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Author(s)	ALONSO DE LA FUENTE, José Andrés
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Vowel Epenthesis in Orok *ulisä* ‘meat’

José Andrés ALONSO DE LA FUENTE
University of the Basque Country

In memory of Jirō Ikegami (1920-2011)

Orok *ulisä* ‘meat’ (OD-1: 219 *ulisə*, OD-2: 222 *ulišə́*, OD-3: 379b ул’исэ~улис’э, OD-4: 505 *ulisý*; attested in both Southern and Northern dialects, vid. i.a. Ikegami 2001(1994): 261) belongs to a group of words showing an irregular medial *-i-* whose origins remain unexplained from a comparative viewpoint. Doerfer (1978: 84-85, also EEWDT 11686 **öli+*) considers that such a vowel is original, namely a remnant of the parent language, in spite of being present only in Orok and Nanay, cf. Ewenki *ullä*, Oroch *uktä*, Ulcha *ulsä*, Nanay *uleksä*, Udihe *ulähä* (SSTMJa 2: 262). As for Nanay *uleksä*, this is most likely a nominal derivate from the unrelated verbal base *ule-* ‘to feed’ (SSTMJa 2: 260b, from PT **ölii-* [or possibly **ulii-* before these two different bases would have blended?] ‘to feed’ > Ewenki *ulii-*, Manchu *ule-bu-* [with the causative suffix]). This explanation may well apply to Orok too, but unfortunately the verbal base is absent from the Orok lexicon. There is an alternative solution that may also help to account for the following additional instances of the medial *-i-* in Orok (unless otherwise stated, PT *et alia* reconstructions are my own):

- (1) Orok *waŋta* ~ *waŋita* ‘spruce, fir (*Picea*)’ (OD-1: 225 *waŋita*, OD-2: 227 *waŋitá mōni*, OD-3: 52b ван(й)та (мөн’й), OD-4: 516 *vánita*) < PT **ŋaŋta* id. > Ewenki *ŋaŋtä*, Negidal *ŋaŋta*, Udihe *ŋaŋta*, Ulcha *waŋta*, Nanay *waŋta*, Manchu *wantaha* (SSTMJa 1: 657-658, EEWDT: 7624 **ŋaŋta* ~ **wāŋta*).
- (2) Orok *talpi* ~ *tarpi* ~ *talipu* ‘thigh, hip’ (OD-1: 200 *talpi* ~ *tarpi*, OD-2: 203 *talpí*, OD-3: 337b талпү(н-) ~ талипу(н-), талпи ~ тарпи, OD-4: 475 *tárpxi*) < PST **talpi* id. > Ulcha *tarpi*, Nanay *talpe* (SSTMJa 2: 169a; for the *r* ~ *l* alternation before consonants, see Alonso de la Fuente 2012).
- (3) Orok *kalixi* ‘scar’ (OD-1: 94 *kalixi*, OD-2: 102 *kaléxi(n)*, OD-3: 119b *калiхi*, OD-4: —) < PST? **kalsi* id. > Ulcha *kalxi*, Udihe *kalehä*, Nanay *kalxe* (SSTMJa 1: 366b). Oroch *kalixi* must be a loanword, otherwise the regular outcome would be ***kakci* < ***kakti* < **kalsi*.
- (4) Orok *seepo* ~ *seepüwa* ‘calf’ (OD-1: 176 *seepoo* ~ *seepuwa*, OD-2: 183 *sēpu(n)* ~ *sēpuŋa*, OD-3: 296b *cēno*, 297a *cēpüŋa*, OD-4: —) < PCT **xyap+kaan* ‘calf (domestic reindeer of 1-2 years)’ > Ewenki *eewkaan* ~ *eepkaan* ~ (Učur dialect and others) *yewkaan*, Negidal *eewkaan* (SSTMJa 1: 288b, EEWDT: 3567, 3738 **hiäpu+kān*). The Orok word may be the result of the following chain of changes: **seepi+ga* < **seepka* < **seewka*, with (irregular?) labialization of *-i-* before *-p-*, cf. (11).
- (5) Orok *sariiki* ~ *sariikki* ‘herring’ (OD-1: 175 *sarukki* ~ *sirukki*, OD-2: 182 *sarúkki*, OD-3: 295a *сарý(к)кi*, OD-4: —) < PT **sarga+kta* ~ **sarga+kii* ‘perch’ > Ewenki *sargaka* ‘perch’, Negidal *saygati*, Ulcha *sargadi* ‘grub, chow’, Manchu *sarga nimaha* ‘whitefish’ (SSTMJa 2: 65b, 67a). Cf. Yakut *sargaatta* ‘grub, chow’ (with *-tta* perhaps from †*-kta*). Vowel epenthesis in Orok only if the following development is assumed: **sarigki* < **sargVki*.

- (6a) Orok *unä* ‘smell’ ~ *unänä-* ‘to smell, sniff’ (OD-1: 220 *unə* ~ *unəxəni*, *unnee-ni*, OD-2: 223 *unə́* ~ *unə́xəni*, *unnēni*, OD-3: 384b *унэнэ-*, OD-4: —) < PCT **önjä(-)* ‘(to) smell’ > Ewenki *unjuu* ~ *unjä-*, Negidal *uñju* ~ *uñjä-*, Ulcha *uñä-*, Nanay *uynä-* (SSTMJa 2: 274-275). Cf. PT **ŋoo-* ‘(to) smell’ (SSTMJa 2: 663-664, EEWTD: 7960 **ŋō* ~ **ŋuā*).
- (6b) Ork *puun* ~ *puunigä* ‘smell’ (OD-1: 169 *puun*, OD-2: —, OD-3: 272a *пунигүэ*, OD-4: —) < PT **pön+gä* ‘(to) smell’ > Ewenki *xuñjäktä*, Negidal *xun*, Ulcha *puu(n-)*, Manchu *fun* ~ *funsan* ~ *fujšun* (SSTMJa 2: 349, EEWTD: 11953 **pöön*). The irregular cluster in Ewenki might be seen as the result of contamination with the cognate in (6a).
- (7) Orok *nañisa* ‘dirt, mud’ (OD-1: 134 *nañisa*, OD-2: 140 *nañisá*, OD-3: 206 *наñисава*, OD-4: 380 *nannisá*) < PT **ñañsa* + id. > Ewenki *ñañña*, Negidal *ñañsalkaan*, Ulcha *yañsa*, Nanay *yañsa*, Manchu *nantuhun* (SSTMJa 1: 633-634, EEWTD: 7617 **ñañ+sa*).
- (8) Orok *xäpici-* ‘to splash’ (OD-1: 237 *xəppəjji-ni*, OD-2: 82 *xəpə́si-ni* ~ *xəpə́si-ni*, OD-3: 165b *хэпиччи-* ~ *хэпиччи-*, OD-4: 300 *хурузихүни*) < PT **xäwti-* id. > Ewenki *äpti-*, Negidal *äpti-*, Manchu *ebe-* (SSTMJa 2: 459-460).

The next two examples are problematic at best:

- (9) Orok *utäriktä* ‘elfin wood’ (OC-1: —, OC-2: 225 *utäriktä*, OC-3: 389b *утэриктэ*, OD-4: —) < PCT? **utän* ‘tundra; marsh’ > Ewenki (Upper Len dialect) *utun* id. (SSTMJa 2: 294b, 295b). The Orok form may be a secondary formation from the plural **utä-r* and the collective suffix **+ktA*.
- (10) Orok *pati* ~ *pací* ~ *pacikkä* ‘tail (fish)’ (OD-1: 154 *pacii*, acc[usative]. *pacikkee*, OD-2: 160 *pací*, OD-3: 254b *пачí* ~ *пачí* ~ *пачíккэ*, OD-4: —) < PST? **pati* ~ **pat+kii* id. > Ulcha *patí*, Nanay *pacee* ~ *packe*, Kili *fatki* (SSTMJa 2: 35b).

All of these examples clearly show that only Orok has the unexpected medial *-i-* (yielding *-ä-* in ex. 6a or *-ü-* in exx. 4-5 as a consequence of vowel assimilation). These stand in sharp contrast with other words where the medial *-i-* is most likely etymological:

- (11) Orok *ŋonimi* ‘long’ (OD-1: 144 *ŋonimi*, OD-2: 153 *ŋoními*, OD-3: 229a *нон’ими*, OD-4: 365 *mónimi*, 394 *ŋónimi*) < PT **ŋooli+min* id. > Ewenki *ŋoonim*, Negidal *ŋonom*, Ulcha *walmi*, Nanay *ŋoneme*, Udihe *wanimi*, Manchu *golmin* (SSTMJa 2: 664-665, EEWTD 4294 **ŋōlī+mī* ~ **ŋōnī+mī*).
- (12) Orok *xosikta* ~ *wasikta* ‘star’ (OD-1: 241 *xosikta*, OD-2: 87 *xosikta*, OD-3: 52b *васíкта*, OD-4: 286 *xosiktá*) < PT **xosí+kta* id. > Ewenki *oosiikta*, Negidal *oosikta*, Ulcha *xosta*, Udihe *waikta*, Nanay *xose(a)kta* ~ *xosakta*, Manchu *usiha* (SSTMJa 2: 27, EEWTD 8983 **hōsia+kta*).
- (13) Orok *xasikta* ‘spruce, fir’ (OD-1: 232 *xasikta*, OD-2: 79 *xasíкта*, OD-3: 147b *хасíкта*, OD-4: 264 *hásikta*, 279 *xášta*) < PCT **xasí+kta* id. > Ewenki *asíikta*, Ulcha *xasta*, Nanay *xasekta*, Udihe *ahikta* (SSTMJa 1: 56a, EEWTD 855 —). Pilsudski’s <*xášta*> most likely reflects an Ulcha loanword.
- (14) Orok *seremükta* ~ *sirmükta* ~ *sirümükta* ‘eyelash, eyebrow’ (OD-1: 187 *sirumukta*, OD-2: 189 *sirumúкта*, OD-3: 297a *сíрмүкта* ~ *серемүкта*, 309a *сíрүмүкта*, OD-4: 439

- šeremúkta) < PT *sarimī+kta id. > Ewenki *sarimikta*, Ulcha *sarumta*, Udihe *saamikta*, Manchu *solmin* (SSTMJa 2: 66, EEWDT: 9457 *sarimī+kta).
- (15) Orok *simurä* ~ *simuksä* ‘fat; butter’ (OD-1: 185 *simurə* ~ *simuksə*, OD-2: 187 *simūrə* ~ *simükšə*, OD-3: 304b *симурэ*, OD-4: —) < PCT *ximö+ksä id. > Ewenki *imuuksä*, Ulcha *simsä*, Nanay *simuksä*, Udihe *imoho* (< *imu(k)sV), Manchu *imenggi* (SSTMJa 1: 313-314, EEWDT 5196 *himö-ksä).
- (16) Orok *xämugdä* ‘insides’ (OD-1: —, OD-2: —, OD-3: 165a *хэмүгдэ*, OD-4: —) < PCT *xämö+gdä id. > Ewenki *ämugdä*, Ulcha *xämdä*, Nanay *xämdä*, Udihe *ämugdä* (SSTMJa 2: 451, EEWTD 9151 *hämögdä). The Nanay form is an Ulcha loanword.

In exx. 11-16, the reconstruction of the medial *-i-* is based on the testimony of Northern Tungusic, Orok, Nanay and Udihe. The loss of this segment in Ulcha and Manchu is regular (the so-called *Mittelsilbenschwund*, with parallels in other Tungusic languages and dialects, is always secondary, e.g. Southern Udihe *kusikta* > Northern Udihe *kusta* ‘pine nut’, Southern Udihe *mäsiktä* > Northern Udihe *mästa* ‘grape’).

The following two general patterns can be unambiguously drawn from exx. 1-16:

PT	NT (Ewenki, Negidal)	Orok	Ulcha (±Manchu)	ST (Nanay)
*CC	CC	C(i)C	CC	CC
*CiC	CiC	CiC	CC	CiC

This confirms that, generally speaking, the original shape of the PT base is better preserved in Northern Tungusic. Therefore, Doerfer’s reconstruction *öli-, as well as Benzing’s *xol+sa (1956: 46), can be replaced by *öl+sä.

The descriptive facts, so far, are very clear. However, the explanation may be not that obvious. The phonotactics of consonant clusters in Tungusic can be summarized as follows: (1) the syllabic boundary is always to be found after the first member of a cluster, (2) both components must be voiceless or voiced, i.e. they have to agree in voicing, except (3) the sonorants, which can be followed by voiceless or voiced consonants. As is well known, “[t]he spirants /x/ and /s/ as well as the sonorant /l/ are not normally present within consonant clusters” (Nikolaeva, Tolskaya 20001: 63). The velar nasal /ŋ/ is common as the first member in two-consonant clusters, but it rarely or never appears as the second. Vowel epenthesis arises in three-consonant clusters, usually after the first member, i.e. C₁C₂C₃ > CiC₁C₂. It is possible to argue that on the basis of instances such as (9) Orok *utäriktä* (tentatively segmented *utä.r-i-ktä*), words like (12) PT *xosī+kta could be analyzed as having the epenthetic vowel *-i-*. This option must be rejected, for there are no traces of a hypothetical base **xos+.

Vowel epenthesis (more properly speaking, anaptyxis) is a common phenomenon in Tungusic. As pointed in the previous paragraph, it regularly arises with sequences of three consonants, as for instance, when in Ewenki the allative or instrumental endings are added to consonant bases: V^o-*tki* (*bira-tki* ‘to the river’) : C^o-*tiki* (*bur-tiki* ‘to the island’), and V^o-*t* (*ŋaalä-t* ‘with the hand’) : C^o-*it* (*adil-it* ‘with the net’) ~ N^o-*ji* (*mokan-ji* ‘with the stick’). Vowel epenthesis is also found in one of the two allophones of the comparative suffix, i.e. V^o-*tmAr* (*aya-tmar* ‘better’) : C^o-*d̄mAr* (*xäg-d̄mār* ‘bigger’). There are numerous sporadic instances of

etymological vowel epenthesis, e.g. PT **äiskä-* ‘to be worried or anxious’ > Manchu *esuk’e*, Ewenki *äksi-t-* (SSTMJa 2: 443, 468), where it is perfectly legitimate to assume that Manchu *-u-* is the epenthetic vowel **-i-* (the context applies too, as we will see in next paragraphs). Vowel epenthesis is also regular in loanwords when the context demands it, e.g. Russian *hápra* ‘sledge’ → Orok *naarita* (OD-1: 132 *naarta* ~ *naaritta*, OD-2: 140 *nāritá oksó*, OD-3: 207b *nāpra* ~ *n’āpra*, OD-4: —], Russian *бумáжка* ‘money’ → Southern Orok *gumaska* ~ *gumasikka* vs. Northern Orok *gumaaska* (Ikegami 2001(1994): 263, OD-1: 75 *gumaska*, OD-2: 72 *gumáska*, OD-3: 70a *gúmaska*, OD-4: 171 *bumaška*; cf. SSMTJa 1: 171, with prothetic *g-*, i.e. **wu-* > **uu-* > **ḡu-*).

As for Orok, exx. 1-10 have consonant clusters with one of the continuants /*s c x w*/ or the combination sonorant /*r*/ + stop. It is important to emphasize that Nanay allows consonant clusters containing sonorants, but that is not the case in Oroch or Udihe (cf. the corresponding tables in Avrorin 1959: 59, Avrorin, Boldyrev 2001: 39, and Nikolaeva, Tolskaya 2001: 63, respectively). As a matter of fact, certain original consonant clusters trigger vowel epenthesis in Udihe, e.g. **CsV₂* > *CV₁hV₂*, where *V₁* = *V₂*. Russian borrowings documented in that language also shows quite unambiguously that, generally speaking, there is little tolerance toward consonant clusters, even these which are not in initial position, e.g. *хлеб* → *xeleba* ~ *xelebe* ‘bread’, *клуб* → *kulube* ‘club’, *книга* → *kiniga* ‘book’, *метр* → *metra* (Nikolaeva, Tolskaya 2001: 77-78).

This solution is irregular in Orok, where one would expect (regressive) assimilation, namely **ls* > *lt*, **ns* > *nt*, and **ms* > *ps* (Cincius 1949: 198-199, Benzing 1956: 44). However, it is undeniable that the solution adopted in Orok for words (1-10) parallels the one in Udihe under more or less the same circumstances. Therefore, we can conclude that vowel epenthesis appears in Orok in order to break up consonant clusters of the type *-Cs-* and, more generally, where the second component is a continuant.

It may be inferred from the discussion above that the establishment of the sound correspondences in exx. 1-16 is a trivial economic matter: if Northern Tungusic (plus Orok, Nanay and Udihe!) displays the medial *-i-*, then it must be postulated for the parental language. On the other hand, if this segment is absent from these languages, it can be safely assumed that it is secondary. Furthermore, the particulars of the phonotactics in Udihe, and apparently in Orok, favour the view that the medial *-i-* is an epenthetic element used to avoid consonant clusters of the general type *-Cs-* (consonant + fricative).

Abbreviations

C	=	any consonant
C°	=	base ending in consonant
N°	=	base ending in /n/
PCT	=	Proto-Common Tungusic
PNT	=	Proto-Northern Tungusic
PST	=	Proto-Southern Tungusic
PT	=	Proto-Tungusic
V	=	any vowel
V°	=	base ending in vowel

A d d e n d u m

As is well known, the Tungusic materials which were gathered during the 18th and 19th centuries are not especially reliable. In the domain of Orok philology, there are notable exceptions: two 19th-century glossaries, the earliest available documents in the particular history of the Orok language (Ikegami 1971: 87, 2001[1992]: 294), written with the Japanese katakana, show a high degree of accuracy in their transcriptions. In the following two tables, the words in Table A have the medial *-i-* in accordance to the modern forms. On the other hand, Table B contains words with a suspicious medial *-i-* which is unattested in contemporary dictionaries.

I stick to Ikegami’s transliteration. It is worth noting that consonant clusters are rendered by <Cu> sequences in katakana, as expected, therefore †*hatsukkoo* could be read /hakkō/, †*kihiri* may correspond to /kipiri/, whereas sequences <Ciyo> to /C[ʰ]jo/ (= <kyo>, <sho>, etc.). It is also necessary to bear in mind the particulars of 19th-century katakana, i.e. カ = /ka/ ~ /ga/, ハ = /ha/ ~ /ba/ ~ /pa/, no smaller kana in the “twisted” sounds, etc.

A			
1	†gaasukaeue <ガアスカウエー>	<i>gayaska-bi</i> ‘thigh, hip’	NOS 119, OD-1: 63
2	†gorofuchie <ゴロフチエ>	<i>goropci</i> ‘old, ancient’	NOS 120, OD-1: 72-73
3	†hashita <ハシタ>	<i>xasikta</i> ‘spruce, fir’	NOS 123, OD-1: 232
4	†hatsukoo <ハツコヲ>	<i>xäkkü</i> ‘heat, fever’	NOS 123, OD-1: 235
5	†hoshitsuta <ホシツタ>	<i>xosikta</i> ‘nail, claw’	NOS 128, OD-1: 241
6	†hotsuchiuee <ホツチウエー>	<i>bäggi-bi</i> ‘leg’	NOS 128, OD-1: 18
7	†itsute <イツテ>	<i>iktä</i> ‘tooth’	NOS 130, OD-1: 78
8	†katsutan <カツタン>	<i>kaltaa</i> ‘half’	NOS 133, OD-1: 94
9	†kihiri <キヒリ>	<i>kipiri</i> ‘hill on the coast’	NOS 134, OD-1: 102
10	†konkori <コンコリ>	<i>konkori</i> ‘a species of seal’	NOS 136, OD-1: 104
11	†nefujiraa <子フジリア>	<i>nokci-la-</i> ‘to melt (snow)’	NOS 143, OD-1: 138
12	†tanchiraa <タンチリア>	<i>talji-la</i> ‘north-eastern wind’	NOS 158, OD-1: 198-199
B			
13	†akichie <アキチエ>	<i>agji</i> ‘thunder’	NOS 104, OD-1: 4; PT *akdyan, SSTMJa 1: 12-13, EEWTD: 145
14	†aritanei <アリタ子イ>	<i>aldaa-ni</i> ‘gap, break’	NOS 106, OD-1: 6; PST *aldan, SSTMJa 1: 31
15	†dokishiyo ~ tokishiyo <ドキシヨ> ~ <トキシヨ>	<i>dööksö</i> ‘otter’	NOS 116, OD-1: 49; PCT *jöököñ, SSTMJa 1: 271, EEWTD: 3359
16	†hakisee <ハキセエ>	<i>pakci</i> ‘skillful’	NOS 121, OD-1: 153; PT *pakc’in, SSTMJa 2: 32a,
17	†kiyokisa <キヨキサ>	<i>geuksa</i> ‘seal’	NOS 135, OD-1: 66; cf. Nanay <i>geoksa</i> , Ulcha <i>geuksa</i> (Krejnovič 1955: 163)
18	†sakichi heene <サキチ ヘエ子>	<i>sagji bee-ni</i> ‘October’, lit. ‘old moon’	NOS 152, OD-1: 172; PT *sagdya, SSTMJa 2: 52-53, EEWTD: 9336

The words in Table A illustrate very well the accuracy of the transcription of consonant clusters. Put another way, the words in Table B could have been rendered without troubles, but instead they show the medial *-i-*, and therefore it must be assumed that exx. 13-17 contain the epenthetic vowel discussed in the main section of this paper. Other explanations can't unambiguously account for all instances: if we assume that †*akichie* = [ak'ci] (*vel sim.*), with palatalized /k'/, hence キ, as リ for /l'/ in ウリチ (= /ul'č/, from Russian) 'Ulcha', then we cannot explain all the instances in Table A.

In accordance with what has been explained, in exx. 13, 15-18 the presence of the medial *-i-* results from the phonological context (consonant clusters containing the fricatives /s c j/). As for the origin of the words in Table B, one is forced to assume, for the time being, that they belong to an Orok dialect which has not yet been documented.

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SUMMARY

The main goal of this brief contribution is to show that the sound correspondence Orok (a.k.a. Uilta) -CiC- : Northern Tungusic -CC- is unambiguous. Orok introduces an epenthetic vowel in order to avoid consonant clusters containing fricative sounds (in analogy to a very similar process taking place in Udihe), hence Northern Tungusic preserves an original consonant cluster that should be reconstructed in the parental language. It is possible to find additional examples of vowel epenthesis in two 19th-centuries Orok glossaries, although they do not correlate well with more contemporary Orok sources.

ウイルタ語 *ulisä* 「肉」における母音添加

J. A. アロンソ・デ・ラ・フエンテ
バスク大学

本稿は、ウイルタ（オロッコ）語の-CiC-と北方ツングース諸語の-CC-との対応を明らかにすることを目的とする。ウイルタ語では、摩擦音を含む子音結合を避けるために母音が挿入されたと解釈できる（同様の变化はウデヘ語にも見られる）。したがって、北方ツングース諸語の形が本来の子音結合を保っており、祖形と考えられる。19世紀に記録された二つのウイルタ語彙にも、この母音添加の例が見出されるが、現在知られている語形と合わない語例もある。