

On the word *bolmačï* in Turkic Languages

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the word *bolmačï*, which is rarely attested in Early Middle Turkic texts and has been overlooked by scholars until now. This word has multiple meanings, which are sometimes contradictory, including 'impossible, futile, vain, unnecessary, insignificant' and 'to be, to exist'. The study aims to trace the word's semantic range in historical and modern Turkic languages, identify its dominant meaning and analyze its morphemic structure.

The analysis is organized into three parts. The first part compiles all occurrences of *bolmačï* from historical texts of the Karakhanid, Khwarezmian, and Kipchak periods, analyzing the meanings of the lexeme, which are predominantly context-dependent. Furthermore, the interpretations of these meanings proposed by various scholars are reviewed, and the author offers alternative interpretations in cases where the existing explanations do not correspond to the sentence context.

The second part investigates the meanings of *bolmačï* in modern Turkic languages. To determine the dominant meaning and lexical-semantic variants of the word, explanatory dictionaries of various Turkic languages are consulted. The study finds that the lexeme remains widely used in various forms in Kazakh (*bolmačï*), Karachay-Balkar (*bolmačï*), and Urum (*bolmačï*). In modern Turkic languages, the lexical meaning of the word varies: 'small', 'few', 'insignificant', 'meaningless', 'empty', 'futile', 'worthless', 'insufficient', 'unnecessary', 'negative', and 'false', among others. The lexical-semantic variants also shift depending on the context.

The third part of the study analyzes the morphemic structure of *bolmačï*, consisting of the root stem *bol-* ('to be') + *-ma* (a formative negation affix) + *-čï* (a derivational affix). Particular attention is paid to the semantic transformation of the suffix *-čï*, whose origin and grammatical function remain the subject of scholarly debate. Summarizing various academic viewpoints, the author argues that *-čï* was

originally a formative affix used to create future participles, typically attached to negative verb forms. Throughout the historical development of the Turkic languages, this affix underwent lexicalisation, acquiring a derivational function in the process.

In the conclusion, the author notes observes that *bolmaĉi* currently functions as an independent adjective and should be included in Turkic dictionaries as a nominative lexical entry.

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Түркі тілдеріндегі *bolmaĉi* сөзі туралы

Аннотация. Мақала осы уақытқа дейін зерттеушілер назарына ілікпеген және ерте ортағасырлық түркі мәтіндерінде сирек кездесетін *bolmaĉi* сөзін талдауға арналған. Зерттеушілердің пікірінше, лексеманың бірнеше мағынасы бар және олардың кейбірі бір-біріне тікелей қарама-қарсы: «мүмкін емес, бекер, босқа, қажетсіз, маңызды емес», сондай-ақ «бар болу, бар». Мақаланың мақсаты – сөздің тарихи өткен шақтағы және қазіргі түркі тілдеріндегі мағыналарының алуан түрлілігін ашып көрсету, оның басым мағынасын анықтау, сондай-ақ морфемдік құрылымын талдау.

Мақаланың талдау құрылымы үш бөлімнен тұрады. Бірінші бөлімде Қарахан, Хорезм және Қыпшақ ескерткіштерінің тарихи мәтіндеріндегі *bolmaĉi* сөзінің барлық қолданыстары іріктеліп, лексеманың көбіне контекстке байланысты туындайтын мағыналары қарастырылады. Оның үстіне, бұл мағыналарға әртүрлі ғалымдардың берген түсіндірмелері талданып, сондай-ақ сөйлем контексіне сәйкес келмеген жағдайда автор тарапынан балама талқыламалар ұсынылады.

Талдаудың екінші бөлімінде қазіргі түркі тілдеріндегі *bolmaĉi* сөзінің мағыналары ашылады. Сөздің басым мағынасын және лексика-семантикалық нұсқаларын анықтау үшін әр түрлі түркі тілдерінің түсіндірме сөздіктері пайдаланылған. Зерттеу нәтижесінде бұл лексеманың қазіргі күнге дейін қазақ (*bolmaĉi*), қарашай-малқар (*bolmaĉi*) және ұрым (*bolmaĉi*) тілдерінде әр түрлі нұсқаларда кеңінен қолданылатыны анықталды. Қазіргі түркі тілдерінде сөздің лексикалық мағыналары әр қилы: «кіші», «аз», «жарытымсыз», «мағынасыз», «бос», «бекер», «түкке тұрғысыз», «жеткіліксіз», «қажетсіз», «теріс», «жалған» және басқалар, сондай-ақ олардың лексика-семантикалық нұсқалары контекстке байланысты өзгеріп отырады.

Үшінші бөлімде *bol-* (болу) түбірі + *-ma* (болымсыздық сөз түрлендіруші жұрнақ) + *ĉi* (сөз тудырушы жұрнақ) түзілген *bolmaĉi* сөзінің морфемдік құрылымы талданады.

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Шығу төркіні мен грамматикалық қызметі әлі де талас тудырып отырған -*сi* жұрнағының мағыналық трансформациясына ерекше назар аударылған. Ғалымдардың түрлі көзқарастарын жинақтай келе, автор бұл жұрнақтың бастапқыда болымсыз етістіктерге жалғанып, келер шақ есімшесін тудыратын сөз түрлендіруші аффикс болғанын айтады. Түркі тілдерінің тарихи дамуы барысында жұрнақтың грамматикалық мағынасы лексикаланып, сөз тудырушы формантка ие болған.

Қорытындыда автор *bolmaсi* сөзінің қазіргі кезде дербес сын есім ретінде қызмет ететінін және түркі тілдері сөздіктеріне номинативті атау ретінде енгізілуі қажет екенін атап өтеді. Аталмыш сөздің уақыт өте келе алған мағыналарының алуан түрлілігі оның лингвистикалық тұрғыдан ғана емес, мәдени тұрғыдан да маңызды функцияны атқарғанын; ол жанама немесе жасырын сынды қамтитын күрделі тілдік бірлік ретінде қолданылатынын көрсетеді.

Кілт сөздер: ерте ортағасырлық мәтіндер, *bolmaсi*, мағынаның көп түрлілігі, қазіргі түркі тілдері, қазақ, қарашай-балқар, ұрым, сөздің морфемдік құрылымы, -*сi* жұрнағы, грамматикалық мағынаның лексикалануы.

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О слове *bolmaсi* в тюркских языках

Аннотация. Статья посвящена анализу слова *bolmaсi*, которое до сих пор не было объектом внимания исследователей и которое редко встречается в раннесреднетюркских текстах. Лексема, по мнению исследователей, имеет несколько значений, и некоторые из них прямо противоположны по смыслу: «невозможный, тщетный, напрасный, ненужный, неважный», а также значения «быть, есть». Задача данной статьи раскрыть многообразие значений слова в его исторических прошлом и современных тюркских языках, определить его доминантное значение, а также проанализировать его морфемную структуру.

Анализ статьи структурно разделён на три части. В первой части осуществлена выборка всех употреблений *bolmaсi* из исторических текстов Караханидских, Хорезмийских и Кыпчакских памятников и рассматриваются значения лексемы, чаще всего обусловленные контекстом. Более того, даются интерпретации этих значений разными исследователями, и автор статьи также предлагает свои альтернативные толкования, когда данные значения не соответствуют контексту предложения.

Во второй части анализа раскрываются значения *bolmaсi* в современных тюркских языках. Для определения доминантного значения и лексико-семантических вариантов слова используются толковые словари различных тюркских языков. Выявлено, что исследуемая лексема до сих пор широко употребляется в различных вариантах в казахском (*bolmaсi*), карачаево-балкарском (*bolmaсi*) и урумском (*bolmaсi*) языках. В современных тюркских языках лексическое значение слова варьируется: «маленький», «мало», «незначительный», «бессмысленный», «пустой», «напрасный», «никчемный», «недостаточный», «ненужный», «отрицательный», «ложный» и другие, а также лексико-семантические варианты слова меняются в зависимости от контекста.

В третьей части – исследуется морфемная структура *bolmačï*, состоящая из корневой основы *bol-* (быть) + *-ma* (формообразующего аффикса отрицания) + *-čï* (словообразовательного аффикса). Особое внимание уделяется трансформации значения аффикса *-čï*, происхождение и грамматическая функция которого до сих пор дискуссионны. Обобщая различные точки зрения ученых, автор статьи утверждает, что изначально *-čï* был формообразующим аффиксом и служил для образования причастий будущего времени, который присоединялся к отрицательным глаголам. В процессе исторического развития тюркских языков грамматическое значение аффикса подверглось лексикализации и приобрело словообразовательное значение.

В выводах автор также отмечает, что *bolmačï* в настоящее время функционирует как самостоятельное прилагательное и должно быть включено в тюркские словари как номинативное именование.

Ключевые слова: ранние среднетюркские тексты, *bolmačï*, многообразие значения, современные тюркские языки, казахский, карачаево-балкарский, урумский, морфемная структура слова, аффикс *-čï*, лексикализация грамматического значения.

Introduction

The word *bolmačï*, which appears with varying meanings in both Middle Turkic and modern Turkic languages, has not yet been the subject of detailed scholarly analysis. What drew our attention is that in lexicological studies of Middle Turkic, the meaning of this word is sometimes interpreted in accordance with the context of the sentence in which it occurs, while in other cases the interpretation appears less consistent or convincing. Boeschoten (Boeschoten, 2022: 89), defines *bolmačï* as “impossible” and “in vain”, whereas Ünlü (Ünlü, 2012: 106) interprets it as *olacak, olan* ‘will be, is’ (Ünlü, 2012: 106). Boeschoten (Boeschoten, 2022: 89) *bolmačï* “impossible” and “in vain,” Ünlü it as ‘will be, is’. Furthermore, in Middle Turkic dictionaries *bolmačï* is consistently listed under the the root *bol-* (‘to be’), whereas in modern Turkic dictionaries it is always treated as an independent headword. These observations give rise to several important questions: “What exactly does *bolmačï* mean? Have scholars interpreted the word correctly in Middle Turkic texts? Has this word developed new meanings in the modern Turkic languages? And should *bolmačï* be presented as a headword in its own right or under *bol-*? The present study seeks to address these questions.

Materials and Methods

This research will begin by collecting all available occurrences of the word *bolmačï* in historical texts in order to determine its precise meaning. It will analyze how these instances have been interpreted by different scholars and where the proposed meanings do not align with the sentence context, alternative and more appropriate interpretations will be suggested. Subsequently, in order to identify the presence and meanings of *bolmačï* in modern Turkic languages, comprehensive dictionaries of contemporary Turkic languages will be consulted. Finally, the study will examine scholarly views on the morphological structure of the word.

Research background

In the field of Turkic languages, the word *bolmačī* represents a notable case of semantic ambiguity and limited scholarly attention. Although it appears infrequently in Early Middle Turkic texts, *bolmačī* has been interpreted in markedly different ways by researchers. Some have assigned it meanings such as "impossible", "futile", "vain", and "unimportant", while others have rendered it as "will be" or "is". The coexistence of such contradictory interpretations indicates that the semantic, syntactic, and morphological characteristics of the word have yet to be subjected to a comprehensive and systematic analysis.

The absence of a unified approach is especially evident in the lexicographical treatment of *bolmačī*. In Middle Turkic dictionaries, it is typically subsumed under the headword *bol-* "to be", a practice that may obscure its potential function as an independent lexical item. Conversely, in modern Turkic languages such as Kazakh, Karachay-Balkar, and Urum, the word persists with distinct phonological forms and meanings, frequently conveying notions such as "triviality", "insignificance", "falsehood", or "slightness". This discrepancy between historical and modern usage raises important questions regarding the diachronic development of *bolmačī* and its semantic evolution.

Furthermore, the morphological structure of *bolmačī* comprising the verb root *bol-* ("to be"), the negation suffix *-ma*, and the rare and morphologically opaque suffix *-čī* has long been a subject of scholarly debate. Various hypotheses have been proposed regarding the origin and function of *-čī*, ranging from its classification as a future participial suffix to a possible borrowing or internally innovated element within Turkic languages. Despite these efforts, no scholarly consensus has been reached.

In light of these unresolved issues, a comprehensive re-evaluation of *bolmačī* is warranted. The present study aims to fill these gaps by systematically analyzing the word's occurrences in historical sources, examining its modern reflexes, and investigating its morphological structure within the broader context of Turkic linguistics. Through this approach, the study aims to clarify the meaning, lexical status, and historical trajectory of *bolmačī*, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of lexical and morphological developments across the Turkic language family.

Analysis

1. The Word in Early Sources

The earliest example of the word appears in a 14th-century interlinear translation of the Qur'an written in late Karakhanid Turkic (TIEM 73): (*ayğıl bütünlükün tañrı färmānlamas bolmačī yawuz işni*, 114r8). Ünlü's translation is as follows: "de ki: Allah çirkin işleri emretmez" 'Say: Allah never commands what is evil deeds' (Ünlü, 2018: I, 346-347). In Ünlü's version, *bolmačī* was not considered. A more appropriate translation may be as follows: "Say: Surely, God does not command unacceptable evil deeds". In this example, the meaning of *bolmačī* should be 'unacceptable'.

A total of six examples were found in works written in Khwarezm Turkic. There were five examples in *Husrav u Širīn* (HŠ) and one example in *Qışaṣ al-Anbiyā'* (QA). Zajaczkowski explains *bolmačī* in HŠ as *nie istnieje, na próżna* – 'impossible, futile, in vain' (Zajaczkowski, 1961: III, 35). Boeschoten translates it as "impossible, in vain" (Boeschoten, 2022: 89).

Examples in HŠ include: *nečä bolmači iſgä tiſ bilärsän* (HŠ 1823). Zajaczkowski translated this example as: “*Po co ostrzysz zęby (po próżnicy) wobec nieistniejącej sprawy*” ‘Why would you sharpen your teeth (in vain) over an issue that does not exist’ (Zajaczkowski, 1961: III, 35). Boeschoten reads it as *nečä bolmači eſgä (or: iſgä) tiſ bilärsän* and translates it as: “How impossible a mate (or: task) you are set on!” (Boeschoten, 2022: 89). In our opinion, it can also be rendered as: “You are greedy [you look for opportunities, you have appetites] for what is impossible [unlikely to happen]”. (*ägär bolmasa aqçaſ taqı häm / ač ölmäzsän yemä bolmači köp gam*, HŠ 1933). Zajaczkowski explained as: “*Jeżeli nawet nie będziesz miał ant grosza, to i tak nie umrzesz z głodu, nie martw się więc na próżno*” ‘If you don't have even a penny, you won't starve to death anyway, so don't worry in vain!’ (Zajaczkowski, 1961: III, 35). Boeschoten translates it as: “If you don't die from hunger that will be a lot of suffering in vain” (Boeschoten, 2022: 89). The translation of this phrase should be: “Even if you do not have a coin / you will not die from hunger, [then] do not worry too much for nothing [in vain]”. (*hämışä bolmači qadğu yutarmän*, HŠ 2217). It was rendered by Zajaczkowski as: “*Zawsze trapię się nieistotną troską*” ‘I always fall into vain anxiety’ (Zajaczkowski, 1961: III, 36). This should be translated as: “I always keep unnecessary [needless, empty] anxiety to myself”. (*yana bolmači saſınc saſnu turma*, HŠ 3288). Zajaczkowski translates it as follows: “*Znów gdy będzie się przejmował próżnymi myślami*” – “Don't worry about empty thoughts again” (Zajaczkowski, 1961: III, 36). This should be translated as: “And do not dwell in vain [unimportant] thoughts”. (*yana közdin qatığraq bolmači söz*, HŠ 3477). Interpretation of Zajaczkowski's interpretation is: “*Znów od oka twardsza jest słowo po próżnicy*” ‘Again, empty words are harsher than eyes’ (Zajaczkowski, 1961: III, 36). The correct translation should be: “Nevertheless, vain words [meaningless, nonsensical] are harsher than embers [fire]”.

There is only one example of the *bolmači* to be found in the QA: *bu nä bolmači opraklarni yığib turursen!* (Ata, 1997: 325). Schinkewitz read and interpreted this phrase as follows: *bula bulmači obraklarnı yığib turursen* “You keep gathering all kinds of vagabonds and hoodlums” (Schinkewitz, 1947: 116). Schinkewitz misread *bolmači* as *bula bulmači*, giving the meaning “all kinds of”. Boeschoten translates this example as: “What an impossible collection of rags you have collected!” (Boeschoten, 2022: 89). The correct translation of the example should be “What worthless, worn-out [clothes] you keep collecting!”. In this example, the meaning of *bolmači* should be ‘worthless’, not ‘impossible’ or ‘all kinds of’.

Examples of Middle Kipchak texts that have been identified in various sources include two instances in the *Codex Cumanicus* (CC), one in the *Irşād al-mulūk va s-salāṭīn* (IrM), and another occurs in works written in the Armeno-Kipchak variety of the Turkic language.

In the studies on CC, *bolmači* is usually given the following meanings: Kuun *bolmači* “in vanum” (Kuun, 1880: 302), Grønbech *bolmači* “nichtig” (Grønbech, 1942: 64), Gabain *bolmači* “in vanum”, “nicht” (Gabain, 1959: 66), Argunşah & Güner *bolmači* “*olmaz, imkansız, gerçekleşmesi mümkün olmayan*” - “impossible, unfeasible, unrealizable” (Argunşah, Güner, 2015: 670), Boeschoten *bolmači* “impossible, in vain” (Boeschoten, 2022: 89).

Examples from the *Codex Cumanicus* include: *ave sen qız kim jänirni almayipsen bolmači* (CCb 70a3). The phrase has been interpreted as follows: Grønbech - “Du hast deine Seele nicht umsonst empfangen” (‘You have not received your soul in vain’) (Grønbech, 1942: 64), Gabain - “Indem du hast deine Seele nicht vergeblich empfangen” (‘You have not received your soul in vain’) (Gabain, 1959: 66), Argunşah & Güner - “Selam sana bakire ki canını almaman mümkün değil” (‘Greetings to you virgin, it is impossible for you not to take your

life') (Argunşah, Güner, 2015: 379), Boeschoten – "You have not received your soul in vain" (Boeschoten, 2022: 89). In these cases, *bolmači* is correctly rendered as 'nicht', 'in vain'.

However, the interpretation as 'impossible' does not align with the overall semantic structure of the sentence. Another example, *eč bolmači nāmägä näk berdiñ munča ulu baħa, nek tölediñ* (CCb 75a6), has been translated as follows: Kuun äč bolmači "gratis, gratuito" ('free, worthless'; Kuun, 1880: 251), Grønbech – "Für eine ganz nichtige Sache weshalb gabst du, weshalb bezahltest du einen so grossen Preis" ('For a completely unimportant matter why did you give, why did you pay such a great price') (Grønbech, 1942: 171), Gabain – "Warum hast du einen so hohen Preise für eine ganz nichtige Sac he gegeben?" ('Why did you pay such a high price for something that means nothing?') (Gabain, 1959: 66), Argunşah & Güner "Hiç değmeyecek bir şeye niçin verdin, bunca büyük paha niçin ödedin" ('Why did you pay for something that is not worth anything? Why did you pay such a great price?') (Argunşah, Güner, 2015: 395). Boeschoten – "Why have you given (so much) for a worthless thing?" (Boeschoten, 2022: 139). In this context, the translations are consistent, with *bolmači* correctly interpreted as meaning 'worthless'.

There is an example in *Irşād al-mulūk va s-salāṭin* (IrM), one of the Mamluk Kipchak Turkic texts: *esrük ol turur kim bolmači sözler sözler taqı sözi bulğaşuq* (IrM 411b2). No prior scholarly explanation has been found for this example. We interpret it as follows: "A drunkard is someone who speaks nonsense – meaningless, empty, or vain words – and whose speech is incoherent".

Only one example of *bolmači* can be found in Armeno-Kipchak. Garkavets assigns the following meanings to *bolmači* in Armeno-Kipchak texts: "nedolžniy" ('unsuitable'), "nedopustimiy" ('invalid'), "nepozvolitelniy" ('unacceptable'), and "negodniy" ('empty, vain, trivial') (Garkavets, 2010: III, 310-311). The relevant example with *bolmači* is as follows: *Teñriniñ 10 buyruħuna ħulaħ ħoymiyirmen, artıħsı yaman, u keräksiz, u bolmači heč nemägä ħulaħ ħoyupmen*' (Garkavets, 2002: I, 796). Garkavets interprets this passage as follows: "10 Božiyım zapovedyam, izryadno prisluşiyvalsya k zlym, i nepotrebnym, i soverşenno nedopustimym veščam" ('I do not heed the Ten Commandments of God, but rather, I heed what is evil, unnecessary and insignificant') (Garkavets, 2002: I, 796). This interpretation is correct, as in this context *bolmači* means 'insignificant or vain'.

2. The Word in Modern Turkic Languages

During the research of *bolmači* in modern Turkic languages, comprehensive dictionaries were consulted. However, among the modern Turkic languages, the term *bolmači* was found only in Kazakh, Karachay-Malkar and Urum. In each of these languages, the word appears as a headword in the respective dictionaries. Given the variation in usage and meaning across these languages, each is treated under a separate heading in the analysis.

2.1. Kazakh

In Kazakh, the word appears as *bolmaşı* (< *bolmači*), is attested with three different meanings in *Qazaq ädabi tiliñiñ sözdiği* (Süyerķulova, Žanūzaķ, 2011: III, 470-471):

The first meaning is:

I) "Azyantay, kişkentay, az, şamalı" – 'Small, a little, a little bit, slight'.

Examples include:

(1) 6-8 aķpan aralıyında kūn bolmaşı suwı tadı.

'The weather will get a little cold between 6-8 February'.

(2) *Ortalık aymaqtıñ xalık sanı bolmaşı 0,7 %-ğa köbeydi.*

'The population of the central region increased slightly by 0.7%.'

(3) *Birinci dünya žüzilik soystıñ barışı Sıdannıñ işki žaydayına bolmaşı äser etti.*

'The course of the First World War had a slight impact on the internal situation of Sudan.'

(4) *Könjil tükpırinde bolmaşı bir ümit säwlesı oyanıday boldı.*

'It was as if a small ray of hope had awakened in a corner of the heart'.

II) "Bolar-bolmas, säl-päl, biraz" – 'Somewhat, barely, slightly, light, imperceptibly'.

Example include:

(5) *Bolmaşı žanbırğa žarık öşıp qala beredi deydi.*

'It is said that with a light rain, the light tends to go out'.

(6) *Türk lirası 0,1 %-ğa bolmaşı nııyaydı.*

'The Turkish lira rose [appreciated] slightly by 0.1%'.

III) "awis. žoktan özge, usaq-tüyek, kişkene närese, bosqa" '(Figuratively) trivial, irrelevant, insignificant, in vain'.

Examples include:

(7) *Bosañ adam bolmaşığa ökpeleydi.*

'A careless person gets upset [in vain] about trivial things'.

(8) *Urıstıñ köbişi bolmaşı närseden şıyatın bolıandıqtan, Zeyneptıñ aytқан sözi Aydarbekke şiltaw boldı.*

'Since most quarrels arise from trivial things, Zeynep's words became an excuse for Aydarbek'.

(9) *Endi bolmaşı sırawlarmen dırektordı mazalamaydı.*

'No longer will the director be disturbed with irrelevant requests'.

(10) *Bolmaşı sebepten qolakpanday žanžal tıwadı.*

'A major conflict erupts over an insignificant [vain] reason'.

2.2. Karachay-Balkar

Bolmači is also attested in Karachay-Balkar. It has three meanings in the *Qaračay-Malkar tilni añılátma sözlüğü* (Guzelanı, Ahmatlanı, 1996: I, 470-471):

I) "žukğa žaramayan, qolaysız, osal; bolumsuz." 'bad, terrible, useless, incompetent, unimportant, unnecessary, negative'.

Examples include:

(11) *Esine biyagi türlü-türlü bolmači sağışla kele...*

'A variety of negative [terrible] thoughts come to your mind again...'

(12) *MTS-ni başçıları añı [Nastıyanı] bolmači tışırıwğa sanap qoyadıla.*

'The heads of the MTS consider her [Nastya] as an incompetent woman'.

(13) *Ol bolmači kitapnı neşin okıysa?*

'What is there to read in that useless book?'

II) "žangyılıči bolyan, žašaudača bolmayan." – 'Mistaken, with errors (e.g., in direction, path or action)'.

(14) *Ol [Šontuq] kişi ortası bolur zamanğa, añı xalkı qalay ese da bir bolmači žolğa terilip, muşliyman topıraqnı izlep ketdi.*

'When he [Šontuq] reached middle age, his people, for some reason, seized with a vain [mistaken] hope, went in search of Muslim land [homeland]'.

III) "kertige ušamayın, ötürük, žalyın" – 'untrue, false, nonsense, fabricated'.

(15) *Bolmači şiltawla etiw.*

‘To make nonsense [false] excuses’.

(16) *Žanšaq, bolmači sözleni žanšap, Saw elge kayğını salıp keter.*

‘The chatterbox speaks nonsense [empty] words and leaves the whole village in trouble’.

(17) *Alay endi xatıwnı közüne türlü-türlü bolmači zatla köryinedile.*

‘But now all kinds of nonsense [unreal] things appear before Hativ’s eyes’.

(18) *Ol bolmači tawruχdu.*

‘That was a fabricated story’.

(19) *Teñleri kallay bolmači tawruχlanı, seyirlik işleni, žigitlikleni eşitirge sıygenleri üçin, Çokur bir kesek koşıp aytsa da, anı aña kečiwçüdi.*

‘Since his friends enjoy hearing all kinds of fabricated [unreal] stories, strange events, and tales of heroism, even if Çokur adds a bit, they forgive [tolerate] him for that reason’.

2.3. Urum

The word survives in this language in the form *bolmaci* (< *bolmači*), which means ‘useless, futile’ (Garkavets, 2000: 111). Although a range of Urum texts, riddles, proverbs, and others – were examined, no actual occurrences of the word were identified.

Morphological Structure

In both historical and modern Turkic languages, *bolmači*, which originally means ‘impossible, unacceptable, futile, insignificant, bad, little, small, light, incompetent’ is used as an adjective modifying nouns, expressing a variety of semantic meanings. Morphologically, the word consists of three elements: *bol-* ‘to be’ + *-ma* ‘negation suffix’ + *-či* (of uncertain origin). Researchers have proposed various theories regarding the rare suffix *-či*, particularly in Old and Middle Turkic. Gabain offers two different interpretations for *-či* suffix in *bolmači*, as it appears in the *Codex Cumanicus*. For the phrase *jāniñni almayıpsen bolmači*, she suggests a possible connection to the Mongolian converb *-ji*. In contrast, for *eč bolmači nāmägä nāk berdiñ munça ulu baħa*, she argues that *-či* does not serve as a converb, but rather functions as a nominal attributive (Gabain, 1959: 66).

T. Tekin argues that the origin of the suffix is *-yači / -geči* (*-či* < **-yači / -geči*), which parallels the Mongolian suffix *-yači / -geči*, and that its negative form is *-mači / -mäči* (< **-mayači / -mägäči*) and stating that the suffix has the same function as *-yuči / -güči*. Ş. Tekin points out that the suffix *-či / -či* is very rarely used. In particular, he explains that the suffix may have something to do with the suffix *-dači / -däči*, citing its use with verbs that are the negative of the suffix *-dači / -däči* (*ölmečisen* ‘you will not die’, *yaramači* ‘useless, nugatory’, *tegmeči men* ‘I will not attack’) as evidence (Tekin, 1992: 97). Karamanlioğlu examines *-mači* under the category of the imperative mood. According to him, the suffix *-či* in the word *bolmači* in CC is related to *‘-či / -či kilči, kilmeči, kilsinči’*, which is one of the emphatical enclitic of the imperative forms in Northern Turkic (Karamanlioğlu, 1994: 137). Berta in contrast, lists *-mači* under the headword *bol-*, but does not provide any further analysis regarding its function (Berta, 1996: 98).

Barutçu referring to the Mongolian version of Altun Yaruk from the Old Uyghur period, notes that Turkic *yme* is usually met with the postposition *ču* in Mongolian, and that *ču* in

Mongolian appears in one place as a counterpart to *ok* in Turkic. She also notes that *čī* is used as an enclitic in Early Middle Mongolian and explains that the postposition exists not only in Turkic but also in Mongolian (Barutçu, 2001: 84). According to T. Tekin, the suffix *-čī*, which is rarely used, indicates that an action will take place in the future and this suffix is usually attached to negative verb stems (Tekin, 2003: 189). Erdal, under the heading of future tense, considers *-mAčī* as the negative counterpart of the Old Turkic suffix *-dAčī* and suggests that it seems to be the counterpart of the very rare future participle suffix *-čī*. He further proposes that the suffix *-mAčī* may have originated from **-mAdčī* < **-mAdAčī*, and notes that there are also a few instances of the positive counterpart used as participles qualifying nouns that refer to pregnant living beings (Erdal, 2004: 243).

As a possibility, Eraslan considers the suffix *-čī* / *-čī* potentially related to *-čġ* / *-čġ*, which is considered a variant of future tense deverbal noun suffix *-sġ* / *-sġ*, and evaluates it as **-čī* / *-čī* < *-čġ* / *-čġ*. He also analyzes the suffix in negative formations as *-mačī* / *-mečī* < *-ma* *-ma* + *čī* / *-me* *-me* + *čī* (Eraslan, 2012: 321-322). Nasilov concurs with Erdal in identifying *-mAčī* as the negative equivalent of *-dAčī* in Old Turkic. He notes that the question of whether the suffix *-čī* in the example *bu yolın yorisar* functions as a participle remains open to debate. He also offers possible etymological reconstructions, including *-mačī* + < *-ma* + (**-ya* / *u*) + *-čī* or *-ma* + (*-mak*) + *-čī* or other homomorphic formations derived from future participles and denominative suffixes (Nasilov, 2016: 181-184).

It is difficult to come to a definite conclusion about the origin and formation of the suffix *-čī*. However, based on the evaluation of the available scholarly views, it is not possible to interpret the suffix as an enclitic postposition or as a reinforcing element in the imperative mood. The examples from Old and Middle Turkic clearly demonstrate that the suffix functions to indicate the future tense. We disagree with Gabain's interpretation of the example *jāniñni almayipsen bolmačī*, as it is evident from the context and meaning that *-čī* does not function as a converb, but rather as an adjective. We also find Eraslan's hypothesis, while put forward as a possibility, not compatible with the developmental trajectory of the suffix.

Since Orkhon Turkic, this suffix has appeared in a tense-related function, typically affixed to verb stems. Given that the future tense suffix *-sġ* / *-sġ* was already in use in Orkhon Turkic, it is unlikely that the final *-ġ* / *-g* would both disappear and persist within the same chronological period. We support Erdal's interpretation, this suffix as the negative counterpart of *-čī* and *-dAčī*. As Erdal notes, this is a rare future participial suffix, and although its precise etymology remains unclear, it likely originated as a negative future participle formed with the *-mA* negation suffix. But, in later periods, especially in the case of *bolmačī*, the suffix lost its function (future participle). It became lexicalized through its fixed association with the verb *bol-* and the negation suffix *-ma*. In historical and modern Turkic languages, this lexicalized form came to carry the meaning of a negative adjective (e.g., 'useless', 'futile', 'trivial'), rather than functioning as a grammatical participle.

Results

The word *bolmačī*, which appears only infrequently in Middle Turkic texts, is attested with meanings such as 'impossible', 'in vain', 'insignificant', 'worthless', 'unacceptable', 'futile', 'unnecessary', 'meaningless', and 'empty'. In addition, several previously incorrect or incomplete interpretations of sentences containing the word have been re-evaluated and corrected in this study.

In modern Turkic languages, *bolmačï* continues to appear in various forms. In Kazakh, in addition to its Middle Turkic meanings, it has developed new semantic values such as ‘small’, ‘a little’, ‘slight’, ‘somewhat’, ‘barely’, ‘light’, and ‘imperceptibly’. In Karachay-Balkar, it has acquired meanings including ‘bad’, ‘terrible’, ‘negative’, ‘incompetent’, ‘mistaken’, ‘untrue’, ‘false’, ‘nonsense’, and ‘fabricated’. It is understood that these extended meanings are conceptually close to the meanings in Middle Turkic. Thus, it may be concluded that *bolmačï* has undergone a process of semantic expansion in modern languages. It is also thought that the word *bolmačï* should be considered a distinctively Kipchak element within the broader Turkic language family.

Morphologically, *bolmačï* is composed of *bol-* (‘to be’) + *-ma* (negation) + *-čï*. The suffix *-čï* was initially used as a future participle suffix by being added to negative verb stems, but later, especially in the case of *bolmačï*, it lost its participial function and was transformed into a lexical element with the verb *bol-*. In contemporary usage, the form functions as a lexical adjective expressing negative evaluation or judgment.

In our opinion, *bolmačï* is used to express an insulting or disparaging meaning that might be considered inappropriate to state directly. In such contexts, the word may even function as a mild euphemism, particularly when used with generic nouns such as *iş* (‘thing’), *zat* (‘object’), *söz* (‘word’), *yol* (‘way’), and *närse* (‘thing’).

Conclusion

As in the dictionaries of modern Turkic languages, it would be more accurate to list *bolmačï* as an independent headword in Middle Turkic dictionaries, rather than placing it under the headword *bol-*. This is because the form does not carry tense, and although it is derived from the verb *bol-*, it functions as a fully lexicalized adjective with a distinct and independent meaning.

Abbreviations

CCb = *Codex Cumanicus* “Italian” section.

IrM = *Iršād al-mulūk wa's-salāṭin*.

QA = *Qışaṣ al-Anbiyā'*.

ḤŞ = *Husrav u Širîn*.

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Conflict of Interest.

There is no conflict of interest related to this article.

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