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Titel: Some remarks on the Yakut suffix +SXt

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Some remarks on the Yakut suffix +SXt

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There is a special Yakut suffix +SXt that forms names of diseases from body parts, e.g. *tuŷaxsīt* '(ulcerated) hoof disease' ← *tuŷax* 'hoof'. The aim of this paper is to prove the connection between the given suffix and the noun *sīt* 'smell, odour; decay, putrefaction' (cf. Old Turkic *yīd* 'odour, smell'), outlining a plausible way in which a single word could have become a suffix.

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Introduction

There are a variety of ways in a language to develop new derivational elements: resegmentation, reinterpretation and composition of old elements, sound changes, language contacts, etc. that may lead to the grammaticalization of new derivational suffixes. Sometimes it is possible to trace the given suffix back to its primary source; for instance, the fairly new English suffix *-gate* originated from the phrase *Watergate affair/scandal*. After the truncation of this phrase to *Watergate*, the ending *-gate*—in spite of the fact that it was a place-name—came to be used as a suffix meaning 'a scandal involving X' (Joseph 1998: 359–360).

Linguists of Turkic languages too have made several attempts to find the primary source of suffixes. A well-known example of this kind of attempt is linked with the name of W. Bang (1917: 925), who presumed that the Turkic suffix +dAš¹ is a compound of the locative suffix +dA and the noun *äš* 'comrade, companion';² cf. the Turkic examples in (1):

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| (1) <i>ögdäš</i> 'half brothers of the same mother' | ← <i>ög</i> 'mother' |
| <i>qarındaš</i> 'womb-fellow' | ← <i>qarın</i> 'belly, abdomen' |
| <i>yoldaš</i> 'fellow traveller' | ← <i>yol</i> 'road, way' |

¹ Lexemes in +dAš "denote persons who are companions to the entity denoted by the base noun or have the entity denoted by the base noun in common" (Erdal 1991: 119).

² Besides Bang's theory, there have been a number of attempts to explain this suffix; for further information, see TMEN 3: 191–195 and Erdal 1991: 119–120.

In the present paper an attempt will be made to investigate a special Yakut suffix $+SXt^3$ which produces terms for diseases. This derivational element has not been discussed in the literature so far, and allows us to follow the entire process of how an independent word becomes a grammaticalized suffix.

Since there is a homophonous suffix $+SXt$ (the so called *nomen actoris*) in the Yakut language, I will first briefly describe it in order to make clear that it cannot be of the same origin as the suffix denoting diseases.

Nomen actoris in $+SXt$

$+SXt$ is a well-documented suffix. It is mentioned in almost every Yakut grammar, the most important ones, in chronological order, being: Böhlingk 1851: § 387, Jastremskij 1900: § 95, Xaritonov 1947: 100, 131–132, Poppe 1959: 680, Krueger 1962: 116, Korkina 1982: § 155.

First of all this suffix forms names of occupations, describing one who has continuous or periodic activity or has a great experience in a given task. In extreme cases it is used to describe the unalterable state of humans. The base can be a noun (2), an adjective (3) or a verbal noun (4):

- (2) *balıksıt* ‘fisherman’ ← *balık* ‘fish’
masčıt ‘woodcutter’ ← *mas* ‘wood, tree’
iriahıt ‘singer’ ← *irĩa* ‘song’
- (3) *kırahıt* ‘small/young thief; captious man’ ← *kıra* ‘small, little’
- (4) *ölüöxsüt* ‘dead, deceased’ ← *ölüöx* ‘one who will die (future participle of *öl-* ‘to die’)
ardı:hit ‘rower’ ← *ardı:* ‘rowing by oars; oar (from *ärt-* ‘to row by oars’)

In some cases the derivative can be used as an attribute (5):

- (5) *bulčut* (üt) ‘hunter (dog)’ ← *bult* ‘booty, loot; goods, prey (of a hunt)’
oloñxohut (*kihi*) ‘*oloñxo*-teller, (a man) who is a good teller of heroic epics’ ←
oloñxo ‘heroic epic’

Undoubtedly this Yakut suffix $+SXt$ can be connected with the general Turkic $+čI$ and Mongolic $+či(n)$; cf. point 6 and 7. However, there is no clear explanation for the final /t/ of the suffix. Böhlingk (1851: § 225) was the first who thought that this

³ Yakut suffixes have a wide set of morphophonological variants; thus capital letters are used to give standardised forms. According to the last syllable of the base, S can be /h/, /s/, /č/, /j/ or /ñ/; and X can be /i/, /i/, /u/ or /ü/.

segment originated from the Mongolic plural suffix +*d*, presuming that the Yakut speakers misunderstood or misused it; this idea does not seem plausible.⁴

- (6) *baliqčiči* 'fisherman' ← *baliq* 'fish'
sabčiči 'messenger' ← *sab* 'a speech'
- (7) *qoničiči(n)* 'shepherd' ← *qonin* 'sheep'
emčiči 'physician' ← *em* 'medicine'

Nomen morboris in +SXt

There are seven words altogether collected from Pekarskij's dictionary in (8) and (9). A simple morphological analysis shows that these are derivations with a certain suffix +SXt. The base noun designates a body part and the suffix +SXt refers to a specific disease relevant to the given part of the body. There is one exception in (9), where the base is not only a body part, but a diseased one.

- (8) *tiiñiraxsūt* 'felon, whitlow; hoof disease' ← *tiiñirax* 'nail'; cf. Turkic *tirnaq* id.
tuŷaxsūt '(ulcerated) hoof disease' ← *tuŷax* 'hoof'; cf. Turkic *tuŷaq* id.
bilčarxayjūt, *bilčarxaljūt* 'scrofula' ← *bilčarxay* 'gland'; cf. Mongolic *bulčirqai* id.
küömäljūt, *küömäl'it*, *küömärjūt* 'grievous abscess in the throat; throat disease of horses (may be fatal); scarlet fever, diphtheria' ← *küömäy* 'throat'; cf. Mongolic *kömegei* 'pharynx; throat'
xabarğasūt 'sore throat' ← *xabarğa* 'throat' ← ? *xabar-* 'to be angry'; cf. Turkic *qabar-* 'to become a container; to form a blister, vesicle';⁵
süräxsit 'painful heart disease caused by trichinosis' ← *süräx* 'heart'; cf. Turkic *yüräk* id.
- (9) *sosumtağajūt* 'scrofula' ← *sosumtağay* '(one who has) glandular swelling'; cf. Mongolic *soči-*, *čoči-* 'to swell (of glands)'

As mentioned above, this suffix (or other ones similar in function and phonetic form) has not been discussed in the Turcological literature. In addition, there is no trace of a similar suffix in the languages with which Yakut has had language contact.

There is a word in the Yakut lexicon which can be connected with the *nomen morboris* suffix +SXt, which is *sūt* meaning 'smell, odour; decay, putrefaction'. It is of Turkic origin, cf. Turkic *yūd* 'smell, odour'.⁶ The key to the relation between the suffix and the single noun in question is the meaning 'decay, putrefaction'. We find two words in (8) where this meaning can be caught in the very act: *tiiñiraxsūt* 'felon, whitlow; hoof disease' and *tuŷaxsūt* '(ulcerated) hoof disease'. Smelly putrefaction, purulent infection (at the end of a finger, toe or hoof) is a characteristic feature of

⁴ As the problem of the final /t/ does not closely relate to the subject of this paper, it is left open for future discussions.

⁵ For a detailed explanation, see Kalużyński 1993: 89.

⁶ Yakut *s-* ~ Turkic *y-* is a regular correspondence.

both diseases. The other five examples too denote diseases which can cause ulceration or inflammation; and ‘decay, putrefaction’ in a figurative sense means ‘diseased’ of the organ in question. Although the word *süräxsit* does not describe a disease which has visible symptoms, it belongs in this group.

Accordingly, I suppose that these terms for diseases originally were simple nominal compounds. Reconstructed forms can be found in (10):

- (10) *tiiñiraxsit* ‘felon, whitlow; hoof disease’ ← **tiiñirax sit* ‘putrefaction of the
nails/hooves’
bilčarxayjūt ‘scrofula’ ← **bilčarxay sit* ‘ulceration of the glands’
süräxsit ‘painful heart disease’ ← **süräx sit* ‘putrefaction, disease of the heart’

In the Turkic languages nominal compounds usually follow the possessive pattern: noun + noun + third-person possessive suffix, e.g. Yakut *atax iarī:ta* [leg disease:POSS.3P.SG]⁷ ‘rheumatism’, *kün sirä* [sun land:POSS.3P.SG] ‘the sunlit World Globe, the Earth (of people)’; Turkish *el çantası* [hand bag:POSS.3P.SG] ‘handbag’; and Old Turkic *täñri yeri* [god land:POSS.3P.SG] ‘divine land’, *äb qapıǵı* [house door:POSS.3P.SG] ‘front-door’.

However, Turkic has numerous cases where the possessive suffix is absent. This sort of compounds can be divided into two groups: (a) nominal compounds with descriptive satellite, or identity attribution (qualifying attribute + noun), where both nouns refers to the same entity. The attribute often describes the material of which the given object is made, and has adjectival characteristic, e.g. Yakut *ta:s jǵä* [stone house] ‘house made of stone’, Turkish *yün palto* [wool coat] ‘coat made of wool’, and Old Turkic *tämir talquqlar* [iron nail:PL] ‘iron nails’; (b) noun + noun type of nominal compounds used similarly as those with possessive satellite, e.g. Yakut *oskuola jǵä* [school house] ‘school building’, *süräx uru:* [heart relative] ‘relation of persons (felt) by heart’, *kis⁸ orto⁹* [winter middle] ‘the middle of winter’, *kis xa:r* [winter snow] ‘winter snow’,¹⁰ and Old Turkic *taqıǵu yil¹¹* [hen year] ‘the year of the hen’, *kün orto¹²* [day middle] ‘noon (lit. the middle of the day)’.

Accordingly, there are two possible ways in which the Yakut suffix +*SXt* could have developed: First, the original forms were made with the possessive satellite; thus, for example, the word *tiiñiraxsit* would derive from a proto-form **tiiñirax sita*

⁷ The 3rd person singular possessive suffix in Yakut is +(i)A; cf. Turkic +(s)I ~ +(s)X.

⁸ Since the word ‘winter’ is *kihin* in modern Yakut, compounds formed by *kis* id. seem to be considerably old.

⁹ Cf. the compound *kis ortoto* [winter middle:POSS.3P.SG].

¹⁰ Korkina 1982: § 215 and Xaritonov 1947: § 64 describe the noun + noun type of nominal compounds, but their examples mostly belong to group (a).

¹¹ Cf. Šu N10 and the form *taqaǵu yili* ‘name of one of the twelve years in Turkic’ with possessive suffix in Ka:š 224–225.

¹² This compound appears several times in Old Turkic, e.g. in IrkB 24. Forms with possessive suffix (*kün ortosi*) also have been registered; cf. Clauson 1972: 203b–204a.

[nail putrefaction:POSS.3P.SG]. This etymology, however, is not convincing because the word-final low vowel should have been preserved in modern Yakut. Second, the original compounds lacked the possessive suffix, and belong to the group (b) mentioned above. The reconstructed form, for example, of *tiiñiraxsit* can be given as **tiiñirax sit*. In this way the word *sit* could have become a derivational element; it now behaves as a real suffix because morphophonological variants are applied correctly.

Finally, a generalized form in (11) shows the initial and final state of the process in which an independent word becomes a suffix.

- (11) [body part:nomen morborosis.SXt ← body part putrefaction]

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