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Pregledni rad

Review paper

**Shebnem Abbasova**

## **ON THE ETYMOLOGY OF THE NEGATIVE SUFFIX *-MA* / *-ME* IN TURKISH LANGUAGES OF THE OGHUZ GROUP**

The formation of suffixes draws the great attention of turkologists. The negative suffix *ma/-me* is one the most interesting suffixes because it is not stressed. This fact led the researchers to assume that this suffix comes from an independent word, though ideas on the word that this suffix is original differ among the scientists. The following hypotheses deal with the origin of the negative suffix:

1. W. Bang's and Sh. Tekin's hypothesis;
2. G.J. Ramsted's and T. Tekin's hypothesis;
3. B.A. Serebrennikov's and N. Z. Hajiyeva's hypothesis.

In most of these hypotheses, it is stated that the suffix *-ma/-me* is connected to an auxiliary verb. The negative suffix used in the Old Turkish language and the one being used in the modern Turkic languages is the same - it has not been changed through time or has very few phonetic changes. Accordingly, all of the suggestions about its formation can only be accepted as hypotheses.

**Keywords:** Turkic languages; Oghuz group; morphology; negation

The origin and formation of suffixes are among the interesting issues in Turkology. The negative suffix *-ma/-me* is especially important in this respect. It is one of the unstressed suffixes, and these kinds of suffixes are usually considered as the morphemes formed by grammaticalization of independent words in the later stages of language history.

Another important characteristic of the suffix *-ma/-me* is the fact that this suffix is used in all the Turkic languages, as well as in the oldest written monuments with different phonetic variants, which means that the formation of this suffix goes back to the Proto-Turkic period; therefore, there are no materials and the transitional forms demonstrating the process of its formation.

There are several ideas regarding the origin of the suffix *-ma/-me*, which can be divided into two groups:

*1. The hypothesis suggested by W. Bang and improved by Sh. Tekin.*

Bang presented one of the first hypotheses about the origin of this suffix. He claimed that the suffix *-ma* was formed by suffixation of an independent word. According to him, this suffix was formed from the auxiliary verb *\*ma-*, *\*ama-*, *\*uma-*, which meant ‘not to fulfill, not to do’ (Tekin 2001: 45). W. Bang connected this word to the verb *unut-*, which, according to him, was used in the forms *umut-*, *umun-*, *umdu-*, *umtu-*, *ungtu-* in many Turkic languages and *man-* (<*\*uma-n-*) in Chuvash and such combination can be seen here: *\*al-a+ama-* ‘not to do the action of buying’ < *\*al-ı+ma-* < *\*al-ma-* (Tekin 2001: 47).

Although W. Bang’s idea seems interesting, it is not confirmed with linguistic materials. It is important to mention that the negative suffix was not registered before the verb *unut-*, whereas the suffix *-ma* was used in Orkhon-Yenisei inscriptions. Furthermore, the verb *unut* was not registered there, but it was used in Old Uyghur written monuments for the first time (Drevne tyurkskiy slovar 1969: 612).

According to Bang, the negative suffix is based on an auxiliary verb and this auxiliary verb was used together with the converbs made with the suffix *-a ~ -ı*. He stated that that was proven with the materials of the Yakut language: *kelime* ‘do not come’, *bihima* ‘do not cut’.

Bang’s hypothesis was not accepted by all Turkologists. Namely, A. M. Scherbak denied this idea and stated that that did not occur in the all verbal forms (Scherbak 1981: 98).

Since the negative suffix has been used from the oldest times of Turkic languages and it has been registered in the earliest written monuments, its present form, determining its origin is very difficult and every idea in this area can only be a hypothesis. It has also been accepted by the researchers who put forward some ideas on the formation of the suffix. For example, according to Sh. Tekin, the origin of the negative suffix *-ma/-me* cannot be determined with the materials of the old or modern Turkic languages (Tekin 2001: 44).

Sh. Tekin, like the other linguists, pointed out the fact that the negative suffix does not get stress, because according to the wide-spread idea which the author himself agrees with, unstressed suffixes were formed by the suffixation of independent words (Tekin 2001: 45). The same thing is also said about personal suffixes.

Sh. Tekin calls his theory ‘the theory of borrowing’; he agrees with W. Bang’s ideas, but shows that the auxiliary verb was borrowed from Tocharian. According to Sh. Tekin, the negative particle *ma* in Tocharian came into Turkic language before the formation of the Turkic written language (Tekin 2001: 49-50). Although the existence of these borrowed particles was not proven, had it really happened, the words would have been borrowed much before the written language. Like W. Bang, Sh. Tekin wrote that this particle was initially used in front of the imperative mood and then it became a suffix. Sh. Tekin also accepted the idea that in the earlier times, after its suffixation, this particle was used as the suffix of verbal forms ‘neutral’ in terms of tense and person, i.e., non-finite verbal forms. Afterwards, the verbs that got this suffix began to conjugate (Tekin 2001: 51-52).

However, the author himself stated that the traces of the aforementioned form had not been found in any periods of the Turkic written language.

## 2. *The hypothesis suggested by G. J. Ramstedt and developed by T. Tekin.*

G. J. Ramstedt’s hypothesis is also based on the grammaticalization of an auxiliary verb. According to him (1924), the negative suffix was formed by adding the negative verb *e-* ‘not to be’ to the infinitive made by the suffix *-m*, e.g., *bolmaq* < *\*bol-ım a-η* < *\*bolım e-η* (Tekin 2001: 48). G.J. Ramstedt’s idea regarding the origin of the suffix can be summarized as the following: nouns made from verbs by the suffix *-m* + conjugated forms of *verbum negativum* that exists as *e-* in the Uralic languages, and as *e-/a-* in the Tungstic languages. He connected the negative verb *e-* in the Tungusic languages to the verbs *a-* ‘to be’ in the Mongolic languages and *er-* in the Old Turkic language (Tekin 2013: 208). The construction in the form of ‘main verb + auxiliary verb’ was the main point of this hypothesis. However, this idea has not been not accepted by the all linguists. According to Sh. Tekin’s opinion, there are many lacking points in this hypothesis:

1. If *e-* were an auxiliary verb, it would be added to converbs, not to infinitives with the suffix *-m*.

2. During the process of suffixation, the stress would be kept in the second syllable of the word *nolım*, and the stressed vowel would not disappear; then the form *\*kelim e-di* > *\*kelim-di* should have appeared. This same process happened in the functional

words *ile* and *ise* (Tekin 2001: 48). It is also doubtful how a negative form was made from the combination of a deverbal noun and a verb meaning ‘to be’.

G.J. Ramstedt stated that the negative suffix was made from the combination of deverbal noun-making suffix *-m* and the auxiliary verber- ‘to be’ (Ramstedt 1957: 101), but this hypothesis cannot explain how the negative suffix was formed.

A similar idea has been put presented by K. Menges. It is explained as the following: deverbal noun-making suffix *-ma/-me-* + the Altaic negative verb *e-*. However, this idea did not satisfy T. Tekin because if there were a syllable combination there, the suffix should have been stressed (Tekin 2013: 208).

Tekin wrote a special article about the origin of the suffix *-ma/-me* and examined this matter deeply. Like Sh. Tekin, he paid attention to the fact that the suffix was not stressed in the first place and came to the following conclusion: “The fact that the negative suffix does not get stress in the Turkic languages shows that the verbal forms made with this suffix had actually been a group of words or a phrase consisting of two words” (Tekin 2013: 207).

According to T. Tekin, G.J. Ramstedt’s version is “the most reasonable and “acceptable one.”. He tried to confirm that idea with the information given below: “In the most Tungusic languages, negative forms of verbs are made with the negative auxiliary verbe- added before the main verb” (Tekin 2013: 209).

In order to prove these ideas, T. Tekin emphasized out the word *eng* ‘no, not’, *eng eng* ‘no, no! not, not!’ which was attributed to the language of the Oghuz in *Divanlu Lughat it-Turk*. He connected that word with *engi*, which is one of the negative particles in the Tungusic languages (Tekin 2003: 210). He also showed that Mahmud Kashghari had registered the negative particle *ep* (*ap* in B. Atalay), and connected it with the negative particle *aba* in Nanai and Manchu (Tekin 2013: 211). Tekin also wrote about the negative adverb *bidi* ‘never’ in the Old Turkic, connecting it to the negative particle *ežiin* Tungus.

As a conclusion, he showed the way of formation of the negative suffix like this: *kel'im edi* > *kel'medi* > *gel'medi* (Tekin 2013: 211). Although that idea seems reasonable, there are not enough linguistic materials to prove it.

This idea continued. For instance, L. Tohti accepted G.J. Ramstedt’s idea with T. Tekin’s correction, i.e. the connection of the negative suffix *-ma* with the suffix *-m* of verbal nouns and the negative verb *\*e-* ‘not to be’ (Tohti 2001: 127). L. Tohti explained it as the following: “First of all, there is a general rule in Turkic languages, i.e., when two verbs are used one after another the first one must be in a substantive form, even if the second one is a copular or auxiliary verb” (Tohti 2001: 128). The

constant use of the auxiliary verb \**e-* after verbal nouns with the suffix *-m* caused their combination. Such combinations are still used in the modern Uyghur, e.g., the form *-p yat-* > *-wat*: *ukuwat* <*ukup yat-* “continue to read” (Tohti 2001: 128).

L. Tohti expressed ideas about why the negative verb was used before the main verb, when its suffixal variant was used after the main verb. According to the author, it happens because these languages have suffixes, not prefixes (Tohti 2001: 135). However, it is still obscure how an auxiliary verb used before a main word turns into an affix that is used after it.

O. Pritsak showed that there was the main verb *ä-* with negative meaning in Old Turkic (Tohti 2001: 129). The existence of the negative verb *e-* was also noted by A.N. Kononov, but his idea is a little different. According to A. N. Kononov’s opinion, a different combination took place here: the converb with the suffix *-a* or *-t* the adverbial form of the negative verb *a-/e-* with the suffixes *-pa/-pe*, *-ba/-be*, *-ma(n)/-me(n)* (Kononov 1980: 172).

Tekin did not approve the idea that the oldest form of the negative suffix had the consonant *b ~ p*. At the same time, he disagreed with A.N. Kononov’s version: “*The converbial suffix -pa(n)/-pe(n) in Turkic (-uban/-übenin Old Anatolian Turkish) cannot be the origin of the negative suffix -ma/-me for phonetic, morphological and semantic reasons*”. He also wrote: “...*a group made from two converbial forms cannot be imagined*” (Tekin 2013: 209). Actually, using a combination of two converbs as a main verb is not observed in Turkic languages.

The traces of the negative verb \**e-* have been found in the other Altaic languages. In the Tungusic languages, the negative verb *e-* can still be used in front of substantive verbal forms. The negative auxiliary verb *e-* ‘not to be’ is fully conjugated in Tungusic (Tohti 2001: 130, 133).

T. Tekin took the form in Tungusic as the main form and wrote: “*Ese (\*e-se), one of the particles changing affirmative verbs into negative ones was formed from the verb in Tungusic*” (Tekin 2013: 210).

### 3. *The hypothesis suggested by B.A. Serebrennikov and N. Z. Hajiyeva.*

According to their opinion, the earliest form of this suffix was *-ba*, and the phonetic variant *-ma* formed later. B. A. Serebrennikov and N. Z. Hajiyeva gave a detailed explanation of this matter and tried to prove that the earliest version of this suffix had the consonant *b*: “*In the Turkic languages, the oldest negative suffixes were -bay (present tense), -ba (past tense), and -bas (future tense)*” (Serebrennikov 2002: 281). The fact that there are the variants with the consonants *b* and *p* is not enough to assume

that the earliest version also had the consonant *b*. One question also draws interest: *Why the past negative form did not have a tense suffix?*

They later added: “However, the initial *b* had not been historically constant in the negative suffix; it was later turned into *m* in many Turkic languages” (Serebrennikov 2002: 281). It means that they consider *m* as the result of the transformation of the consonant *b*. Other examples are also given to the transformation of intervocal *b* into *m*: *kibi – kimi* ‘like’, *tabak – tamak* “throat” (Serebrennikov 2002: 281). The transformation *b > m* is really observed in the Turkic languages, but not only is this feature connected with intervocalic position, but it is also connected with the use of *n* in the words with *b* and its effect on the consonant *b* that changes it into another consonant which is closer to *n*: *ben – men*, *boncuk – muncuq*, *bin – min*, etc. The version *-ma* is not only used in intervocalic position.

On the other hand, the Oghuz languages prefer *b* in this kind of words, while the Kipchak and other groups of Turkic languages prefer *m*. Therefore, there is a completely opposite view regarding the variants *-ma* and *-ba*, e.g., *gibi* (Oghuz) – *kimi* (other groups), *boyun* (Oghuz) – *moyun* (other groups), *ben* (Oghuz) – *men* (other groups). What is more, the versions *-ba* and *-pa* of the negative suffix are observed in the languages and dialects with strong tendency towards assimilation. In these languages, there are many variants of the case and plural suffixes: *-lar*, *-dar*, *-tar* (plural suffixes), *-nıy*, *-dıy*, *-tıy* (genitive case), *-ni*, *-di*, *-ti* (accusative case), *-dan*, *-tan*, *-nan* (ablative case). If the idea given above is accepted, the assimilated versions of these suffixes as their oldest forms must also be accepted.

This idea was followed by other linguists. F. Zeynalov wrote: “Even in the Old Turkic period there was the suffix *-ba* (*-ma*) to express negation” (Zeynalov 2008: 182). This example showed that F. Zeynalov also accepted *-ba* as the earliest or at least the most common version of that suffix.

According to A.M. Scherbak, different versions of the negative suffix depend on the characteristics of the sounds coming before and after it (Scherbak 1981: 98). Although he did not specify the earliest version, he connected the difference to the phonetic reasons.

Firidun Jalilov has another assumption. According to him, the archetype of the negative suffix in the Turkic languages was *\*-ba*. The author connected that suffix to several functional words, e.g., *ba! pa! bıy! (bay!)*, and *mı-* interrogative particle. Afterwards, he connected those words to the word *boş*, and according to the fact that there was another variant of this word in Karagas – *bot*, he spoke about the existence of the root *\*bo* in the Turkic languages (Aytach 2007: 248). He also added the prefix

*me-*, which forms the negative form of imperative in Persian. Furthermore, he stated that the root *\*ba* could be found in the words *var* (< *bar*) and *bol* (*ba ol-*), which had positive or negative meanings depending on their pronunciation (Aytach 2007: 249). Like G.J. Ramstedt, he suggested the idea that the same word root could be used to form two opposite meanings, which is doubtful.

O. Suleimenov presented the idea that the negative suffix *-ma* was from the same origin with the deverbial noun-making suffix *-ma*. He connected the derivational and inflectional functions of the suffix *-ma* to the same root: “The first function of the aforementioned suffix had probably been in the direction of negation and not only the lexical meaning of the verb, but also its grammatical meaning had been negated; i.e., the verb had turned into a noun” (Suleyman 2001: 41) (Karasoy 2004: 8).

It is interesting that both G. J. Ramstedt and T. Tekin connected the negative form to verbal nouns with the suffix *-m*. N. A. Baskakov, B. A. Serebrennikov and others saw a connection between the suffix *-m* and the suffixes *-maq* and *-ma* of the infinitive. They saw a connection between the noun-making and negative suffixes *-ma*, whereas K. Menges presented the first element of the combination directly as the noun-making suffix *-ma*.

In most forementioned ideas the formation of the negative suffix is connected to auxiliary verbs. A.M. Scherbak also followed that idea, but he did not give a clear auxiliary verb. According to him, “we can agree with the idea that the negative suffix in the Turkic languages was originated from a verb meaning ‘to be enough’, ‘to leave’ or something similar, but as a result of several new creations its etymological form became obscure” (Scherbak 1981: 99).

As a conclusion, it can be said that determining the origin of the negative suffix *-ma* in the Turkic languages is very difficult. Nevertheless, each hypothesis suggested by very prominent turkologists lack proper explanation and proofs in some points, which is why it is difficult to choose one of them; they need some improvement in order to be accepted. It has to be noted once again that the negative suffix in the oldest written monuments of the Turkic languages corresponds to the modern Turkic languages, especially to the Oghuz languages and it has already been stabilized as a grammatical suffix. Therefore, it is hardly possible to take the opinions about its origin apart from the frame of the hypothesis.

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## **ETIMOLOGIJA NEGATIVNOG SUFIKSA -MA / -ME U TURKIJSKIM JEZICIMA OGUSKE GRUPE**

### **Sažetak**

Upotreba negativnog sufiksa -ma/me u turkijskim jezicima oguske grupe privlači veliku pažnju turkologa. Sufiks za negaciju -ma/-me jedan je od najinteresantnijih iz razloga što nije naglašen. Ova činjenica vodila je istraživače ka pretpostavci da ovaj sufiks nastao od nezavisne riječi, iako se ideje o riječi iz koje je nastao međusobno razlikuju. Porijeklom negativnog sufiksa bave se sljedeće hipoteze:

Hipoteza W. Bang i Sh. Tekin;

Hipoteza G. J. Ramstedt i T. Tekin;

Hipoteza B. A. Serebrennikov i N. Z. Hajjiyeva.

U većini ovih prijedloga sufiks -ma/-me povezan je s pomoćnim glagolom. Negativni sufiks koji se koristio u starim turkijskim jezicima i koji se koristi u modernom turskom jeziku isti je; nije se mijenjao kroz vrijeme, ili ima vrlo malo fonetskih promjena. Zbog toga se svi prijedlozi o njegovom formiranju mogu prihvatiti samo kao hipoteze.

**Gljučne riječi.** Turkijski jezici; grupa Oguza; morfologija; negacija

Adresa autorice

Author's address

Shebnem Abbasova  
Baku State University  
Azerbaijan  
semseddinova@mail.ru

