

A Textual Research on the Modern Uyghur Terms Referring to Corn from the Etymological Aspect

Shuhua Shen

College of Chinese Ethnic Languages, Xinjiang University, Urumqi, Xinjiang, 830046, China.

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Abstract. Based on the theory of etymology, together with relative documents and historical facts, this paper analyzes the etymon of two terms: qonaq and kǎmmiqonaq, which refer to "corn" in Modern Uyghur language. The word meaning enhancement and weakening of qonaq, and the forming of the word kǎmmiqonaq, reflect objective reality at that time and people's subjective perceptions of objective things have the profound influence on language, and also provide some important agricultural information to us.

1. Introduction

Corn, also known as maize, is called bao gu(苞谷), bang zi(棒子), zheng zhu mi(珍珠米), Yu Shu(玉林), sorgo(芦粟), sorghum(玉高粱), wheat(番麦) by the Chinese and there are more than 100 other names for it to list. Corn is native to Latin America. China introduced corn in the mid-16th century. The earliest records of corn is found in a book named Gongxian Records, which was written in 1555 during the years of Jiaping in Ming Dynasty.

Corn was introduced to Xinjiang in the middle period of the reign of Qianlong in Qing Dynasty (around the 18th century) [1], and it is now often called baogu(苞谷) or baogu(苞谷) in Xinjiang. Corn favors warmer climate and is easy to cultivate and manage. Corn is easy to get good harvest in the farmlands with perfect irrigating systems. Since the farmlands in Xinjiang meet these natural requirements well, corn became staple food crop at the end of the Qing dynasty after its introduction and a relatively short period of promotion. Its importance as staple food crop and its sown area is greatly enhanced, second only to wheat.

There are two terms used to refer to corn in modern Uyghur language: one is qonaq, the other kǎmmiqonaq. The two terms are different in stylistic function: qonaq is used in speech, while kǎmmiqonaq in writing.

2. The Etymological Analysis of the Term Qonaq

According to the ancient documents known, qonaq is first utilized to refer to millet in the papers and studies of Uighur script in the late 8th century. For example, 1) qonaq meni(millet flour); qonaq tygisi(the unshelled millet)[2]. qonaq, sometimes written as qonuq, is still used to refer to millet in the documents of Uighur script from the 11th to the 15th century. For example, 2) it is recorded in the Turkic Dictionary (roll one), "qonaq refers to millet, it is quoted in the saying: qonaq ba●i s●zr●ki j●g, which means millet is best for thinning, for being thin, the fruits would be large and for thick, the small" [3]. 3) It is recorded in Manichaean documents: aj saju iki ●nt●man t●ngril●g● s●kiz●r on ●iq bu●daj jiti●iq kynt●it iki ●iq burt●aq yt● ●iq qonuq birzynliw tutzyn, which means the monks will be supported with ten dan (as a unit of volume) of corn, seven dan of sesame, two dan of beans, and three dan of grains each month as their food. [4];

In the Chagatai documents written during 18th century, the word meaning of the term qonaq got generalized. Instead of a species concept, the term qonaq became a generic concept and a collective name, covering not only millet but also a series of crops like sorghum and corn. A clear definite record of this change can be found in Wuti qingwen jian (Five-Fold Mirror to the National Language), a series of multi-lingual dictionaries from the Qing period compiled on imperial order. qonaq(rice); to●ar qonaq(sorghum); tutu●a●u qonaq(sticky sorghum); sypyr●u qonaq(broom sorghum);

k̡m̡ qonaq(jade sorghum); t̡yd̡yn qonaq(millet)[5]. Among them, the latter five words are compound words with prejudiced construction, and qonaq being their center word. Millet, sorghum and corn are of the same family-Gramineae, and they share similar morphological characteristics in stem, leaf and ear. Sorghum and corn has various aliases in Chinese, for instance, sorghum in ancient Chinese was called “liang” which belongs to one of the varieties of millet. In modern Chinese, sorghum is also named as “shu”, “lu”, “iauts” and so on. The aliases of corn can be classified into different categories: wheat, broomcorn millet, Maydeae, sorghum, millet, beans, rice, grains, phragmites. These aliases are precise reflections showing that people from different regions have different understanding and awareness about the generic relationship between millet, sorghum and corn, but since these crops share much similarities, most people view them as the same genus.

People’s perception of these crops is reflected on the language level and the crops are often expressed by using a central word that denotes the generic concept and indicates the commonalities. To distinguish them, by word-building methods with modified compositions.

The appearance of the following terms: to̡ar qonaq(sorghum), tutu̡a̡u̡u̡ qonaq(sticky sorghum), sypyr̡u̡ qonaq(brom sorghum), k̡m̡ qonaq(corn), t̡yd̡yn qonaq(millet)reflects people’s perception of viewing millet, sorghum and corn as the same genus.It is suggested that the terms to̡ar qonaq, tutu̡a̡u̡u̡ qonaq, sypyr̡u̡ qonaq, k̡m̡ qonaq, t̡yd̡yn qonaq have transformed into hyponyms of qonaq, indicating that millet, sorghum and corn have been subdivided from qonaq in Uyghur, getting their specific names ever since. This is not only a result of the change in the proportion of millet, sorghum and corn cultivation structure, but also a reflection of Uyghur people’s more scientific perception on the three different crops.

The semantic change of qonaq in this period can be verified by the using of qonaq to mention Cangmi, the grains stored in the official storehouse, in the Chagatai. Chinese ancient food grain reserve system was first established in the Xia Dynasty, matured in the Qin and Han dynasties, and completed in the Ming and Qing Dynasty. It played important role on relieving famine and disaster, stabilizing food prices, and maintaining social stability. The grains stored included rice, millet, wheat, beans, sorghum and so on, which was quite different from place to place according to the local demand.Before the Han Dynasty, the food grain reserved around the state was mainly millet, and during the Han and Tang Dynasty, millet and wheat were stored as the main food grain. After Tang and Song Dynasty, the food grains reserved were unhulled rice or rice in the southern rice producing provinces and rice, unhulled rice, wheat, and beans in the north. However, in the history of food grain reserve, millet has always been important because of its particular characteristics: hard shell, insect-proof, moisture-proof, thus can be stored for decades. Rice cultivation in Xinjiang was restricted during the period of Qing Dynasty, due to the limitation of the natural conditions. The natives valued wheat rather than the rice then, and the government did not reserve and even tax on wheat. [6] so, the food grains reserve did not included rice in XinJiang at that time. The food grain reserve in the governmental warehouses of Urumqi in the earlier days of Qianlong’s reign mainly includes millet, panicum miliaceum and other crops [7]; In the middle period of Qianlong’s reign, sorghum became the main grain to be reserved [8]. Since the thirteenth year of the reign of Guangxu (1887), “people in Hotan(a district in southern Xin Jiang) set up a social warehouse by collecting corn from every household. "peasants donated corn, , each year to borrow 50%, the book to take a bucket." To donate 8,460 stone (as a unit of volume), in addition to the usual expenditure of the calendar year to operate the various costs of the social warehouse, cut to Guangxu 34 years, in fact, 19,592 stones are stored "[9] and so on." According to the Chagatai documents in the 18th century, qonaq was naturally used to refer to Cangmi instead of the Word gyryt (rice), due to the fact that millet, sorghum, and corn had become the main varieties of grain stored in the governmental warehouses. This was justified by the generalization of the word meaning of qonaq in this period.

In modern times, Millet has faded out of the Modern Uyghur grain planting structure and diet, the concept of the genus category of qonaq has shrunk, becoming a general term for sorghum and corn. The word qonaq now can referred to both corn and sorghum in Modern Uyghur colloquial language. However, since the large-scale planting of corn, and its wide distribution as well as its important

position in the Uighur production consumption structure far surpasses sorghum in Xinjiang, people now prefer using qonaq to refer to corn in their oral communications.

3. The Etymological Analysis of the Term $K\text{̣}m\text{̣}m\text{̣}iqonaq$

$K\text{̣}m\text{̣}m\text{̣}iqonaq$ is a compound word with prejudiced construction, which is compound of $k\text{̣}m\text{̣}m\text{̣}$ and qonaq. The meaning of " $k\text{̣}m\text{̣}m\text{̣}$ " is "Buried in the fire to bake" [10]. It is an adjective which is made up of verbal suffixes " $k\text{̣}m\text{̣}m\text{̣}$ " meaning "bury" and Additional suffix $-m$; It is a specific word used to refer to corn with the qonaq that represents the concept of the genus category. In the existing ancient Uyghur documents $k\text{̣}m\text{̣}m\text{̣}iqonaq$ was recorded earliest in Wuti qingwen jian. The term $k\text{̣}m\text{̣}m\text{̣}$ is form of provincial writing of the static word $k\text{̣}m\text{̣}m\text{̣}$.

So, how was term $k\text{̣}m\text{̣}m\text{̣} qonaq$ created? As mentioned before, the time which Corn as a new crop be introduced into European countries was relatively late, but it was rapidly popularized in a short period of time. It was very unrealistic for a country or region that originally introduced corn to create a neologism or borrow a foreign word to meet the needs of reference in production and life in the short term. The quickest and most efficient way was to create neologism by using words that were well known and can produce similar associations with the referent objects. In fact, it was also one of the ways in which most of neologism were created and enriched. Corn has many similarities with sorghum and millet in the morphological characteristics of stem, leaf, ear and grain, especially the seedlings of corn are very similar to sorghum. Therefore, it is natural that people place corn, sorghum and millet to the same genus category in cognition, and it is natural in language that people use the generic concept term "*qonaq*" as a formative for *ḳṃṃiqonaq*. Although there are many similarities between the three crops in people's cognition, such as millet, sorghum and corn, but they are different in essence. They belong to different families of plants in the classification of natural science, and have obvious differences between them. In eighteenth Century, the level of agricultural production in Xinjiang has been greatly improved than before. It is reflected in the varieties of crops that they have a more detailed and clear division. So, the corn had referential term *ḳṃṃ qonaq* in Uyghur language.

Why choose $k\text{̣}m\text{̣}m\text{̣}$ as parts of $k\text{̣}m\text{̣}m\text{̣} qonaq$, but not other words? Which is closely related to its motivation of word-building. "The word-formation and the acquisition of the names of things are closely related to the objective reality. According to the understanding and evaluation of various features of the objective things, people name and create neologism, and always hope to put informations related with things into the names." [11] According to records of 《Shengjing annals》 written at the beginning of eighteenth Century, when Liaoning plain just introduced the cultivation of corn, people made corn as staple food. This shows that corn was not main food crops at that time, which was the same as the corn was introduced in Xinjiang. Corn was used as a main grain crops mainly from the beginning of Qing Daoguang period. Then, how did corn come to be known at that time after introduction in Xinjiang? The answer is that when corn was introduced at the beginning of Xinjiang, its fruit of corn should be often roasted to eat. This way of eating has become an important feature of corn, which became the reason for $k\text{̣}m\text{̣}m\text{̣} qonaq$ created. We can also find evidence from Modern Uyghur dialect: $\text{̣}urlima$ is the specific word of Hami dialect [12], referring to corn. $\text{̣}urlima$ is a noun that is composed of verb $\text{̣}urli-$ with affix $-ma$, thereinto $\text{̣}urli-$ expresses the meaning of barbecue. The way of word-building and motivation of $\text{̣}urlima$ is as well as $k\text{̣}m\text{̣}m\text{̣}$. $k\text{̣}m\text{̣}b\text{̣}$ is the specific word of Atushi dialect, referring to corn, which is phonetic change of $k\text{̣}m\text{̣}m\text{̣}$. Consonant "m" and "b" are close to their place of articulation and manner of articulation, that is, they are both bilabial consonants and each other often alternate in history. At present, "m-b" alternating phenomenon in Modern Uyghur language only exists in individual dialects. Therefore, $k\text{̣}m\text{̣}m\text{̣} qonaq$ is the term given to corn from the perspectives of attribution of corn and its perception of how it is eaten.

Uyghur people often use qonaq to refer to Corn in spoken communication, which results in a division between $k\text{̣}m\text{̣}m\text{̣}iqonaq$ and qonaq in stylistic functions, so as to meet people's needs in different situations.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, by analyzing the etymon of the two terms qonaq and k mmiqonaq, we find that the word meaning enhancement and weakening of qonaq, and the forming of the word k mmiqonaq, reflect objective reality at that time and people's subjective perceptions of objective things have the profound influence on language, and also provide some important agricultural information to us.

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