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Sino-Uralic Etymology for 'Moon, Month' Supported by Regular Sound Correspondences

Jingyi Gao[1], Tõnu Tender[2]

[1] Beijing International Studies University, China; E-mail: gao.jingyi@bisu.edu.cn
[1] Institute of the Estonian Language, Tallinn, Estonia; E-mail: jingyi.gao@eki.ee
[1] University of Tartu, Estonia; E-mail: jingyi.gao@ut.ee
[2] Institute of the Estonian Language, Tallinn, Estonia; E-mail: tonu.tender@eki.ee

Abstract

Using etymological methods, the present study has researched four Sinitic and Uralic shared etymologies (etyma). Two of them form a rhyme correspondence. Three of them form an onset correspondence. These regular sound changes validate the genetic connection between Sinitic and Uralic. The Sino-Finnic term for 'moon, month' is among these four etyma. It is demonstrated that this term should be aboriginal in Sino-Uralic languages.

Keywords: etymology, rhyme correspondence, onset correspondence, Sinitic, Uralic, Sino-Uralic, astronomical terms, moon, month

Introduction

The Uralic term for 'moon' (equivalents e.g. Finnish ***kuu*** 'moon, month'; Estonian ***kuu*** 'moon, month'; Hungarian ***hó\hava-*** 'moon') has been compared to the Sinitic term for 'moon'【月】〖equivalents e.g. Mandarin *yuè* (*üè*) 'moon, month'; Cantonese *jyut6* 'moon, month'; Minnan *guȧt*/*guėh*/*gėh* 'moon, month'〗and suggested as a Sino-Uralic etymology (Gāo, 2008, p. 231). The present study researches and supports this etymology with regular sound correspondences.

Materials and methods

The present paper is a comparative etymology study. The Sinitic language family is compared to the Uralic language family.

The Sinitic etyma are led by Chinese etyma (DOMs) which are historically attested Chinese glyphs (Sinograms). Their historical glosses are cited from the Chinese classical dictionaries (121-SW; 543-YP; 1008-GY). Their historical phonological values are cited from the work 1161-YJ (with reference to 1008-GY) and transcribed according to Gāo (2014, pp. 81–83). Their attested equivalents including forms and glosses are represented by Beijing Yan (Mandarin) (written in Hanyu Pinyin including non-simplified forms), Guangzhou Yue (Cantonese) (written in Jyutping), Taipei Min (Minnan) (written in Tâi-lô), Sino-Japanese[1] Go-on and Kan-on (written in orthography and Hepburn), Sino-Korean (written in orthography and the Revised

[1] Sino-Japanese is a linguistic term for the portion of the Japanese vocabulary that is of Chinese origin or makes use of morphemes of Chinese origin (similar to the use of Latin or Greek in English). The same applies to the terms Sino-Korean and Sino-Vietnamese. They do not mean common proto populations.

Romanization) and Sino-Vietnamese (written in orthography), in this fixed order. Their historically attested Old Chinese (OC) rhymes are given according to Wáng (1980) and reconstructively transcribed according to Gāo (2014, p. 79).

The Uralic etyma are based on the relevant etymological dictionaries 1988-UEW and 2001-SSA. Their attested equivalents including contemporary forms and glosses are represented by Estonian, Finnish, Sami\Lappish North/Lule/Inari/Skolt/Kildin (equivalents up to 1989-YSaS; North Sami forms are adjusted according to 1989-SSS), Mordvin, Mari\Cheremis, Udmurt\ Votyak, Komi\Zyrian, Khanty\Ostyak, Mansi\Vogul, Hungarian, Nenets\Yurak, Enets\Yen, Nganasan\Tawgi, Selkup and Kamass, in this fixed order. Non-English glosses are translated to English in the present study. Some modifications within Uralic etyma (adding or deleting equivalents) are made and remarked in the present study. Refutations of previously suggested etymological equivalents are given in footnotes.

For the etyma in question, etymological equivalents in other languages claimed by other scholars (mainly Germanic and Tibeto-Burman) are checked according to relevant etymological or comparative works, e.g. 1988-UEW, 1996-CV5ST, 2001-SSA, 2007-EDOC and 2012-EES. Such extended equivalents are mostly cited as in references.

Language reconstructions are listed only for reference reasons. All the attested language data are compared instead of trusting the phonetic and semantic details of reconstructions, because the reconstructions are subject to changes depending on [newly compared] attested linguistic data. Two Old Chinese (OC) reconstructions, OC-W according to Wáng (1980) and OC-Z according to Zhèng-zhāng (2013), are listed. Other reconstructions are quoted from the direct references.

Proto-Sinitic, also known as Proto-Chinese, cannot be compared because it is only a theoretical notion without reconstructed results. Proto-Sino-Tibetan cannot be compared because it is a hypothetical notion without a sufficient amount of etyma representing a sufficient number of the languages in question. Many scholars are still comparing only Tibetan, Burmese or another Tibeto-Burman language to Sinitic (e.g. Shī 2000; Zhang et al. 2019). The works Benedict (1972) and Matisoff (2003) have compared more “Sino-Tibetan languages”, whereas many comparisons do not touch Sinitic. The work 1996-CV5ST compares only five “Sino-Tibetan languages”: Sinitic, Tibetan, Burmese, Jingpo\Kachin and Mizo\Lushai, whereas still many comparisons do not touch Sinitic. Etyma without Sinitic equivalents cannot be labeled as “Sino-Tibetan”. Etyma with equivalents only in one Tibeto-Burman language and Sinitic may be non-genetically diffused (loaned/borrowed) from Sinitic. There is a website called “The Sino-Tibetan Etymological Dictionary and Thesaurus” (https://stedt.berkeley.edu), whereas its content is so far rather a thesaurus (book of synonyms, collection of X-English dictionaries) than an etymological dictionary. This is the current situation of the comparative studies between Sinitic and Tibeto-Burman. Moreover, the Sino-Tibetan hypothesis has been successively criticized (Miller 1974; Beckwith 2002, 2006, 2008; Hé 2004; Guō 2010, p. 21; Zhāng 2012, 2013, 2014; Qú & Jìn 2013; Qú 2019). Besides, there are hypotheses for the multiple origins of Sinitic (Lǐ 1990; Schuessler 2003). In sum, the notion Sino-Tibetan cannot be considered as a certain language family which represents Sinitic.

Etymological equivalents are given in orthographies or transcriptions. Equivalents in Western alphabets are given in boldface if they are found in official languages covered by ISO 639-1. Equivalents in Roman alphabets are given in italic. Cyrillic alphabets are transliterated into Roman alphabets according to ISO 9. If a given equivalent word is longer than one morpheme, the targeted morpheme is underlined (if certain). In successive data, dialectal and authorial

variants are separated by a slash (/); grammatical variants are separated by a backslash (\); while lexical variants are separated by a comma (,).

Ancient and fully etymological Chinese etyma (DOMs) are put in the brackets 【】. Ordinary Chinese terms are put in the brackets 〖〗 or written without brackets. Double quotation marks (“”) are added when its target is quoted but not agreed. Double arrows (⇒ or ⇐) indicate genetic diffusions ('inherited' in western linguistics; 'born' in Sino-linguistics). Single arrows (→ or ←) indicate non-genetic diffusions ('loaned/borrowed' in western linguistics; 'educated' in Sino-linguistics).

The methods follow traditional etymology (cf. 1662-ELL; Lemon 1783; Rask 1818; Gāo 2008) and renewed etymology (cf. Gao 2012-3, 2014, 2017, 2018, 2019a, 2019b, 2020). This study includes also methods of Sino-grammatology (cf. 121-SW; 543-YP; 1008-GY; 1978-82-HJ; 1989-LZ) and Sino-phonology (cf. 1008-GY; 1161-YJ) which are ancient technologies.

Results and discussion

The common format of the next etymological paragraphs is:

#Number of etymon)【DOM】〖historical reference: phonetic description original gloss 'gloss' (transcribed from); Mandarin form 'gloss'; Cantonese form 'gloss'; Minnan form 'gloss'; Sino-Japanese form; Sino-Korean form; Sino-Vietnamese form; {OC rhyme group; OC-W reconstruction; OC-Z reconstruction}〗 (Read: The Sinitic etymon【DOM】with the contents 〖…〗) is or has been compared (reference) to the Uralic etymon after the equivalents: … (reference).

This etymon has been or not been identified in other languages (reference). This paragraph is used for other language groups compared in other directions (not Sinitic ~ Uralic but Sinitic ~ other or Uralic ~ other) by other scholars.

#1)【月】〖說文(121-SW):闕也大陰之精象形('moon'); 玉篇(543-YP):魚厥切太陰之精也夜見光謂之月('moon'); 廣韻(1008-GY):魚厥切范子計然云月者尺也者紀度而成數也王子年拾遺録曰水精爲月('moon'); 韻鏡(1161-YJ):外轉第二十二合三等入聲牙音清濁(outbound, final-16, labialized+, division-3, tone-D, velar initial voiced±)(ŋʷeaṯᴰ); Mandarin *yuè* (*üè*) 'moon, month'; Cantonese *jyut6* 'moon, month'; Minnan *guȧt*/*gueh*/*gèh* 'moon, month'; Sino-Japanese Go-on ごち(*gochi*)/がち(*gachi*); Kan-on げつ(*getsu*); Sino-Korean 월(*wol*); Sino-Vietnamese ***nguyệt***; {OC rhyme 月韻 *-ta; OC-W *ŋi̯uat; OC-Z “*ŋod”}〗 has been compared (Gāo, 2008, p. 231) to the Uralic etymon after the equivalents: Estonian ***kuu*** 'moon, month'; Finnish ***kuu*** 'moon, month'; Finnic other *kū*/*kuu* 'moon, month'; Mordvin *kov* 'moon, month'; Khanty\Ostyak *χăw*/*χŭw* 'moon'; Hungarian ***hó\hava-*** 'month', ***hold*** 'moon'; Nganasan\Tawgi *kīťada* 'moon'; Kamass *ki* 'moon, month'; {Proto-Uralic “*kuŋe”[2] 'moon, month' (1988-UEW, p. 211)}. {⇐ Proto-Sino-Uralic *ŋgʷeta 'moon'}

This etymon has not been identified in other languages.[3]

This etymon must be aboriginal in Sino-Uralic languages. There are two main reasons:

(1) This DOM is very ancient and already attested in the Oracle Bone Script[4] (Figure 1) (1989-LZ, p. 433: e.g. 1978-82-HJ, #7949). The glyph images a crescent moon.

[2] REFUTATION: Previously claimed *-*ŋ* is not justified.

[3] REFUTATION: Previously claimed (1988-UEW, p. 211) etymological equation from these Uralic equivalents to Lule Sami *kuojiti-* 'rise (moon)' is rejected due to semantic inconsistencies. It was already rejected in Aikio (2012, p. 236). Previously claimed (1988-UEW, p. 212) etymological equation from these Uralic equivalents to Yukaghir *kiŋze* 'moon, month' is rejected due to phonetic inconsistencies (*-ŋ* is not justified). Previously claimed (Matisoff 1980, p. 20) etymological equation from Sinitic to Angami Kohima *thèmvə* 'star'; Chakhesang *themvü* 'star'; Konyak *sha-nha\sha-ha* 'star'; Mao *ovu* 'star'; Lotha *shantiwo* 'star'; Meluri *awachi* 'star'; Ntenyi *awachi* 'star'; Maring *sorwa* 'star'; Sangtam *chinghi* 'star'; Lahu *mə̀ʔ-kə* 'star' is rejected due to semantic and phonetic inconsistencies. Previously claimed (LaPolla 1987, p. 25) etymological equation from Sinitic to Proto-Tibeto-Burman “*s-ngywat 'star(-moon)'”; Dulong *gur55 met55* / *gu31 nyet55*; Angami Naga *thèmvə*; Lahu *mə̀ʔ(-kə)*; Motuo Menba *karmi* is rejected due to phonetic inconsistencies.

Figure 1. Attested form of【月】in the Oracle Bone Script.

(2) It is a certain Sino-Uralic etymon supported by a rhyme correspondence consisting of two etyma (see Table 1 in the next section) and an onset correspondence consisting of three etyma (see Table 2 in the next section).

The following reinforced etyma are studied in order to form regular sound correspondences with the etymon #1.

#2)【別】〖說文(121-SW): 分解也('divide'); 玉篇(543-YP): 分別也('separate'); 廣韻(1008-GY): 皮列切 又彼列切異也離也解也('different, separate, divide'); 韻鏡(1161-YJ):外轉第二十三開三等入聲脣音濁(outbound, final-23, labialized-, division-1, tone-D, labial initial voiced+)(beat^{D}); Mandarin *bié* 'other'; Cantonese *bit6* 'other'; Minnan *piȧt*/*pȧt* 'other'; Sino-Japanese Go-on べち(*bechi*); Kan-on へつ(*hetsu*); Sino-Korean 별(*byeol*); Sino-Vietnamese ***biệt***; {OC rhyme 月韻 *-ta; OC-W *bi̯at; OC-Z "*bred"}〗is compared to the Uralic etymon after the equivalents: Estonian ***muu*** 'other'; Finnish ***muu*** 'other'; Finnic other *mū*/*muu* 'other'; Mari\Cheremis *molə̑*/*molo* 'other'; Udmurt\Votyak *mi̯d*/*mə̑d* 'other'; Komi\Zyrian *me̮d*/*mu̇d* 'other'; Mansi\Vogul *māt*/*mōt*/*mɔ̄t* 'second, different'; Hungarian ***más*** 'other'; {"Proto-Finno-Ugric" **mu* 'another, "(?)this, that"' (1988-UEW, p. 281)}. {⇐ Proto-Sino-Uralic *mbeta 'other'}

This etymon has been identified in other languages: Tibetan *phjed* 'half'; Burmese *phrat* 'cut in two, chop off'; Jingpho\Kachin *phjat*/*phrat* 'cut, severe' (1996-CV5ST: Sinitic ~ Tibetan, Burmese, Kachin; 2007-EDOC, p. 167: Sinitic ~ Burmese *prat* 'be cut in two'). [5] {← Sinitic} These equivalents should be non-genetically diffused (loaned/borrowed) from Sinitic, because their phonetic diversity is low. It is a sign of recent occurrence (without differentiation through history). In contrast to that the same etymon exhibits different onsets within Sinitic (/b/ in 1161-YJ and Sino-Japanese Go-on; /p/ in Mandarin, Cantonese and Minnan; /h/ in Sino-Japanese Kan-on), but Tibetan, Burmese and Jingpho\Kachin have the same onset /p^{h}/. An etymon exhibits diversity in Germanic languages, while its equivalents borrowed from English are very similar in its target languages in the world.

#3)【言】〖說文(121-SW): 直言曰言('speech'); 玉篇(543-YP): 言辭也('speech'); 廣韻(1008-GY): 語軒切言語也('speech'); 韻鏡(1161-YJ): 外轉第二十一開三等平聲牙音清濁(outbound, final-21, labialized-, division-3, tone-C, velar initial voiced±)(ŋean^{A}); Mandarin *yán* (*ián*) 'speech'; Cantonese *jin4* 'speech'; Minnan *giân*/*gân* 'speech'; Sino-Japanese Go-on ごん(*gon*); Kan-on げん(*gen*); Sino-Korean 언(*eon*); Sino-Vietnamese ***ngân***; {OC rhyme 元韻 *-na; OC-W *ŋi̯an; OC-Z "*ŋan"}〗has been compared (Gao, 2018, p. 78) to the Uralic etymon after the equivalents: Estonian ***keel***(***e***) 'tongue, language'; Finnish ***kieli\kiele-*** 'tongue, language'; Sami\Lappish ***giella***/*kiella*/*kiela*/

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[4] Oracle Bone Script is the discovered writing system used in the Shang Empire (ca. 1600 − 1046 B.C.E.) [So far the oldest Oracle Bone Script is excavated from the Erligang Culture (ca. 1510 − ca. 1460 B.C.E.) (Zhèng, 2008, p. 80). However, the Shang Empire's older remains (scripts and other materials) have not been discovered or confirmed]. It was recognized as being ancient Chinese writing by Wáng Yì-róng 王懿榮 in 1899. Liú È 劉鶚 compiled and published the first collection of 1,058 rubbings including some interpretations of some unearthed scripts in 1903. In English, it was introduced as "inscriptions upon bone and tortoise shell" by Frank H. Chalfant (1906, p. 30). Wáng Guó-wéi 王國維 (1916) demonstrated that the commemorative cycle of the Shang emperors matched the list of emperors in Sima Qian's *Records of the Historian*. Other important leading scholars are for example Guō Mò-ruò 郭沫若 (chief editor of 1978-82-HJ), Yú Xīng-wú 于省吾 (chief editor of 1996-GL), and Yáo Xiào-suì 姚孝隧 (chief editor of 1989-LZ). The work 1978-82-HJ is to date the largest collection of oracle bones. It contains 41,956 rubbings (without graphic-etymological equations). The work 1989-LZ is a primary academic reference book. It sorts lexical terms and identifies their graphic-etymological equations to transmitted Chinese etyma (DOMs) (without interpreted glosses). The work 1996-GL is a secondary academic reference book. It collects interpreted glosses of the terms by many scholars. For recent works in English, see Takashima (2010), Keightley (2014) and Pankenier (2015).

[5] REFUTATION: Previously claimed (1988-UEW, p. 281) etymological equation from these Uralic equivalents to Sami\Lappish ***nubbi***/*nubbē*/*nubbe*/*nu̯ʙᴇ*/*nuⁿᵇp* 'the other, another' is rejected due to phonetic inconsistencies.

ќiełł[a]/*kīлл* 'language'; Mordvin *keĺ*/*käĺ* 'tongue, language'; Udmurt\Votyak *ķįl*/*kâl*/*kįl* 'tongue, language, word, speech'; Komi\Zyrian *ķįl*/*ķįv*/*kəl* 'tongue, language, speech, word'; Khanty\Ostyak *köl*/*ket*/*keл* 'word'; {Proto-Uralic **kele*/*kēle* 'tongue, language' (1988-UEW, p. 144)}. {⇐ Proto-Sino-Uralic *ŋgena-L 'tongue, speech'}

This etymon has been identified in other languages: Yukaghir *kał-* 'speak', *geinerr* 'tongue, language'; Chuvash *kala-* 'speak'; Mongolic *kele-* 'speak', *kelen* 'tongue, language' (1988-UEW, p. 144).[6] {(?)← Uralic or (??)⇐ Sino-Uralic} These equivalents should be non-genetically diffused (loaned/borrowed) from Uralic or genetically diffused (inherited) from Sino-Uralic. With current data, the first view is more likely than the second. The second view will be supported, if regular sound correspondences are identified for these languages.

#4)【岸】〖說文(121-SW): 水厓而高者('high shore'); 玉篇(543-YP):午旦切 水涯而高者也魁岸雄桀也高也('high shore'); 廣韻(1008-GY):五旰切 水涯高者('high shore'); 韻鏡(1161-YJ): 外轉第二十三開一等去聲牙音清濁(outbound, final-22, labialized-, division-1, tone-C, velar initial voiced±)(ŋo̱an^{C}); Mandarin *àn* 'shore'; Cantonese *ngon6* 'shore'; Minnan *gān*/*huānn* 'shore'; Sino-Japanese Go-on がん(*gan*); Kan-on がん(*gan*); Sino-Korean 안(*an*); Sino-Vietnamese ***ngạn***; {OC rhyme 元韻 *-na; OC-W *ŋan; OC-Z "*ŋgaːns"}〗 has been compared (Gao, 2010, p. 287) to the Uralic etymon after the equivalents: Estonian ***kallas**kalda*** 'shore'; Finnish ***kallas**kaltaa-*** 'shore'; Finnic other *kallas*/*kaľťľi* 'shore / precipice / through, along'. {⇐ Proto-Sino-Uralic *ŋgo̱na-L-S 'shore'}

This etymon has not been identified in other languages.[7]

Overview

The etyma #1【月】and #2【别】form a rhyme correspondence (Table 1).

Table 1. Rhyme correspondence (Rc#2020JGaoTT-2310-2144-t1): Old Chinese rhyme 月韻 *-ta ⇔ Minnan *-at* ⇔ Estonian\Finnish ***-uu***

DOM	Mandarin	Cantonese	Minnan	Estonian	Finnish	North Sami	Hungarian
【月】	*üè*$^{(yuè)}$ 'moon, month'	*jyut6* 'moon, month'	*guȧt* 'moon, month'	***kuu*** 'moon, month'	***kuu*** 'moon, month'	--	***hó**hava-*** 'month'
【别】	*bié* 'other'	*bit6* 'other'	*pi̍at* 'other'	***muu*** 'other'	***muu*** 'other'	--	***más*** 'other'

The etyma #1【月】, #3【言】and #4【岸】form an onset correspondence (Table 2).

Table 2. Onset correspondence (Oc#2020JGaoTT-2310-2144-t2): Mandarin 0- ⇔ Cantonese *j-* ⇔ Minnan *g-* ⇔ Estonian\Finnish ***k-***

DOM	Mandarin	Cantonese	Minnan	Estonian	Finnish	North Sami	Hungarian
【月】	0*üè*$^{(yuè)}$ 'moon, month'	*jyut6* 'moon, month'	*guȧt* 'moon, month'	***kuu*** 'moon, month'	***kuu*** 'moon, month'	--	***hó**hava-*** 'month'
【言】	0*ián*$^{(yán)}$ 'speech'	*jin4* 'speech'	*giân* 'speech'	***keel(e)*** 'tongue, language'	***kieli**kiele-*** 'tongue, language'	***giella*** 'language'	--
【岸】	0*àn* 'shore'	*ngon6* 'shore'	*gān* 'shore'	***kallas**kalda*** 'shore'	***kallas**kaltaa-*** 'shore'	--	--

[6] REFUTATION: Previously claimed (1988-UEW, p. 144) etymological equation from these Uralic equivalents to Nenets *śe* 'tongue'; Enets *sioðo*/*sioro* 'tongue'; Nganasan *sieja* 'tongue'; Selkup: *šē*/*sē*/*sée* 'tongue'; Kamass *šəkə* 'tongue'; Mator *kašte* 'tongue' is rejected due to phonetic inconsistencies. These equivalents were already questioned in 1977-FUV (p. 45). Previously claimed (1996-CV5ST) etymological equation from Sinitic to Jingpho\Kachin *ŋon*^{1} 'be pleasant, agreeable' is rejected due to semantic inconsistencies.

[7] REFUTATION: Previously claimed (1996-LÄGLOS, p. 20) etymological equation from Finnic to Old Norse *hallr* 'slope, rock'; {Proto-Germanic *χalþa-z* 'slope; be inclined'} is rejected due to semantic inconsistencies. Previously claimed (2007-EDOC, p. 151) etymological equation from Sinitic to Tibetan *dŋo* 'shore, bank' is rejected due to phonetic inconsistencies.

What is the essence of Sino-Uralic? Gāo (2014, p. 37, p. 51) has introduced it as a proto population in Neolithic China, which should be correlated to the Yandi Shennong nation (炎帝神農氏) in Chinese pre-history and the Human Y-chromosome DNA haplogroup N-M231.

We hope that the present study does not only contribute to the domains of linguistics, but also to the domain of archaeoastronomy. Astronomical terms can be very ancient and widely diffused (cf. Gao, 2019a, on the term for 'sky' in Sino-Uralic with extensions to many Indo-European languages; Gao, 2020, on the term for 'Jupiter, year' in Sino-Uralic with extensions to many Indo-European languages). What is the essence of the etymological diffusion beyond Sino-Uralic? It should be discussed in the future. It can be complexly a shared genesis or simply a shared cultural heritage.

Conclusions

Using etymological methods, the present study has researched four Sinitic and Uralic shared etymologies (etyma). Two of them form a rhyme correspondence. Three of them form an onset correspondence. These regular sound changes validate the genetic connection between Sinitic and Uralic. The Sino-Uralic term for 'moon, month' is among these four etyma. It is demonstrated that this term should be aboriginal in Sino-Uralic languages.

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