



## THE QUESTION OF WHETHER THE KOREAN LANGUAGE BELONGS TO AN ISOLATED LANGUAGE

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### ABSTRACT

Currently, there are heated debates about the belonging of the Korean language to one or another language family. The article describes the works of famous foreign Korean and Russian scientists on this topic.

### KEYWORDS

Language family, ainu language, Altaic language family, non-Altaic theory, «micro-Altaic» family, proto-Altaic language.

### INTRODUCTION

In linguistics, there are several assumptions about the genetic proximity of the Korean language with the Ural-Altaic, Japanese, Chinese, Indo-European, as well as the Ainu language and others.

Korean (한국어, 조선말hangugo, Chosonmal ) is the official language of the Republic of Korea, North Korea, and the Korean autonomous district of Yanban in China. In addition, most of the Korean diaspora from Uzbekistan to Japan and



Canada communicate in this language. It is a stunning but not easy language with a rich history and culture.

A language family is a group of languages related through descent from a common ancestral language or parental language, called the proto-language of that family.

The term «family» reflects the tree model of language origination in historical linguistics, which makes use of a metaphor comparing languages to people in a biological family tree, or in a subsequent modification, to species in a phylogenetic tree of evolutionary taxonomy. Linguists therefore describe the daughter languages within a language family as being genetically related.

Usually dominated by non-Altaic theory of the origin of the Korean language, that is, the Korean language is considered isolated language, «traditional ties» which are established only hypothetically. However, relying on the work of A.V. Dybo and S.A. Starostin, we can say about the relationship of the Korean language with the languages of the Altaic families. This hypothesis is called «Altaic». The Altaic theory of the origin of the Korean language proves the relationship of the Korean language with the languages of the Turkic and Altaic language families.

One of the supporters of the non-Altaic theory of the origin of the Korean language was N. Poppe. The classification he proposed languages indicates an insufficient degree of knowledge of the Korean language, which does not make it possible to attribute it to the Altaic language family. In addition, Poppe in his research indicates the

absence of intermediate stages in the Korean language, which confirms the theory of isolation of this language. The scientist suggests that the Korean language most likely separated directly from its progenitor language.

In this way, the theory of the «Micro-Altai» family, to which Turkic, Mongolian, Tungus, and Korean were attributed, emerges. One of the most significant for the genealogical classification of Korean is the works of Korean philologist Lee Ki-Moon. One of the first he acknowledged the fact of secession of Korean language directly from the proto-Altaic at the beginning of one's development. He also revealed the intermediate stages of Korean language evolution yet.

Lee Ki-Moon conducted research on the kinship of Korean and Japanese languages. Turning to the historical chronicles «Samguk sagi» and «Samguk yusa» by exploring the ancient Japanese language and languages of Kogure and Kai, Lee Ki-Moon revealed similarities between some words. For example, the word "sea" sounds in all three languages as [we], «land» in ancient Japanese - [na-vi], and in Koguryo and Kayak - [na]. The examples given demonstrate the kinship of the Japanese language and the Kogure language spoken by the peoples living in the northern part of the Korean Peninsula. This kinship is due to the invasion of the Japanese islands by tribes that had migrated from the northern part of the Korean Peninsula, whose language later began to be used among the inhabitants of the Japanese islands. Based on the historical fact of contact between the people of Japan and the Korean tribes,



Japanese can be regarded as a related group of ancient Korean languages.

However, in order to fully determine the genetic affinity of Japanese and Korean, it is worth considering modern Japanese and Korean languages as well. An example might be the word «sea» which sounds like [wata] in Japanese, and the Korean word for the [skia] translates as 바다 [pada]. Based on research by Japanese, Korean, as well as Western linguists, it can be judged that there are a number of common language development trends in Japanese and Korean languages that speaks about the closest kinship of the Korean language precisely with Japanese.

The largest number of similarities of the system to the Korean language was found in the Tunguso Manchurian group. Since Manchurians lived in the northern part of the Korean Peninsula, Manchurian had a strong influence on the development of the Korean language. Thus, in both languages, there were later many common idioms.

Lee Ki-Moon compares about 250 lexical units of Manchurian and Korean languages based on their superficial analysis. For example, the word «water» is translated into Korean as 물 [mul], and in Manchurian it sounds like [muke].

These examples show the existence of a process of cultural exchange between the Korean and Manchurian people. Thanks to this process, the vocabulary of one language also penetrated into another. Thus, based on Lee Ki-Moon's writings, it is possible to make a guess as to whether the Korean language belongs to the Tunguso-

Manchur group that emerged after the division of the proto-altaic language.

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