that Evenki has also borrowings from Yakut which have  célib in Evenki but do not have it in Yakut. On Evenki evidence, on may conclude that Yakut must have had  célib going back to  célib in the following etymology:


Ev. Ald. ṭēkārī "faster! (hold faster)" < AY *hikārī > Yak. ikārī "very close" from ikā "close, tight" < Mongol, cf. Mo. īgē/ īğū "full, tight, dense."

3. On some ancient diphthongs

Tungus does not have diphthongs of the type ai, oi, etc., and their present reflex is ī. Words which have cognates in Mongolian or are borrowings from Mongolian have ī instead of Mongolian ai, oi, etc.


Ev. akī < *akāi "uncle, elder brother" = Mo. aqāi "brother, Russ. brat'," Bur. azāi "elder brother."


Ev. būlī "blind" < Mong. balai, Mo. balai "blind," Kh. balī id.

Ev. Nrč. gūlsakī "wry, oblique (e.g., line)" < Mong., cf. Mo. gūlajaigī id., Kh. gūldṣagāi id.

Ev. E, I, Učr., Urm. täkāän < *tākāän (with the diminutive suff. -kāän) "bend, turn, bend of a river" < AMO. *tōkāi > Mo. toqāi "elbow, bend," Kh. tozōi "elbow, cubit, river bend."

** Rinzen, op. cit., p. 103.
** Benzing, Die tungsusischen Sprachon, p. 25; Benzing, Lamutische Grammatik, p. 7.
** Benzing, Die tungsusischen Sprachon, l.c.

Ev. gēřī < *gēre "brightness, light," Lam. Ts. gērīn "light" < AMO. *gēre > Mo. gere "light," Kh. gerē id.

Ev. Učr., Tng. keŋδ (which probably should be keŋδ) "cave, hollow" < AMO. *kondei > Mo. kōndei id., Kh. žōndi "cave, hollow, valley."


Ev. P-T, N, E, I, Z, Ald., Učr., Urm. agī < *aqī "forest, field," Brg. "open space, steppe" = AMO. *aqī > Mo. aqī "spacious, vast, large; cave," Kh. aqī "cave."

Ev. čē < *čēi "aunty, sister!" (in addressing) < AMO. *čēi > Mo. čēi, Kh. čūči "aunty."

On the above evidence, the Evenki suffix of the genitive (also called suffix of possessive noun) -pi (cf. hundātpī "of the daughter") is to be regarded as a development of an older -pi (cf. Mo. minuqūi < *minyaii "mine," SH minu' ai id.


4. On the representation of ī

In loan words taken from Mongolian, the consonant ī before ī is often rendered in Tungus with č, this being an evidence that īs in such cases had already become ī in the lending dialect. It is known that Tungus has no phoneme ī different from s. Tungus č is a substitute for ī.

Ev. N ērjolī "ant" < Mong. ērjolī < *ērjulīfīn > Mo. ērjulīfīn, Kh. ērjulīfīid. 

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<sup>16</sup> Cincius-Rišoe, op. cit., p. 552.
** Cincius-Rišoe, op. cit., p. 551.
Ev. S-B čīwai “reindeer intestines filled with blood and cooked, a kind of sausage” < Mong. śibai, Mo. šibai, Kh. șawai “intestines of sheep filled with blood and cooked.”

Ev. Brg. čīwukė “awl, long needle” < Mong. šibüke, Mo. šibüge, Kh. šoŋqö id.

Ev. V-L čiweqchin “womancook” < Mong. šibegčin, Mo. šibegčin, Kh. šiweqčiŋ “maidservant.”

Ev. I čigi “thicket” < Mong. *šigüi, Mo. *šigüi, Kh. șugü “forest.”

Cf. Ev. sīgi supra.


Ev. Brg. čingešun “larch tree” < Mong. šinesün, Mo. šinesün, Kh. șunes id.

Ev. Tng. čenwo “top of a mountain” < Mong. șebqo, Mo. şebqo “pointed, peaked,” Kh. șenwo id., Bur. șebqo id.

The borrowings in question are of relatively late date because Russian и and ы are also rendered with ы, e.g., Ev. P-T čike “mosquito net” < Russ. setka [šetka] “net;” Ev. Tng., Z, Ald. kompor “ramrod” < Russ. kompoš id.

It is difficult to explain the appearance of Ev. ы instead of Mongolian and Russian ы in Ev. Nř. gaqqa “to milk” < AMo. *sagqa > Mo. saya-, Kh. sa- id. and Ev. P-T, S čanki “sleigh” < Russ. sanny id. respectively.

5. On Evenki ы


The development *ja > Ev. ы is corroborated by the correspondence of Ev. ы to Yakut ia and ia in borrowings from the latter language, e.g., Ev. Z, Učr., Urm., Sx. kēi “to vanquish, conquer, defeat” < Yak. kīai “to be able, overcome, vanquish, defeat;” Ev. Učr. kēp “pattern” < Yak. kīap id.

On the other hand, Ev. ы in borrowings corresponds to Yak. i, e.g., Ev. Učr., Urm., Čmk., Sx. kēhala “torment, suffering” <

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41 Bonzing, Die tungusischen Sprachen, p. 25.
42 Poppe, Vergleichende Grammatik der altaischen Sprachen, p. 32.


Likewise, Written Mongolian ы is rendered both as ы and i in Mongolian loan words in Evenki.

Ev. P-T bēldarā “to crack” < Mong., cf. Mo. bīləra- “to fall to pieces.”

Ev. N. bēru “sheep” < Mong., cf. Mo. bīrəyu “calf in its second year,” Kh. bərə id.


Ev. P-T, Sx. kēk “to gnaw, to bite off” < Mong., cf. Mo. kīqo “to intimidate, to oppress,” Kh. xəxə- id.

Ev. N čērga- “to cut off with shears, to clip” < Mong., cf. Mo. kīrə “to cut with shears or scissors, clip,” Kh. xərə- id.


It is known that AMo. *ʻi has become assimilated to the vowel of the following syllable in Modern Mongolian, e.g., in Khalkha, Buriat, etc. which development is commonly called “the breaking of i.” Breaking began at the end of the Middle Mongolian period. Consequently, when the ancestors of the Evenki borrowed words at that period or later, *i in most cases had already developed to ia (ia), iu (iu), etc. at least in some Mongolian dialects. The Evenki forms of the type kirga- certainly date from the time before breaking of *i in Mongolian had begun. On the other hand, forms as běrū, čērga, gêltan, and kērga- go back to birū, čīrga, gīltan, kīrga- respectively, i.e., to forms in which these words occur in some Modern Mongolian languages, e.g., Khalkha.

The above examples demonstrate, once more, how important the Mongolian loan words in Evenki are for the study of the history of the two languages.

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43 Although one would have expected this form to be kēhala for that simple reason that only ы occurs in words which have a in the following syllable, Vašilevič’s dictionary gives this form as kēhala which must be a misprint. However, in his Rusko-Evenkijijskij slovar’, Moskva, 1948, p. 151, Vašilevič gives the correct form kēhala.
44 Poppe, Introduction to Mongolian Comparative Studies, pp. 34ff.