

The Intensive Degree of Adjectives of Altaic Languages in the Comparative Interpretation

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1. The comparison is based on Japanese forms of the intensive degree of adjectives such as *ma-k:uro* 'completely black' from *kuro* 'black', *ma-m:aru* 'entirely round' from *maru* 'round'. The ancient form of the intensive in Japanese is also supposed to be in the form "the prefix *ma* + reduplication" (Поливанов 1968: 143-144).

2. The formal indication of the intensive in Turkic languages is the reduplication of the first syllable of the adjective added by consonants *p* or *m* (rarely *s* or *r*), e.g.: *kapkara* 'entirely black' from *kara* 'black', *sapsarı* 'entirely yellow' from *sarı* 'yellow', *gömgök* 'entirely blue' from *gök* 'blue', *bomboş* 'completely empty' from *boş* 'empty', *masmavi* 'entirely blue' from *mavi* 'sky-blue', *cırcılpak* 'entirely bare' from *cılpak* 'bare', etc.

The late appearance of the elements *s* and *r* in Turkic languages is undoubtable. But the consonants *p* and *m* (the latter appeared in this function later), can probably, be traced back to the common for them element *b* as the transition $p > m$ is less probable.

3. The priority of the element *b* is also confirmed by the facts of Mongolian where the formation of the intensive degree is analogous to Turkic languages. The examples given by G.J.Ramstedt (Рамстедт 1957:219) show that a reduplicated syllable in Mongolian has a consonant ending *b*, e.g.: *qab qara* 'entirely black' from *qara* 'black', *šab šara* 'entirely yellow' from *šara* 'yellow', *čab čağan* 'entirely white' from *čağan* 'white', *ub ulan* 'entirely red' from *ulan* 'red', etc. It should be noted that in modern Mongolian and Kalmuk there happened a shift of *b* into *v* in this position (Орловская 1961:98; Бадмаев 1966:54).

4. For establishing the ancient form of the Turkic intensive (which can be identified with the Mongolian form) the following should be taken into consideration. In many Turkic languages there are certain cases of forming the intensive degree when the vowel *a* (*ə*, *e*) is added to the reduplicated syllable. In this case the element *p* is often geminated, e.g.: Azerb. *sapasağ /sappasağ* 'completely healthy', Kaz. *tuppa-tura* 'completely straight', Karach.-Balk. *chippe-chiy* 'completely row', Tur. *düpedüz* 'downright, openly', etc. The use of such forms in Turkic written monuments of Middle Ages is a common case. This and the wide areal spreading of this form give grounds for regarding it as an element existing in the ancient Turkic language.

5. So the Turkic form of intensive may be expressed in the form "the affix *-ba-* + reduplication". The functional and semantic conformity of the Japanese and Turkic forms is obvious: both of them serve to express the

superlative degree of the quality which characterises the object without comparing it with other ones.

There is a ground for speaking about the correspondence between the stated ancient forms in the material aspect, the more so, as the phonetic correspondence between the ancient Japanese *m* and ancient Turkic *b* has been established (Азербаетв 1985:77). Difference in the nature of reduplication in the compared languages cannot be a barrier for approachment since historically they developed on the basis of common complete reduplication.

The correspondence between the Japanese and Turkic forms of the intensive degree can be proved by the fact in both cases the intensive element precedes the stem. Since this is the only prefix in Turkic languages and one of a few prefixes in Japanese the analogy cannot be considered as accidental.

6. These forms are not parallel with those in the Korean and Manchu-Tungus languages. In spite of the formal similarity the Evenki form of the intensifying degree *-ma* (usually reduplicated) has nothing common with the above stated forms. First of all, the Evenki morpheme is not a prefix but a suffix. Secondly, not the adjective or its part but the morpheme itself is reduplicated. Generally speaking in the Korean and Manchu-Tungus languages the morphological way of expressing the intensive degree is not enough developed. In the majority of these languages the corresponding meaning is expressed either syntactically or by means of affixes with different grammatical meanings which besides their main functions serve to express the intensive degree of adjectives.

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