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# SEMANTIC FEATURES OF SOME TURKIC WORDS IN THE FOLKLORE LANGUAGE OF KHOREZM REGION

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**ABSTRACT**

*This article investigates the semantic features of certain Turkic words found in the folklore language of the Khorezm. The oral literary heritage of the Khorezm people, rich with diverse genres, represents an integral part of the general Turkic and Uzbek artistic and cultural heritage, reflecting the national worldview, history, and values of the people. By analyzing the lexical layers of the Khorezm folklore, particularly through historical-comparative linguistics, etymology, and dialectology, the study highlights the preservation of ancient Turkic lexemes and their original meanings within this folklore. The article explores the common morphological patterns in Turkic languages, especially suffixes like -q, -g‘, -k, and their role in word formation and semantic development. Through detailed analysis of examples from Khorezm dialects and comparative data from other Turkic languages, the research reveals deep-rooted connections among Turkic languages and contributes to understanding the historical lexical development of the Uzbek language. The study underlines the significance of Khorezm folklore as a fundamental resource for the linguistic and cultural study of Turkic heritage.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Khorezm Folklore, Turkic Lexicon, Semantic Features, Word Formation, Suffixes, Historical Linguistics, Etymology, Uzbek Language, Dialectology, Oral Literature.*

As a result of the consistent development throughout the works of the artistic potential of the people of the Khorezm, oral artistic creations composed of various genres are considered an integral part of the national value system of the common Turkic, and especially the general Uzbek artistic thought. Indeed, these works reflect the people's national consciousness, worldview, lifestyle, and history. From this perspective, it is highly relevant to conduct linguistic research on the folklore materials of the oasis.

In particular, folklore materials play an extremely important role in realizing that the similarities and commonalities in the languages of Turkic peoples are far greater than we previously imagined. For example, in the dialects of Khorezm, there is the phrase *yamanliq sag’inmaq*, which means to consider it permissible to do harm to someone. This phrase is actually in the form of a compound verb, and its meaning can also be understood by examining the verb *sag’in-* in some other Turkic languages.

In Old Uzbek, the verb **sog‘in- (sag‘ын-)**, which currently means “to be sorrowful longing to see,” “to feel longing,” besides this meaning, also conveys “to consider,” “to understand,” “to suspect,” and “to think.” Additionally, the verb **sag‘ındurmoq** carries the meanings “to remind,” “to recall,” and “to bring to mind” [1.571]. Specifically, in Old Uzbek, the following semantic nuances of the verb **sag‘in-** are observed:

1. To think: “Sahar namozin ayturda ul xuftan sog‘indi” (He thought at dawn prayer about that person);
2. To consider, to believe: “…bozurgon meni yaxshi amin kishi sog‘inib,…” (…the elder believed me to be trustworthy);
3. To suppose, to imagine: “Abu Solih o‘lsa, kim bila suhbat tutqungdur? Dedim: bilmon. Dedi: halo hamul sog‘inki, ul o‘lubdur” (If Abu Solih is dead, who will talk with you? I said: I don’t know. He said: I suppose he is dead);
4. To hope, to expect: “Sog‘indimki, oxir bo‘lg‘usidur” (I hope that it has come to an end);
5. To suspect: “Masjid hodimi ul suvni ko‘rub sog‘inibdurki, darvesh bavl qilibdur” (The mosque official suspected that the water caused the dervish’s sickness);
6. To long for, to desire: “…majolisu mahofilda ani sog‘inib, istihson qilur ermish” (He longed and praised at the gathering) [2. 27; 72; 99; 241; 226].

Furthermore, the verb **sag‘ındurmoq**, based on the root meaning “to remember,” also has a semantic extension to “to grieve,” “to feel sorrow”: in the phrase “oxir o‘zni sog‘indurmoq kerak” [2.208], the meaning inferred is “a person must also think about and grieve for themselves.”

Some analyses show a connection between these two meanings, revealing that they intersect at a certain point. Considering that this verb is formed based on the Old Turkic root **saqы** [3.118], which means “to worry about someone,” and that **saqы // sag‘ы** [4.178] originally was an independent verb meaning “to want” or “to love,” its evolution becomes clearer. G. Ramstedt compares

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these meanings with the Tungusic verb **sa-**, which independently means “to speak,” “to think,” and “to do” [5.296]. We believe that the first two meanings of the Tungusic verb correspond to meanings in Turkic languages as well.

For instance, the words **sav // sag‘** meaning “message” and currently the term for a person deputed to obtain consent from the bride’s side to the groom, as well as in Old Turkic and 11th–14th-century inscriptions meaning “envoy” or “prophet,” are formed based on this root. Studies in Turkology have paid considerable attention to the semantic shift of **sa-** into the meaning “to want” and the expression of verbal modality [6].

One of the meanings of **sa-** is “to think.” By analogy, the noun form **saq // sag‘** meaning “thought” or “idea” emerged. Through the suffix **-n**, the verb forms **saqы // sag‘ы** emerged with meanings such as “to think,” “to want,” “to grieve,” “to ponder,” “to guess,” etc. The convergence of these meanings lies exactly here.

The presence of the meaning “to reflect,” “to consider” in Old Turkic monuments for **saqın-** also indicates the deep roots of its semantic development: “buncha isig kuchug bartukgaru saqынmatы” — “not worrying about so much effort and strength spent” [7.104].

Similarly, in the Yakut language, the verb **sanna-**, and in Khakas, **sağın-**, mean “to think.” Our observations are supported by the existence in Khorezm epics of the compound verb **istab-sog‘in**: “But didn’t G‘oro‘gli long for the dutar, starting to play the ‘Black Valley’ tune? Seeing these words, the bard took his horse and dutar and left” [8.75].

**Commonality in Word Formation Patterns of Turkic Languages as a Reflection of Shared Cognitive Foundations**

The commonalities observed in the word formation patterns of Turkic languages persist as a product of the shared cognitive framework of their speakers. For instance, the suffix **-q // -g‘ // -k** is widely used as a word-forming element across Turkic languages. Analysis of words belonging to the Turkic layer indicates that this suffix frequently functions to derive nouns expressing the result of an action denoted by a verb. Examples include **yazuq** (sin, fault), **tilək** (wish, desire), and **qылыq** (behavior) [7.27]. In its role as an adjectival suffix, this morpheme also implies the result of an action, as seen in words like **ulug‘** (grown, mature) or **to‘liq** (full, complete).

During the subsequent development of Turkic languages, the semantic scope of this suffix expanded considerably. For example, in Azerbaijani and Uzbek, this suffix is noted to express meanings such as object, tool, result of action, sign, name of process, and even subject [9. 207-208]. The word **yırtıq** (torn) serves as an illustrative case. In Khorezm, the proverb “ishtanы yoq tizi yırtıqa qulipti” (“the trouser-less knee mocked the torn one”) exists. Morphologically, **yırtıq** decomposes into **yırt + t + uq** components. The root **yırt-** is an Old Turkic verb that, when combined with the intensifying suffix **-t**, forms the base verb. The meanings of **yırt-** in Uzbek dialects likely originally included “to separate.” For example, “suv qulaqtı yırdı” means “the water leaked from the ditch.” Thus, the verb meaning “to move suddenly from one place to another” or “to separate” is derived by adding the suffix **-a** to **yırt-**.

In *Qutadghu Bilig*, the verb **yıra-** is used in the sense of “to distance”: “jiradы maniңdin jigitlik adы” (“the youthhood has distanced itself from me”) [10.212]. The verb **uza-**, less commonly used in the meaning “to distance,” corresponds to Old Turkic **ɥz** [11.178], meaning “to separate from the whole.” Both verbs, when combined with the suffix **-q** expressing the result of an action, give rise to adjectives **yıraq** and **uzaq**. These synonyms are used interchangeably in Uzbek, Turkmen, Altay, and Tuvan languages [10.209].

Comparison of these two Old Uzbek words, as in contemporary Uzbek, shows semantic differences between them: “Va ul nimadin yiroq bo‘lki, seni Tengri taolodin mashg‘ul qilg‘ay...” (“And if he is distant from you for any reason, may God occupy him...”) and “andoqki, so‘z uzoqqa tortti...” (“Thus, the word was extended far...”) [2. 152; 115].

If we consider that **bag‘ // bav** (meaning “tie,” “binding object”) historically derived from the root **ba-** [5.53; 208], the consonants **q/g‘/x** (back velar consonants) often form nouns from CV-type bases, expressing the instrument or abstract noun of an action.

One word formed with this suffix is **ulug‘**. The first part, **ulu**, means “big,” “great,” or “chief” in many Turkic languages [5. 402]. The form and meaning are also recorded in *Kitob al-idrok* [5.402]. It is likely that **ulu** itself is derived from the root **ul-** plus the suffix **-u**. This pattern of verb formation can also be seen in verbs like **ɣy+ɣ** (“to sleep”).

Adding the suffix **-q // -g‘** to the stem **ulu-** forms the word **uluq // ulug‘**. It is justified to say that **ulug‘** derives from the Old Turkic verb **ul-** (“to be high”) [3.389]. It is appropriate to analyze its composition as **ul + u + g‘**.

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In the works of Alisher Navoi, including *Nasoyim*, the semantics of this word differ from the modern literary language's **katta** ("big") by closer affinity. In other words, **ulug'** in classical usage combined the meanings now covered by **katta**, and functioned as a synonym for **biyik** ("tall," "great"). Examples illustrate that it originally did not carry the modern senses of "great," "ideal," or "genius": "Tengri taolo tavfiqi birla bu ulug' ishg'a ilik urdum" ("With God's help, I undertook this great deed"); "…ul adabdurki, yaxshiyu yomong'a va ulug'u kichikka bajo keltirurlar" ("It is that etiquette which brings benefit to good and bad, great and small alike") [2.12; 18].

It is evident that the linguistic study of folklore vocabulary not only yields pure scientific results but also serves an important socio-spiritual function by bringing peoples closer and fostering unity.

Khorezm folklore, especially its epics, clearly demonstrates itself as an invaluable source for studying the ancient layers and dialectal features of the Uzbek language. The identification and study of the Turkic lexical layer rely on the theoretical foundations and practical principles of historical-comparative linguistics, etymology, and dialectology. In this process, comparing words with other Turkic languages and ancient written monuments to establish their etymological roots is crucial.

The presence of numerous original Turkic words in the lexical fund of Khorezm folklore, preserving their archaic forms and primary meanings, is firmly established. Analyzing the Turkic lexical layer in Khorezm folklore is of fundamental importance for the historical lexicology, dialectology, and etymology of the Uzbek language. Systematic study of folklore vocabulary allows for a deeper understanding of the ancient roots of our language, its historical development, and its connections with other Turkic languages.

Therefore, expanding research on Khorezm folklore lexicon remains an urgent scientific and practical task for the future.

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