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Terminative Case Suffix in Middle Mongol

Yoshio Saitô (Tokyo)

One man's error is another man's data.
Berman's Corollary to Robert's Axiom
The Complete Murphy's Law
by Arthur Bloch, 1990

1. Introduction

The terminative case ending is known in some modern Mongolian languages such as Khalkha, Ordos, Bargu, Buryad, Oyirad, Kalmyk.[1] E.g.:

Oyirad	Khalkha	translation
øbdygtsæ: ʊsn	өвдөгцөө ус	"knee-deep water"
(knee-term water)	(knee-term water)	
ʃaga:tsɑ: tsɑsn		"ankle-deep snow"
(ankle-term snow)		

This suffix is attached only to some body parts words and is not productively used in modern languages.

2. Terminative Case Suffix in Middle Mongol

Not only in modern languages, but also in Middle Mongol, the terminative case suffix is unproductive. According to previous works, this suffix appears in two documents: The *Xiàojīng* (Takimdagu Bičig; "The Book of Filial Piety") in Uyghur script and the *Muqaddimat al-Adab* ("Introduction to Belles-Lettres") in Arabic script.[2]

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1 I would like to thank Dr. Möngkädalai (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences) for his information about this suffix in modern languages.

2 According to Hashimoto (1977, 2001a, 2001b), there are two words in the terminative case in Chinese-transcribed Mongol. They both appear in the Section 57 of the *Yuáncháo Mìshǐ* (Monggolun Niguča Tobčiyan; "The Secret History of the Mongols"). They are *-ta* and *-te*:

1-39-4 Qutula-yi qa ergü'ed Qorqonaq-un
1-39-5 saqlaqar modun horčin
Qabirqa-ta qa'uluqa
Ebüdüg-te ölkeg
1-39-6 bolutala debsebe

2.1 Uyghur Script

In the *Xiàojīng* the terminative case suffix *-čägä*[3] appears once on 18a-3.

18a-2 tägübär kümün äčigä äkä düriyän
18a-3 čïkulalaku kämäbäsü äbüdügčägä nïlka üčükän äčä
18a-4 boluyu

Translation:[4]

"Therefore, a person's affection for his parents grows from (the time he is) young and small, and (barely) reaching (their) knees."

2.2 Arabic Transcription

There is one example with the terminative case suffix in Arabic-transcribed Mongol. According to Poppe, the following sentence in the *Muqaddimat al-Adab* contains the terminative case ending *-ča*, which is attached to the word *čisu* "blood":[5]

Translation by de Rachewiltz (2004), 13:
"After raising Qutula as *qan*, they danced around the Leafy Tree of Qorqonaq until there was
A ditch up to their waist,
And dust up to their knees."
This suffix is not dative but terminative from a semantic point of view, and Hashimoto (1977, 2001a) suggests a possibility of a phonetic change **-ta* > **-t'a* > *-ča* to connect this form with the one with *-č*. If it was originally **-ta* as Hashimoto says, why only this ending underwent the phonetic change **t* > č?
The dative suffix attached to a consonant-ending stem is usually *-a/-e*, and to the word *ebüdüg*, *-e* should be attached instead of *-te*. But, in the *Yuáncháo Mìshǐ* there are such examples as *noyad-ta, kürged-te*. (And in this passage, the two words with the suffix are in couplet.)
As Poppe says, this expression was already almost fossilized and may be regarded as an adverb in Middle Mongol, cf. Poppe (1955), 206. There may be a possibility that the compilers of the Chinese-transcribed version of the Secret History of the Mongols (the *Yuáncháo Mìshǐ*) understood its meaning from the context, but did not know what the ending in the original text was, and replaced it with the dative suffix, which expresses the closest meaning to the terminative among the Mongolian case endings. It seems to me that the description of de Rachewiltz (2004: 318) is more convincing than Hashimoto's (2001a, 2001b). He says that the dative suffix is used for the terminative case.

3 Its phonetic form may have been [tʃe ː], the form *-čägä* being a graphic convention.

4 de Rachewiltz (1982), 45.

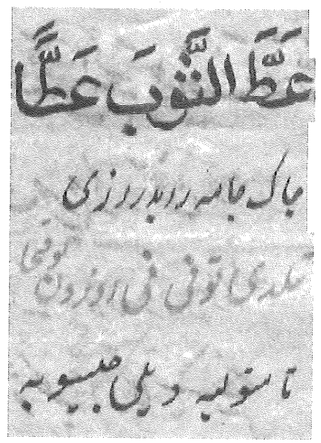
5 Poppe (1938), 340. The corresponding Chagatay sentence is a little different. It reads:
tildi toníní uzunluqča разрезал на полосы его шубу по длине
("he cut his clothes into long pieces").

tamtulba dēli čisuča разорвал шубу до крови
("he tore clothes until blood came out")

Poppe cites the word *čisuča* as an example of the use of the terminative case suffix in his book on comparative studies of the Mongolian languages.[6]

MMo.: Mu. -ča, e.g. *čisuča* "till blood" (i.e. "until blood came")

The element *-ča* in the word *čisuča* is considered to be the terminative case suffix by Poppe, but no such form is to be found in the original manuscript:[7]



Arabic:
ʿaṭṭa al-ṯawba[8] ("he tore the clothes")
ʿaṭṭan[9] ("tearing clothes")

Persian: *pāk jāme darīd darzī*
("he made a rent in a clean garment")

Chagatay: ‹tyldy twny ny âwzwn# lwqča›[10]
("[he] cut his clothes into long pieces")

Mongol: ‹tâmtwlbh dyly›
("[he] tore the clothes")
‹jyswbh› ("[he] cut lengthwise")

The Mongolian part consists of two phrases, ‹tâmtwlbh dyly› and ‹jyswbh›, which correspond to the Arabic *ʿaṭṭa al-ṯawba* and *ʿaṭṭan* respectively. The word *čisuča* "до крови; till blood" in Poppe's works should be read as *jisübe*[11]: *jisü-* "to cut lengthwise, slice"; *-be* "[past-tense verb ending]". In Poppe (1938) the ending *-be* (‹bh›) in *jisübe* (‹jyswbh›) was replaced with the last syllable of the Chagatay word *uzunluqča* (‹âwzwn# lwqča›), perhaps by mistake, and the word was read as *čisuča*,[12] producing a form similar to the terminative case

---

6 Poppe (1955), 206.

7 The Alisher Navoi State Museum of Literature and The Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (2008), 267b-2.

8 Third person, singular, masculine, past.

9 Verbal noun (indefinite accusative form).

10 tildi toníní uzunluqča.

11 The correction is not made in Saitô (2008). For the vowel system of the Mongol language in the *Muqaddimat al-Adab*, see Saitô (2009).

12 The consonants *ǰ* and *č* are both rendered with the character ‹j›, and all rounded vowels, with the character ‹w›. Therefore, ‹jysw› can be read as *jisü*, *čisu*, etc.

ending. Therefore, no terminative case suffix appears in any Arabic-transcribed Mongolian document ever known.

3. Conclusion

As shown above, the word in the terminative case in the *Muqaddimat al-Adab*, that has been cited in some previous works, is a form created by Poppe's misreading or miscopying of the text, and therefore, the terminative case suffix only appears in the *Xiàojīng* in Middle Mongol.

Abbreviations and symbols employed

MMo.	Middle Mongolian language
Mu.	*Muqaddimat al-Adab*
TERM	terminative case suffix
‹ ›	form in transliteration
#	word-final allograph employed word-medially
â	*'alif* in transliteration

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Pál Fodor, György Hazai, Barbara Kellner-Heinkele,
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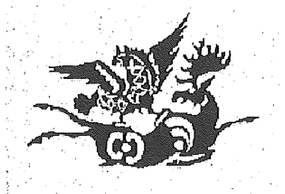
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BAND 13

Tatiana Pang • Simone-Christiane Raschmann • Gerd Winkelhane (eds.)

Unknown Treasures of the Altaic World in Libraries, Archives and Museums

53rd Annual Meeting
of the Permanent International Altaistic Conference,
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