

# On The Origin of Nominalizing Suffixes Derived From Verbs in The Altaic Languages

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**Abstract:** This article explores the nominalizing suffixes derived from verbs in the Altaic languages, specifically focusing on Turkic, Mongolic, Tungusic-Manchu, and Korean languages. It examines the verb-to-noun derivational affixes in the Turkic languages as the base language and compares them with their counterparts in other Altaic languages. The study analyzes their meanings and origins and reconstructs their forms from the Proto-Altaic period.

**Keywords:** Altaic languages, household vocabulary, verb, affix, meaning, form.

**Introduction:** Numerous studies have been dedicated to the comparative-historical morphology of the Altaic languages. The first comparative-historical grammar of the Altaic languages was written by the German linguist W. Schott. Numerals in Altaic languages were studied by B. Laufer, W. Schott, G.I. Ramstedt, B. Munkasi, F. Krayelits, V. Kotvich, pronouns by A. Böhrer, F. Müller, V. Kotvich, and cases by W. Bang, B. Laufer, D. Shinor, N.N. Poppe.

In recent years, major monographic studies in Altaic studies have gained significant importance. G.I. Ramstedt's fundamental work "Введение в алтайское языкознание" (Introduction to Altaic Linguistics) is devoted to the synthetic study of the comparative grammar of Altaic languages. In V. Kotvich's typological research titled "Исследование алтайских языков" (Research on Altaic Languages), the similarities and unique features of morphology and syntax in Turkic, Mongolic, and Tungusic-Manchu languages were highlighted, and the general developmental processes of these languages were outlined. In the collection "Essays on Comparative Morphology of Altaic Languages", edited by O.P. Sunik, a series of articles devoted to the comparative morphology of Altaic languages were published. In N.A. Baskakov's "The Altaic Language Family and Its Study", along with a classification of Altaic languages and directions in Altaic studies, morphological materials were presented to prove the closeness and relatedness of Altaic languages

. In X.U. Chen's dissertation "Comparative Morphology of Turkish and Korean", the morphology of Altaic languages was studied from a comparative-historical perspective.

Below, the derivational suffixes that form nouns from verbs in Turkic languages are compared with suffixes from other Altaic languages, with an attempt to determine their meanings and origins.

Turkic languages: -čak/-čaq // Mongolic: -čag/-čeg // Tungusic-Manchu: -jak/-jek/-čak/-ček/-čok. In Turkic languages, the suffix -čak/-čaq typically appears within nouns and expresses nuances of diminutiveness or endearment. However, when combined with verb stems, it conveys a sense of locality.

We believe that the suffix -čak/-čaq was originally an independent word meaning "place." This argument is supported by the following examples: očaq < hōčaq < hōtčaq "hearth" < hōt "fire" or "to light a fire" + čaq "place" = "a place for lighting a fire"; burčak "corner" < bur- "to twist" + -čak/-čaq "place."

G.I. Ramstedt noted that the suffix -jak/-jek in Tungusic-Manchu languages indicates the location of an action: baldijak "birthplace" < baldi- "to be born"; bujek "grave" < bu- "to die"; bijek "dwelling place" < bi- "to be/stay somewhere." However, he interpreted -jak/-jek as composed of -ja/-je + -k, without clearly establishing the origin of -ja/-je. He only speculated that in bujek, -je may retain the meaning "to lie down."

O.A. Konstantinova wrote that the suffixes -đaq/-čaq in Tungusic-Manchu and Turkic languages combine with verb roots to indicate “place of action” or “name of the action”: xavalđak “workplace,” “work” < xaval- “to work.” She also pointed out that elements carrying the semantic of “place” such as čāk, čěk, and čök occur in various Tungusic-Manchu lexical units like bičěk, čuyačāk, boločök, tuječěk, expressing meanings like “residence,” “place inhabited by people,” or “seasonal dwelling.”

Turkic: -gaj/-ğaj/-gäj/-qaj/-kaj // Mongolic: -gaj/-ğaj/-qaj/-kej // Korean: -kai/-kei. Sources emphasize that the suffix -qaj/-ğaj mostly expresses diminutiveness or endearment (e.g., Uzbek bālakaj < bāla “child”; Tatar kujankaj “little rabbit” < kujan “rabbit”).

G.I. Ramstedt noted that the -qaj/-ğaj markers in Turkic and Tungusic-Manchu languages may have formed under Mongolic influence, and that the Korean -kai suffix is rarely used. He also compared the Mongolic -ğaj/-qaj suffix with the Turkic -ğa/-qa and Tungusic-Manchu -ga/-ka suffixes. Q. Muhamadjonov linked the -qaj suffix in Uzbek and its dialects to the root qaj- denoting movement in a particular direction: qajt- “to return,” qajir “to turn aside,” qajil “to turn back”; in Chuvash qaj “to go, to leave”; in Old Turkic qaj- “to turn, to bend,” etc. He also highlighted that while this suffix forms adjectives in Mongolic and Tungusic-Manchu, in Uzbek it also forms nouns, verbs, and adverbs.

However, we do not agree with Q. Muhamadjonov’s claim that -qaj only forms adjectives in Mongolic and Tungusic-Manchu. The following examples support our view. In the vocabulary of everyday life in Altaic languages, the suffix -gaj/-ğaj/-gäj/-qaj occurs in names of clothing and ornaments. Examples include:

- Tatar: ĵilbägaj “a garment worn without fastening the front”
- Bashkir: jelbägaj “same meaning”
- Kyrgyz: ĵelbegej “a garment worn over the shoulders without putting on the sleeves”
- Uzbek: jelägaj / dialectal ĵelbägaj “same meaning”
- delägaj: “a loose robe worn over a coat”

These forms derive from the root ĵelbä- “to wave” and the suffix -gaj. In Old Mongolian, related forms include maqalai, malaqaj, mayala, maqalaj; Khalkha: malgaj; Buryat: malgaj; Kalmyk: maxlä; Dunsen: maGala; Daghur: malgaj; Mongolic: malGei “fur hat” < maxi- “to bend, fold.”

X.U. Che compared the Mongolic suffix -gai/-gei with Korean -kai/-kei: Korean pjekä “pillow” < pje- “to lay (one’s head)”; tæpkai “quilt,” “blanket” < tæp- “to cover.” Additional Korean lexemes from our research

include: s:akai “sock liner” < s:a- “to wrap”; s:ikai “headwear” < s:i- < si- “to put on the head”; norikai (Old Korean nōrikái) “women’s belt ornament” or “toy” < nōl- “to play” + -í.

As for the origin of the suffix -qaj, we fully agree with Q. Muhamadjonov’s view that it derives from the root qaj- expressing directional movement. Indeed, words containing the -qaj element often convey meanings like “to bend,” “to fold,” “to incline,” or “to split in two.” For example, in Uzbek dialects: čalgaj “armpit area of shirt,” ĵayačalgaj “lining inside a coat”; Mongolic: qačagaj “bent” < qačaji- “to bend”; keltegej “crooked” < kelteji- “to bend”; tasurqaj “cracked” < tasura- “to split.” The suffix also appears in somatic terms describing “bending body parts”: in Uzbek dialects of Karakalpakstan, baqaj “ankle”; Mongolic: berbegei “upper joint of hoof,” tabgaj “foot sole (palm),” “paw of animals.”

Turkic: -ga/-ğa/-kä // Mongolic: -ga/-ğa, -ge // Tungusic-Manchu: -ka/-ke. In Turkic languages, the suffix -ga/-ğa/-kä occurs in names of household items, such as Tatar şöskä “ladle” and Chuvash äškä “dipper” < şö-// äš- “to scoop.”

This suffix is actively used in Altaic languages to form names of household items. Examples include:

- Mongolic: tulga/tulya “tripod stove,” “support” < tul- “to lean on”;
- xučilya “covering” < xuči-/kuči- “to cover”;
- kedürge “upper garment” < kedür- “to wear”;
- Tungusic-Manchu: elbuke “tent covering” < elbu- “to cover”;
- maltika “folding knife” < malta- “to fold.”

The Suffix -gu/-gü/-ğu/-qu in Turkic Languages // -gu/-gu in Mongolic // -ku in Tungusic-Manchu // -gu in Korean

The suffix -gu/-gü/-ğu/-qu plays a significant role in enriching the household vocabulary of Turkic languages. It actively participates in the derivation of words related to kitchen utensils: In Uyghur, bičğu “knife” < bič- “to cut”; In dialects of Turkish, süzgü means “strainer,” “fisherman’s net,” or “a watering can made from metal with a straining end” < süz- “to strain, to filter”; süsgü is “a wire strainer used during milking to prevent impurities from entering the milk” < süz- “to strain.”

This suffix also forms clothing terms: In Old Turkic, ĵayqu “raincoat” < ĵay- “to rain”; keđgü “clothing” < keđ- “to wear.”

The suffix aligns with affixes found in other Altaic languages. In Mongolic, it derives nouns from verbs, e.g.: dēsəgu “mat” < deb- “to spread, to lay out”; It also

forms adjectives: bolduġu “fat” < boldu- “to become fat”; qataġu “hard” < qata- “to dry, harden.”

In Tungusic-Manchu, the form -ku is productive in forming names of household items: alikû “bowl, tray” < alî- “to give, to offer”; elbeku “cover” < elbe- “to cover”; mûliku “bucket” < mûue- “to go fetch water.”

The Turkic -ġu/-gü suffix was first compared to the Mongolic -ġu/-gü and Tungusic-Manchu -ku by G.J. Ramstedt. Later, H.U. Che included the Korean nominal suffix -ki in the same group (häki “to do, to act” < hä- “to do”). However, in our opinion, instead of -ki, it is more appropriate to include the Korean suffix -gu in this group. For example, in Korean, -gu appears in the names of household tools: čälgü, təlgü (Pyongan dialect) “mortar” < čäl / təl- “to decrease.”

The Suffix -i/-ï/-u/-ü in Turkic // -i in Mongolic // -i in Tungusic-Manchu // -i in Korean

This suffix is non-productive in Turkic but still appears in terms for clothes and tools. Examples: Old Turkic jaku, Altay jakî, Oirat jaqqî, Tuvan čayî, Kyrgyz (dial.) ĵaqî, Kazakh (dial.) žaqî, Bashkir jaqî – all meaning “raincoat” < jag- “to rain”; Old Turkic soqu, Turkish soku, Turkmen sokî, Uzbek (dial.) soqî “pestle” < sok- “to strike, crush”; Old Turkic adri “wheat-cleaning tool” < adir- “to separate.”

G.J. Ramstedt and N.N. Poppe compared the Turkic -i suffix with Mongolic -i and Tungusic-Manchu -i; H.U. Che added Korean -i to this comparison. In Mongolic, it forms verbal nouns: ajisui “approach” < ajis- “to approach” + -u (linking vowel) + -i; odui “departure” < od- “to go.” In Tungusic-Manchu, it creates nouns from verb roots: degi “bird” < deg- “to fly”; teti “clothing” < tet- “to wear.” In Korean, it forms abstract nouns from verbs: hari “complaint” < har- “to complain”; ibati “service” < ibat- “to serve”; sari “life” < sar- “to live.”

The Suffix -(V)k/ -(V)q/ -(V)g/ -(V)ġ in Turkic // -g/ -ġ in Mongolic // -(V)k in Tungusic-Manchu

This ancient and productive Turkic suffix functions in multiple semantic domains. In names for kitchen utensils: elgek/elek “sieve” < elge- “to sift”; kalak/qalaq “spoon,” “paddle” < qala- “to gather.” In tools: körük “bellows” < körü- “to blow air.” In bedding: töšek “mattress” < töše- < tole- “to spread”; örtük “sheet” < ört- “to cover.” In clothing: ičik “lined garment” < ič- “to be inside”; küpik “padded coat” < kup- “to swell, bulge”; börk “hat” < boru- “to cover.” In accessories: qijiq “belt” < qij- “to cut”; jiriq “hem” < jir- “to tear.”

This suffix also derives adjectives: teşik “hole” < teš- “to pierce”; egik “bent” < eg- “to bend.” In Chuvash, the variant -x is observed: vārax “far” < vāra- “to stretch”; šivāx “near” < šivā- “to approach.”

In Mongolic, -g/-ġ plays a similar role: ükeg “box” <

üküg “sarcophagus” < ükü- “to die”; qabčig “clamp” < qabči- “to squeeze.” In Tungusic-Manchu: avak “towel” < av- “to wash”; elbek “cover” < elbe- “to cover”; huklek “bed” < hukle- “to sleep.”

The Suffix -kač/-qač/-geč, -kič/-qič/-gič/-ġič in Turkic // -kač/-kat, -kič in Tungusic-Manchu // -kač in Korean

This suffix forms names for tools and instruments from verb roots: ačqač “key” < ač- “to open”; qisqač “tongs” < qis- “to squeeze”; süzgeč/süzgič “strainer” < süz- “to strain.” Its phonetic variants are also common: japkič/jāpqič “sheet” < jap- “to cover”; qirgič “grater” < qir- “to grate”; qisqič “pliers” < qis- “to squeeze.”

These suffixes correspond with Tungusic-Manchu -kač/-kat/-kič: upkač, upkat “whole” < up- “to become whole”; örikič “residence” < örin- “to dwell.”

H.U. Che compared the Turkic -kač/-qač suffix with Korean -kač (motkäči “meeting” < mot- “to gather”). G.J. Ramstedt suggested that Turkic -ġač/-gäč and Mongolic -ġad/-ged come from a common \*-ġad form, a view supported by N.N. Poppe. In many cases, the Mongolic suffix -üür/-üür serves the same function as Turkic -kič/-qič/-gič/-ġič: xavčur “tongs” < xavč- “to squeeze”; ölgüür “hook” < öl- “to hang.”

The Suffix -(V)m in Turkic // -m in Mongolic // -m in Korean

In Old Turkic, this was a productive suffix. It forms names for carpets and garments: jadim “carpet” < jad- “to write, to lay out”; kerim “rug, tapestry” < ker- “to stretch.” It also forms clothing names: keđim “clothes” < keđ- “to wear.” Auxiliary clothing: In Bashkir, kürim “belt tie” < kür- “to tie.”

Affixal Derivation of Household and Clothing Vocabulary in Altaic Languages

In Turkic languages, the affixes -maq/ -mak/ -māk, in Mongolic -mag/-mog, and in Korean -mak are commonly attached to verb roots to derive nouns referring to household objects. For example: toqımaq “a beating tool, a device for threshing grain” < toqî- “to beat”. They also form clothing terms: ičmāk “a garment lined with leather” < ič- “to be inside”. These affixes also yield accessory terms: kürmāk “a clothing strap” < kur- “to tie”.

In Mongolic, similar derivations occur in clothing-related accessories: oromog “foot wrapping” < oro- “to wrap”. In Korean, they form names of garments: turumaki “outerwear” < turu- < turî- “to wrap”; In Korean dialects, khurimāki “coat”, “chapan” < khuri- < kori- “to wrap, tie”.

In Turkic languages, the suffix -(V)n (as well as -n in Mongolic and Tungusic-Manchu) is used to derive household nouns from verb roots: tügün / tugun “a knot” < tug- “to tie”; orun “a bedding set” < or- “to

place, arrange”.

This affix also forms clothing items: čapan “outer garment” < čap- “to split in two”; and accessories: kolan “a broad belt” < kola- “to tie a belt”.

Such affixes play an active role in forming domestic lexicon across Altaic languages. For instance: In Mongolic: oron “bed, sleeping place” < oro- “to enter a place”; In Tungusic-Manchu: kalan “cauldron” < kala- “to gather together”; čoman “wine goblet” < čom- “to immerse, dip”; guren “string, cord” < gure- < gurevu- “to tie”.

The Turkic suffixes -(V)č/ -(V)š and the Mongolic -(V)š form kitchenware nouns from verb stems. For example: čömič / čömüš “ladle” < čom- “to dip”; qamıç “ladle” < qam- “to collect, gather”; kömäč / gömeč “a clay cooking pot” < kom- “to bury”; eğiç / ejış “curved tool for fruit picking” < eğ- “to bend”.

X.U. Che compared the Turkic suffix -č with the Mongolic -ča / -če (e.g., bariča “gift” < bari- “to hold”); the Tungusic-Manchu -če (e.g., irče “mature” < ir- “to grow up”); and the Korean -(V)či (e.g., kərəči “beggar” < kər- “to beg”).

However, in our view, the affixes grouped in the analysis above do not align in terms of phonetic structure and semantic-functional roles. Specifically, the Turkic -(V)č / -(V)š affixes should be compared to the Mongolic -(V)š, while Turkic -ča / -če are more appropriately aligned with the Mongolic -ča / -če, Tungusic-Manchu -če, and Korean -ča.

Accordingly, S. Sidikov compared the Mongolic suffix -(V)š with the Turkic -(V)š on the basis of examples like: xevteš “a resting place above a stove” < xevt- “to lie down”; toxoš “a cart harness” < tox- “to saddle”.

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