



HISTORICAL AND SEMANTIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE LEXEME "KECHA" IN THE UZBEK LANGUAGE

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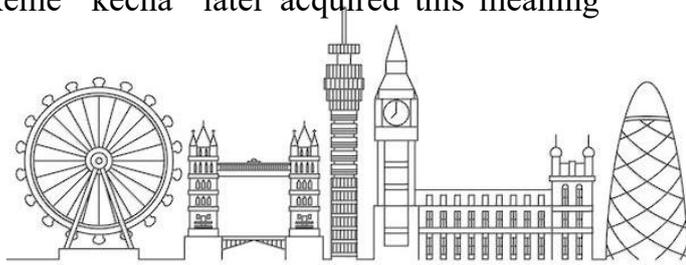
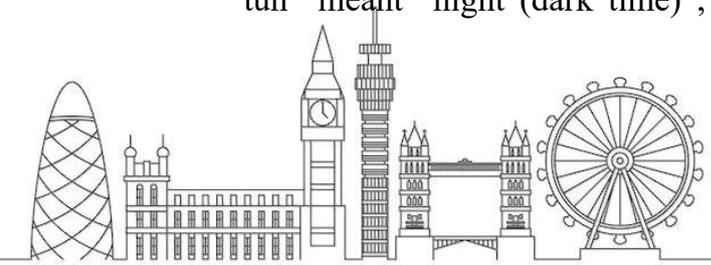
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Abstract: This article analyzes the historical semantic changes of the lexeme "kecha" in the Uzbek language, which refers to time. The article explains the meanings of this word in ancient Turkic sources and its modern meanings through a comparative approach. In particular, based on the information in Mahmud Kashgari's "Devonu lug'otit turk", the early meanings of this lexeme are determined and their meaning transfer processes in later periods are highlighted. The results show that the word "kecha" was initially used in the meaning of "night, night-related time", and later adopted the meaning of "past day". The article analyzes the semantic factors of these changes and substantiates them using comparative examples in Turkic languages and historical and lexical sources.

Keywords: Mahmud Kashgari, Divanu Lugatit Turk, night, semantic change, historical semantics, meaning transfer, Turkic languages, time lexeme.

Introduction: Words expressing the concept of time occupy a special place in the lexical layer of the language. Time lexemes - for example, the word "yesterday" - are among the most frequently used and oldest units expressing concepts in each language. It is known that in the process of historical development, the meanings of such words can change or become richer. In linguistics, a change in the meaning of a word is called semantic transfer, and this process occurs for various reasons: changes in social life, internal development in the language, semantic mechanisms such as metaphor and metonymy, etc. [1:45 Lexicology]. The theoretical aspects of the transfer of the meaning of a word have been covered by a number of researchers in Uzbek linguistics, in which such types as narrowing of meaning, expansion of meaning, and integration of meaning are distinguished [1:45 Lexicology]. In particular, metonymy – the transfer of word meaning based on interrelation – and metaphor – the transfer of meaning based on analogy – are recognized as the main mechanisms of such changes [1:46 Lexicology].

The Uzbek word "kecha" is noteworthy as a lexeme that has undergone such historical meaning transfer processes. These words mean "the past day (or night)" in modern Uzbek. However, in ancient Turkic sources, their meaning was different from today. For example, in modern Uzbek, the main meaning of the word "kecha" is "the past day" (i.e., "yesterday's day"), and it is used relatively rarely in the meaning of "night" [3:271 Devonu lug'otit turk]. Historical sources show that in the early Turkic period, the word "tun" meant "night (dark time)", and the lexeme "kecha" later acquired this meaning





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[3:271 Devonu lug'otit turk]. Mahmud Kashgari provides valuable information about this in his work "Devonu Lug'otit Turk": he interprets the word "tun" as "night, late (time)" [3:271 Devnu Lug'otit Turk]. This shows that in the situation of the Turkic language of the 11th century, the concept of "tun" primarily expressed "night (night) time".

Main part: The word "kecha" in the Uzbek language is used today mainly in the meaning of "the past day", that is, "yesterday's day / night". For example, when "It rained yesterday", the meaning is understood as "during the past day". At the same time, the word "kecha" is also used in the second meaning as "Night, the time from night to dawn": for example, "One night-and-a-day" means one night and one day. The explanatory dictionary of the Uzbek language lists two main meanings of the word "kecha": 1) the dark part of the day, that is, night; 2) the past day (the past day)[4:103 Explanatory Dictionary]. It is also noted that the word "kecha" is also used as a preposition in the meaning "last night/the last day"[4:103 Explanatory Dictionary]. So, in modern Uzbek, "yesterday" more often means "the day before yesterday (or night)." However, this was not always the case.

If we look at historical sources, the lexeme "kecha" may have originally expressed "Night, dark time" in our current understanding. Mahmud Kashgari, who collected the rich treasury of the ancient Turkic language, gives the word "tun" in his work "Devonu lug'otit turk" with an Arabic explanation as "kecha, kech" [3:271 Devonu lug'otit turk]. Here, Kashgari cited the word "kecha" as a translation of "tun". Thus, in the 11th century Turkic language system, the concepts of "tun" and "kecha" were synonymous with each other, and both meant the dark part of the day. Kashgari also explains the sentence "Tunla keldim" as "Kech bilan keldim, kechasi keldim" [3:271 Devonu lug'otit turk]. This example shows that in ancient times, the suffix "-la" was added to the word "tun" to form the adverb meaning "during the night" (tunla), which was equivalent to the word "kechasi" in the modern language. In Mahmud Kashgari's comments, it can be observed that the word "tun" has a universal Turkic character, and "kecha" is given as its synonymous translation [3:271 Devonu lug'otit turk].

The frequency of use of the words "tun" and "kecha" in the literary monuments of the ancient period varied. In the works of Alisher Navoi, the word "tun" is more common than "kecha". For example, in one of the couplets, Navoi writes:

"Hajr shomi gar Navoiy jonin oldi, tong emas,
Kim erur ahli badiiyat qatlining mu'todi tun."

Although the poet used the word "tun" in a poetic sense in these lines, at the same time this situation shows that in the literary language of the 15th century the term "tun" was more dominant in the sense of "dark evening". So, over time, some semantic and stylistic shifts occurred between the lexemes "tun" and "kecha".

The acquisition of the meaning of the word "kecha" to "the past day" is considered an example of metonymic meaning transfer in the history of language. As is known,

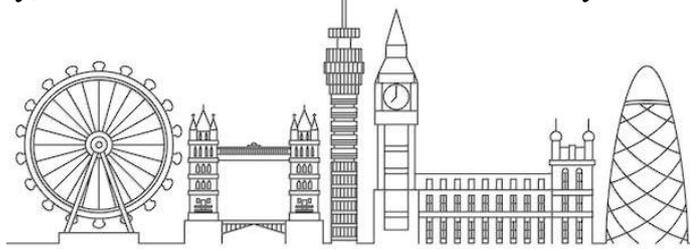




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metonymy is the attribution of the name of an event or thing to another related event [1:47 Lexicology]. Since the dark part of the day (night) naturally follows the past day, the word “kecha” was initially used in the meaning of “night” (last night) and gradually acquired the meaning of “the past day” in connection with it [2:212 Etymological Dictionary]. Linguists, studying the etymology of the lexeme “kecha”, argue that its original meaning was “night” and that it came from the ancient Turkic form *kecä* [2:212 Etymological Dictionary]. For example, etymological dictionaries of Turkic languages note that the word *kecä* in Old Uyghur and Old Turkish meant "nocturnal time, night." In modern Turkish, the word "gece," which comes from the same root, is still used in the sense of "night," but the word "dün," which comes from a Persian source, is used to mean "the past day." This fact shows that the meaning of “night” in Turkic languages developed in two ways: some languages (for example, Uzbek, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Tatar) transferred the word *kecä* to mean “the past day” through internal development [3:272 Divanu lug‘otit turk], while others (Turkish, Azerbaijani, etc.) adopted a word for this meaning from another source. For example, in Kazakh the word “keshé” (keshe) means “the past day, the past day”, and for “tun” there is the term “tün”. In Tatar, the word “kiçä” corresponds exactly to the Uzbek “kecha” both in form and in meaning - “kiçä” means “the past day (the past day)” in Tatar, and the word “tön” corresponds to “tun”. It is clear that the lexeme "yesterday" and its Turkic relatives originally meant "night", but over time this lexeme expanded its meaning in some languages to mean "the previous day".

In the Uzbek language, this process (i.e., the transition of the word *kecä* from “tun” to “o‘tgan kun”) seems to have entered the literary language later than in some other Turkic dialects and languages. As mentioned above, even during the time of Alisher Navoi, the use of the word “tun” was still strong, while “kecha” was not as active in the meaning of “o‘tgan kun” as it is today. However, by the 20th century, the word “kecha” in the Uzbek literary language had completely become the main lexeme expressing the meaning of “o‘tgan kun”. In the current Uzbek language, the word “tun” is used in a neutral way only in the meaning of “dark time”, while “kecha” means “past day” and only in some combinations (“kecha-kunduz”) does it resemble the meaning of “tun”. This change is associated with the tendency to simplification and clarification in the semantic system of the language, when a dominant lexeme is chosen to express a concept, and other synonymous options gradually retreat to a narrower meaning [1:48 Lexicology]. The same phenomenon occurred in the case of “tun” and “kecha”: while the word “tun” specializes only in expressing the concept of night in the literal sense, the word “kecha” has generalized as a word denoting a unit of time – the past day. The above analysis demonstrates an important feature of the transfer of meaning in the example of the lexeme “kecha”: there is a close logical and temporal connection between the initial lexical meaning of the word (night) and its subsequent meaning (the previous day). The word “kecha” first meant the dark part of the day, and then it came to mean the entire day





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associated with this dark part. This change occurred due to the internal capabilities of the Uzbek language, and we have seen that it is also manifested differently in other related languages.

Conclusion. The word “night” in the ancient Turkic language system directly meant “night, evening time”. Mahmud Kashgari confirms this phenomenon by citing “night” in his explanation of the word “night” [3:271 Devonu lug‘otit turk]. Later, the lexeme “night” expanded semantically and included the concept of “past day”. As a result, in the modern Uzbek language, the word “night” mainly means the past day, while “tun” remained only in the meaning of late time. This change occurred through metonymy - that is, the use of the concept of “tun” (dark time) as the name of the entire day that follows it [1:47 Lexicology]. As a result of such semantic transfer, the lexeme “night” enriched its lexical meaning and is actively used in this sense today [4:103 Explanatory Dictionary]. Comparative analyses show that the above changes in meaning occur in most Turkic languages, but their manifestation varies. For example, in Uzbek, Kazakh, Tatar, the word "kecha" ("kiçə/keshə") means "the past day", while in Turkish this meaning is expressed by the word "dün" borrowed from Persian, while "gece" is used only for "tun".

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