On The Usage Of Plural Signs In The Languages Of Chinese Minorities-The Uzbek Plural Sign“-Lar”

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Abstract: Since the 1960s, many scholars have noticed that the plural symbol “men” in Chinese can refer to people as well as things. The first meaning is mainly found in the Gansu and Qinghai regions. Hebei and Shandong were also reported this kind of usage. Many scholars believe that the plural sign “men” as to things is actually affected by the Altaic language. So far, scholars have had more static descriptions of “men” in a single area, but their specific research on Altaic language is relatively limited. They mentioned that these dialects were influenced by the Altaic language, but they did not suggest which aspects specifically and the results under this influence. We mainly examine the co-occurrence of Uzbek language plural signs with proper nouns, countable nouns, and abstract nouns in China.

Index Terms: Chinese, minorities, languages, numerals, + “pl”, abstract, nouns.

1. INTRODUCTION
The Chinese plural mark “men” was first seen in the Tang Dynasty. In Mandarin and most dialects, it is mainly used after referring to human nouns and personal pronouns, which can be regarded as its normal usage. Since the 1960s, many scholars have noticed that in some northern dialects of Chinese, “men” is used for people, and also for things. Usage of the “men” for things is mainly found in the Gansu and Qinghai. There are also reports in Hebei and Shandong (Mo Chao 2004, Xu Dan 2011, Zhang Ansheng 2013, Min Chunfang 2014, Yang Yonglong 2015, etc.) (1). Scholars generally believe that the plural marker of the things; “men” is actually not the normal usage of Mandarin Chinese. This is the result of the influence of Altaic. Csato & Johanson (1998) mentioned, “Turkish is the most widely spoken member of the Oghuz branch of Turkic” (203) and thus shares the common characteristics of Turkic, which is different than Indo-European languages. For instance, Turkish is an agglutinative language, relying on different morphemes with specific roles and remaining unchanged after being added to other morphemes. In this sense, it might be suspected that two unrelated languages like Chinese and Uzbek have different pluralization processes for common nouns. However, although studies dealing with pluralization processes in Chinese and Uzbek can be found separately for language learning purposes generally, there has not been a thorough comparison in the literature regarding this issue.

2. ALTAIC LANGUAGE PLURAL SIGNS
This morphophonemic study aims to analyze pluralization processes for common nouns in Uzbek Minorities and native Chinese. To achieve this, a contrastive analysis focusing on Uzbek Minorities and chine plural markers from a structuralist point of view is taken. The results of the analysis reveal the differences and similarities between two languages in terms of plural markers.

As for the differences, it is found that chinese and Uzbek Minorities differ in regular and irregular plural forms as well as active role of consonants and vowels for pluralization process. Similarities for plural markers include focusing on the final sound of nouns, relying on distinctive features of sounds, employing allomorphs and using plural markers as suffixes for both languages to a varying degree. The findings of this study might help learners of Chinese and Uzbek Minorities by revealing the differences and similarities in both languages. Based on the previous studies, this article summarizes the special usage of the plural ending “men” in the Altaic languages (mainly Turkish, Uzbek, Uighur, Salar, Mongolian, and Tatar). Here are some of the plural forms of these Altaic languages:

a). okul (xuexiao) , okullar (*xuexiao-pl.)
b). sevgi (aiqing) , sevgiler (*aiqing-pl.)
c). ekmek (mianbao) , ekmeklar (*mianbao-pl.)

d). Olma (pingguo), olmalar (*pingguo-pl.)
e). Sugan (yangcong), sugannar (*yangcong-pl.)

According to Turkish vowel harmony rules, there are two forms of plural affixes: “-lar” and “-ler”. When the last vowel of a noun stem is “e, i, ö, ü” the “-ler” is applied. While the last vowel of a noun stem is “a, i, o, u,” the “-lar” is attached. The Uzbek noun plural component “-lar” is not limited by the vowels among the noun stems and stem endings.

In Tatar, the plural marks of the noun include “-lar”, “-ler”, “-nar”, and “-ner”. as follows:

a). Olma (pingguo), olmalar (*pingguo-pl.)
b). Sugan (yangcong), sugannar (*yangcong-pl.)
c). Shem (lazhu), shemner (*lazhu-pl.)
d). Kopak (gou), kopaler (gou-pl.).

Mongolian plural components “-s”, such as:

a). Ere (nan), eres (*nan-pl.)
b). Aqta (ma), aqtas (*ma-pl.)

“-s” is also applied in modern Mongolian language. This attachment has the dual role of configuration and word formation, only in a very few words as though, it appears as a plural form. In the ancient Turkic language, the form “-s” also means plurals. Only special nouns can be pluralized with “-s”, it is possible that Turkic language affects Mongolian, in this way “-s” is also found in Mongolian plurals. In Medieval Mongolian language, “-nar”, “-ner”, were used to represent the

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plural forms of material Nouns and could be used in nouns which indicated the animals and human beings. This usage appears in modern Mongolian as well. E.g:
c. Iman (sheep, imanner (sheeps)
d. Aqa (brother), aqanar (brothers)

There are linguistic correspondences between the “-nar”and “-ner” of Mongolian and the “-lar” and “-ler” forms of Turkic, and the two forms may have a close relationship in their origins. Scholars have different opinions on the source. A. Schcherbak (1982) believes that the plural form of “-nar”in Mongolian originates from the “-lar” form of Turkic. According to the above, some ethnic minorities in the modern Turkic ethnic groups such as Kazakh, Tatar, Uygur, Turkey, and Uzbek have a common plural additional component “-lar”. These components are used according to the tails and vowel harmony. In the Turkic languages, the plural additional components with the main form of “-lar” can be used both to represent non-biological complex numbers and biological plural numbers.

CURRENT STATUS OF THE STUDY

World languages are generally classified into “classifier languages” and “number marking languages”. It is generally believed that Chinese is a typical classifier language, and Altai is a typical number marking language. Many scholars have different opinions on the significance and function of the plural word “-lar, -ler” in the Altai language. Li Pu (2017) founds out six meanings and functions of Uyghur complex words through analysis. Qian Xing (2009) examined the evolution of plural nouns in the Uighur language of Cha Hetai. The three plural forms of Uighur nouns in Cha Hetai have developed to mere one type, namely the “lar, ler” form inherent in Uyghur language. This is related to changes in the use of Arabic loan words. Yang Ling (1994) explained the similarities and differences of plural nouns between the Chinese and Kazakh by analyzing the representation of plural numbers between the two languages. The Chinese people in China are mainly distributed in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Prefecture, Kashig District, Changji Hui Autonomous Prefecture, Tacheng District, Urumqi City, and some scattered in the Altai region. In view of its residential characteristics, this study chose the relatively concentrated population and has a strong representative of Yining City in Yili Prefecture, Dash City in Shishi District, and Uzbek National Autonomous Township in Dajingou, Mujin County, Changji Prefecture. The interview survey was carried out in the sites mentioned above Based on the research of (Adalati, 2012) Chinese Uzbek, I conducted a corpus analysis of her interviews. In addition, I also verified the authenticity of the corpus by interviewing students from the Uzbek minority who are studying in China. Our interview includes background information of the interviewers; the proficiency in Uzbek language and personal interests, etc. Based on the corpus collected by this, I analyzed the difference of plural marks between two languages. In the Uzbek traditional grammar, if a noun has an additional components “-lar”, it is a plural noun; without “-lar” it is a singular noun. However in China, in the Uzbek language, there is no singular mark. (Singular nouns, in many languages, are not marked by a special signs, such as Chinese.) The traditional Uzbek plural symbol “-lar” has several forms. The plural-label “-lar” in Uzbek sometimes does not refer to a plural number, and basically their plural or singular meanings are determined according to the context. Turkic linguists consider the Uzbek plural attachment “-lar” does not have a very large range. In most cases, it loses its complex meaning.

From the above examples, we can see that the analysis of the Russian linguist A.N. Kanonov makes sense. In the sentence “qushlar sayradilar” we find that there are two complex marks. The second one is not to show the complex number instead of emphasizing the action. The following are some basic meanings for sorting out the Uzbek plural symbol “-lar”. The plural form of a noun is basically constituted by a Morphological method, a Lexical method, a Lexical-morphological method, and a Semantic method. The plural mark “-lar”, besides the plural meaning, can also express, emphasizing, respecting, measuring, dissatisfaction, and personifying rhetorical devices. The verbs in Uzbek language with a plural mark can also represent respecting in addition to the plural form. These forms can be constituted by the Morphological method.

NUMERALS + “-LAR”

In China, the numerals in the Uzbek language can be combined with the plural-label “-lar”. Linguists who study the Altai language have different opinions on the use of the plural-label “-lar”. Although, in the Uzbek language, “numbers+nouns+plural forms” can be attached “-lar”, it does not represent plural meanings sometimes. Even if there is an integer in the sentence, and the noun is also followed by “-lar”, still it means “respect”.

1. Buviming 10 ta bolalar bor. (respect, emphasis) Nainai you shige erzi.
2. Buviming 1 ta bolalar bor. (respect, emphasis) Nainai you yige erzi.

In the first sentence, “Buviming 1 ta bolalar bor.” although there is “-lar”, it does not indicate a plural form instead of respect. As to the linguist K. Dmitriev's analysis, “yigirma ot, er shi pi ma” (20 horses of the same kind), “yigirma otlar, er shi pi ma(pl)” (plural form, horses form various kinds).

i. Indicates the approximate number. For example, yettilar “qi + pl. mark”, “da yue qi shi zou you”, yuzlar*yibai + pl. mark”, “yi bai zouyou”

ii. Integers can also represent digits when combined with the plural-label “-lar”. For example, minglarcha “qian+pl”, “yi qian wei”, yuzlar “yibai+pl”. “yi bai wei”.

In Uzbek languages, plural meanings can be expressed, except the “-lar”, with bir talay, ko'pgina, bir qancha, (tong, jige, henduo,jige) and so on. For example, bir qancha odamlar keldi “hao jie ge ren men lai le” If there is an approximate word composed of “-ap”, it may be co-presented with the plural noun “+lar”. For example, kecha o'nlab odamlar keldi “zuo tian lai shiji ge ren men”. The number here is not clear.
UNCOUNTABLE NOUNS + “-LAR”

English nouns are countable and uncountable. Uzbek nouns, like English, can be divided into countable and uncountable nouns. Such as puffak (qi), kuchuk (gou) is a countable noun, suv (shui), sut (niunai) is an uncountable noun. Countable nouns have the plural forms with plural meanings.

Examples:

a). Xonani Puffaklar (qi+pl) bilan bezaldi. Yong qi qiu buzhi le xin fang.

c). Unlarni (mifen+pl) sotib boldingmi? Ba min fen mai wan le mei you?
d). U stoldagi suvlarni (shui+pl) ichib qoydi. Ta ba zhui zi shang de shui hei le.
e). Do'kondagi yog'lar (you+pl) sotib yubordi. Ta ba dian li de you gei mai diao le. f.Keche yangi go'shtlar (rou+pl) olib kelishdi zuo tian mai lai le xingxian de rou.

From the above examples, “svul” (gezhong shui), “unlar(gezhong mianfen)“, “yog'lar(gezhong you)“, and “goshtlar(gezhong rou)” are all uncountable nouns with “-lar”. These nouns are specific. At the same time, these nouns refer to more than one object. For example, “flour(hua)" may refer to the flour in several containers, and “water(shui)” may refer to the water in several bottles. Therefore, when uncountable nouns are marked with a plural sign “-lar”, they represent multiple categories and have multiple meanings.

Examples:

Bu yerda har xil sutlar bor. Zhezi you gezhong niunai.

There are two types of structures that can be accepted:

1. There are various types of milk, bottled and boxed, which represent many types.
2. If there is no “har xil (gezhong)” in this sentence, it means the quantity of milk.

The Uzbek “-lar” added after an abstract uncountable noun does not represent a complex meaning, but merely represents a person or thing that has a common feature with it or is related to it. As follows:

a). Kunlar isib, gullar ochilib ketdi.
b). Tianqi bian nuan le, hua er kai le.
d). Tog' yo'liga qorlar yog'ib mashinalar yo'llini tosib qo'yidi.

Shang li de xue xia de hen da, yingxiang le jiaotong chuxing.

a). In the first sentence, it doesn’t mean the plural form instead of emphasizing.
b). In the second sentence, shamolar is emphasizing the amount and degree of “wind”.
c). In the third sentence, qorlar explains the snow of yesterday and of today.

In addition, in the Uzbek language, when representing a certain part of such uncountable nouns, the nouns are often used in conjunction with a quantity phrase. E.g:

bir tola soch.
One single hair.
bir chimdim un.
A pinch of flour.
bir tomchi suv.
A drop of water.

From the above examples, the countable noun singular form in the Uzbek language means singular meanings; plural forms means complex meanings, in symmetry states. The uncountable noun singular forms represent the collective concept of such foods, and the plural form represents a collection of various kinds of foods. And the expression “quantity + uncountable noun singular form” is used when measuring such things.

ABSTRACT NOUNS + “-LAR”

In the Uzbek language of China, the singular forms of abstract nouns express singular meanings, and the plural meanings can be expressed by “numerals + abstract noun singular forms” and “numbers + quantities + abstract noun singular forms”. Example: Bir takif (yi ge jianyi), ikki dunyo (liangge shijie), ikki xil sevgi (liangzhong aiqing) Therefore, the singular form of an abstract noun is marked, while the plural forms are marked. Abstract nouns are words that indicate the names of abstract concepts. Such as sevgi (aiqing), ishonch (xingren), ko'ngil (liangxin), They are abstract and uncountable. They belong to different species, not in the difference of quantity. So these words generally exist in singular forms and do not have complex meanings. In Uzbek language, these nouns such as sevgi (aiqing), ishonch (xingren), and ko'ngil (liangxin) do not have a plural form, but in some cases, the “-lar” form expresses a kind of emphasizing to add emotional colors.

a). Sen Otamni ko'ngillarini (xin+pl) o'g'rilib qo'yibsan. Ni shangle wo baba de xin.
b). Uni ishonchlariga(xinren+pl) kirib olib, aldab ketibdi. Ta ying dele tade xingrong hou kaishi pienle ta.
c). Dunyoda shunday sevgilar(aqing+pl) borki, dunyolarni larzaga sola oladi.

Shijie shang you yizhong ai bi tian gao da.

(a) In the first example, the “-lar” means respect.
(b) In the second example, “-lar” means the respect form of the third-person pronoun.
(c) In the third example, “aiqing+pl” and “shijie+pl” are used to express emotional feelings when there is anthropomorphizing.

CONCLUSIONS

There are specific abstract nouns in the Uzbek language. These abstract nouns have no categories and they have no plural forms, such as “trust”, “conscience”, “friendship”, “moon”, “Qur'an”, “Allah”, and “heaven”, because these terms are unique.
Table 1.

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