

Idioms As Expressive Means Of Linguistic Identity Of A Speaker (On The Material Tatar And Kazakh Languages)

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Abstract

Phraseology is a unique phenomenon in any language. Kazakh and Tatar have accumulated an enormous amount of idioms. Originally, they are used in fiction prose that is the foundation for the development of a literary language: gradually these occasional word combinations and set expressions gain a firm and stable position in oral and written language use. As is well-known, idioms count centuries-long use and have never failed to attach expressivity and flamboyancy to oral texts. Once uttered by *biys* or *akyns* (sages), they disseminated and spread widely among common people. Their popularity accounts for the fact that they enable a speaker to put expressivity and force into the message conveyed. In this research paper was studied Tatar and Kazakh idioms that share a lot of common features in representing culture and national mentality of people. It views the national linguistic identity as a crucial factor in providing old and newly coined idioms with a firm and stable position in language. The theories applied in the research are those developed by Russian, Tatar and Kazakh scientists works on phraseological stability and on the role of phraseology in the representation of national mentality. The artistic thinking of Kazakhs and Tatars is shaped by the lifestyle of people: the sense of freedom provided by a vast steppe with its amazing nature evokes most romantic and elevated feelings in a human being. That is why, in metaphorical terms, the Kazakh and Tatar linguistic identity is more likely to be compared to a large-scale picture decorated with vivid expressions and metaphors.

Introduction

Our paper focuses on delineation of various factors that lead to the stability of set expressions in language. An important parameter that affects the formation of phraseological units and provides their stability in language is linguistic identity of a native speaker, one of the central concepts in our study.

The data for the research are idioms selected from various sources including oratorical verses produced by *akyns* (poets and narrators), famous *biys* (public judges), and sages, whose eloquent texts reflect the spirit of the Kazakh and Tatar people; creative expressions from lyric epics, fairy tales, historical epics; set expressions used in modern media texts and natural speech.

The **purpose** of this study is to reveal the general and specific features of the idioms of the Tatar and Kazakh languages, as expressive means of a speaker's linguistic identity.

Research methods

The methodological basis of the study is a combination of a number of general scientific and private linguistic methods: a descriptive method and a method of continuous sampling (in the collection and classification of materials on the research topic); lexico-semantic method (for system analysis of lexical material); methods of linguocultural, component and semantic analysis (for highlighting the cognitive features of the functioning of linguistic units); comparative and comparative methods (when translating and comparing idioms).

The methodological basis of the study was compiled by the works of G.H. Ahundzanov [Ahundzanov G.H., 1972], N. Isanbet [Isanbet N., 1989], I. Kenesbaiv [Kenesbaiv I., 1977], R. Syzdyk [R. Syzdyk, 2004], F. Kaliev [Kaliev F., 2006], P. Frath [Frath P., Rissanen M., 2002], R.R. Zamaletdinov [Zamaletdinov R.R. et. Al., 2014], F.R. Sibgaeva [Sibgaeva F.R., Salakhova R.R., 2014], G.N. Smagulova [Smagulova G.N. et.al, 2016], T.S. Shcherbinina [Shcherbinina T.S. et.al, 2016].

Results

Members of a certain language and culture community have their own view of the world: in this respect, illustrative are Tatar and Kazakh set expressions that originate from different sources:

a) from the war epics:

batir keshe bakir uzer (Tatar) – literally: ‘batyr (a word used in Tatar and Kazakh to refer to a fearless warrior) tears copper’;

kabaginan kar jauip, kirpiginen muz tamgan (Kazakh) – literally: ‘to snow from eyebrows, to ice from lashes’;

astingi erni jer tirep, ustingi erni kok tirep (Kazakh) – literally: ‘the lower lip rests on the ground, the upper one supports the sky’

which create an image of a warrior based on the meaning of ‘a severe, wrathful man’;

b) from fairy tales:

tup bashina utirtu (Tatar) – literally ‘to leave (somebody) sitting on a stub’;

kekre kayinga teretu (Tatar) – literally ‘to prop (somebody) against a gnarly birch-tree’;

kozine topyrak shashu (Kazakh) – literally ‘to throw dust into one’s eyes’;

muzga otyrgizip ketu (Kazakh) – literally ‘to leave (somebody) sitting on the ice’

that convey the phraseological meaning of ‘to deceive a person.’

c) from historical sources:

batir uz khalkin yakliy (Tatar) – literally ‘a warrior defends his people’;

kilishtin juzimen, nayzanin ushimen (Kazakh) – literally ‘by sword, by point of the spear’

whose meaning is ‘to show one’s force, demonstrate one’s power’;

d) from a well-known epos:

Leyle belen Medznun kuk (Tatar) – literally ‘like Layla and Majnun,’

Kyz Jibek pen Tolegendey (from the Kazakh epos of “Kyz Zhibek”) (Kazakh) – literally ‘like Kyz Jibek and Tolegen’

which gives the meaning of ‘fidelity in love’: these personal names are similar to Shakespeare’s ‘Romeo and Juliet’;

e) from literary works by famous poets and writers:

tegermechene tayak tigu (Tatar) – literally ‘to put sticks into somebody’s wheels’;

kiska kunde kirik jerge koyma koyu (Kazakh) – literally ‘in a short time to set up warehouses in forty places’ (an expression comes from Abay, the Kazakh poet and philosopher)

which give the meaning of ‘to build obstacles by tricks and meanness’;

f) set expressions created by biys and sages who became famous among Tatars and Kazakhs for their rhetoric and oratory art:

avizinda kosh uynata (Tatar) – literally ‘to make a bird play in one’s mouth’;

awzimen kus tistegen (Kazakh) – literally ‘has bitten a bird with one’s mouth’ (which has two meanings: 1) ‘fast’ (about a horse), 2) ‘sage, orator’;

kara kildi kamshi kilgan (Kazakh) – literally ‘has turned a black mane hair into a whip’

– all of them have the meaning of ‘a skilful, resourceful and eloquent speaker.’

Now that written literature has at its disposal a rich variety of techniques, figurative means and metaphors that make it possible to express any advanced thoughts and ideas, the fate of the original national phraseology is at stake and provokes questions like: a) How sustainable is the bulk of Kazakh and Tatar phraseology? And b) Will new set expressions get a permanent position in language?

The creative discourse of poets and writers, well-known journalists, publicists, satirists who use language as a powerful means of communication comes into the focus of our research as they provide the data necessary for the description of the Kazakh and Tatar linguistic identity. It is these members of a language community who contribute much to the enrichment of the lexical and phraseological stock of a language and are, thus, the driving force for the national language development.

Their persuasive and creative texts influence the formation of the national public identity that integrates peculiarities of their social and philosophical worldview. In the concept of 'linguistic identity' – crucial for this research, the core lexical unit is 'identity.' Linguistic identity is directly related to such three aspects of communication and mutual understanding as 'speech activity', 'language system' and 'linguistic facts'. The term 'linguistic identity' came into being in anthropological linguistics in the 80-ies. The extensive investigation, firstly, of the human factor paved the way for new research in psycho- and sociolinguistics whose findings and achievements served as a foundation for a poly-paradigmatic approach to the study of linguistic identity.

Yuriy N. Karaulov distinguishes three levels of language proficiency significant for identifying one's linguistic identity: semantic, linguistic and cognitive, motivational and pragmatic [Karaulov Y.N., 2010].

The semantic, or zero level, deals with words and expressions acquired by the speaker due to his/her natural speech abilities. In other words, it is correct use of lexical items, whereas grammar rules may be sometimes deviated.

The linguistic and cognitive level is associated with the level of human cognitive activity. In the stage of perception development, each speaker builds up one's own hierarchical system on the basis of socially shared cultural values, their evaluation, and social experience. This is manifest in the manner and content of speech, individual use of words, which can serve as the key to revealing the identity of a speaker (for instance, sadness in Abay's poetry, inspiration and passion in Makhambet's poems).

The pragmatic level is determined by the speaker's communicative objectives and conditions of a communicative situation. This dimension is the major one in identifying one's identity and takes into consideration individual logical reasoning, knowledge and emotional state of a person. Individual linguistic consciousness cannot develop in isolation since any member of a language community acquires the skill of verbal art from preceding generations.

It would be an exaggeration to say that every native speaker is possessive of a linguistic identity. Firstly, a person is to be highly intelligent and, above all, to represent and reproduce in his/her texts national and cultural values of his/her people: in Kazakh and Tatar cultures these people are, to name just a few, Abay, A. Baytursynov, K. Zhubanov, Sh. Marjani, K. Nasiri, G. Tukay, G. Ibrakhimov. Therefore, the concept of 'linguistic identity' is inseparable from those of 'national identity' and 'social identity' and should be considered within this trinity.

Thus, it is the combination of profound knowledge and cognitive ability to artistic thinking, ability to enhance the level of national and social consciousness that provides a person with the status of a linguistic identity.

The above mentioned names, revered in the Kazakh and Tatar societies, refer to experts of verbal art distinguished by their ability to choose and skilfully use language resources, which can be called artistry inherent in a linguistic identity. Moreover, they go beyond the level of efficient and artistic language use

creating new expressions and metaphors that turn from features of one's individual language into a part of the national wordstock.

To illustrate, our study of Abay's language makes it possible to classify idioms used by the poet into two groups:

1. Those created by the poet himself:

basina is tusu – 'to face problems and difficulties';

jalga juru – 'to work for someone';

zakon ustau – 'to follow the law, follow the rules';

at minip aksha ustau – 'to live well, be successful'.

2. Those borrowed from the national language:

baska shauyp, toske orleu – 'to be stubborn, pushy, conceited';

tabaninan tausilu – 'to be tired and exhausted'.

His unique style manifest in his individual phraseological units and figurative expressions can be found now in the works created by other Kazakh poets and writers either in their original or new, modified forms. These expressions are certainly an inexhaustible source of enrichment of the Kazakh phraseology.

The stock of modern Kazakh and Tatar phraseology is enriched by the resources of written literature, folklore and epic stories. And yet it highlights another issue: Why are there few expressions that reflect current countless changes in the cultural life of the people?

If we consider cultural features encoded in previously formed idioms, the thematic framework of Kazakh and Tatar phraseology can be described according to metaphors associated with different domains of social life:

bolganchik yillar (Tatar) – literally 'muddy years', *kirik kun kirgin, min kun surgin* (Kazakh) – literally 'forty days of slaughter, a thousand days of persecution', i.e. the time of war, turmoil and confusion;

kun de beyrem, kun de tuy (Tatar) – literally 'everyday a holiday, everyday a wedding', *kaganagi kark, saganagi sark* (Kazakh) i.e. carefree days;

tele telgä yokmiy (Tatar) – literally 'a tongue does not stick to a tongue', *sildir komey, jez tanday* (Kazakh) – literally 'ringing larynx, copper palate', i.e. an eloquent man, orator;

kolach dzeyip karshi alu (Tatar) – literally 'to meet somebody with welcoming embrace', *at mingizip, ton kigyzu* (Kazakh) – literally 'to give sb. a horse and a fur coat as a gift', i.e. to welcome and honour somebody;

tewekkel tau yiga (Tatar) – literally 'a risky person will bring down a mountain', *jilki minezdi adam* (Kazakh) – literally 'a person of a horse temper', i.e. a person of a violent, quarrelsome nature (paradoxically, the second example also has the meaning of 'a patient person');

ere berenge ashagan (Tatar) – literally 'has eaten a big potato', *khanga salem bermeu* (Kazakh) – literally 'not to greet the khan (the term used in old times to refer to the ruler)', i.e. to be arrogant and haughty;

kodani khoday kusha, dusni fireshte kusha (Tatar) – literally 'an in-law/matchmaker is appointed by God, a friend – by an angel', *kuyrik bauyr jesip, kuda bolu* (Kazakh) – literally 'to taste liver with fat and become matchmakers/in-laws', i.e. become matchmakers/in-laws (the latter expression comes from the Kazakh custom to treat matchmakers to boiled sheep liver).

The above shown ethnophraseologisms reflect traditions and customs of the people and are linguistic manifestations of a national and cultural identity.

At the same time, new expressions that refer to contemporary cultural phenomena appear in language and tend to gain a strong position in language. For example:

kesese kalin (Tatar) – literally 'a thick pocket', *kaltasi kalin* (Kazakh) – literally 'a thick pocket', i.e. rich;

isep-khisap aldan yuri (Tatar) – literally ‘calculation goes first’, *aksha soylegen zaman* (Kazakh) – literally ‘it is the time when money speaks’, i.e. the time of the wealthy;

til ashar jasau (Kazakh) – literally ‘to mark the beginning of speech’, i.e. a feast to celebrate the child’s becoming a schoolpupil;

uzeng utirgan botakni kisu (Tatar) – literally ‘to cut off the branch you are sitting on’, *oz japiragin ozi julu* (Kazakh) – literally ‘to pick off one’s own leaves’, i.e. to create problems for oneself;

bette-kitte (Tatar) – literally ‘it’s over, it’s gone’, *eyttem-bette* (Tatar) ‘I’ve said it and it’s over’, *bazaar jok* (Kazakh) – literally ‘there is no bazaar, no trade’, i.e. to come to an agreement.

Discussion

The twentieth century witnessed enormous changes in Kazakhs and Tatars’ cultural life that resulted in the changing of the national spirit. These changes had a largely beneficial effect on the life of people, on arts and education, but turned out to be destructive to language and mentality. At present, it is mainly the responsibility of poets, writers, and journalists to deploy the national language resources. Wisdom of the past embedded in proverbs and idioms is gradually disappearing since this part of language stock is disregarded by native speakers in communication. And the questions concerning the wide use of culture specific idioms and what kind of national mentality the Kazakhs and Tatars will be left with in the current century still remain open.

Conclusions

The national spirit and culture of the people find their manifestation, most vividly of all, in idioms. Colourful and expressive idioms were widely used in old times by experts of rhetoric and oratory art to sound persuasive, convincing and eloquent.

Tatar and Kazakh idioms analysed in our research display a lot of commonalities in their meaning and sometimes in the use of the same lexemes in conveying information. These similarities speak of common cultural roots, traditions, lifestyle and historical background of the two Turkic-speaking nations.

Idioms that date back to earlier periods of the national history still preserve the tendency to be frequently used for different communicative purposes in a rich variety of sources including modern mass media texts.

As the research findings display, the most significant factor in providing a stable and firm position in language for expressions in question is the authority of the so called linguistic identity, a notion indivisible from the concepts of national and social identities. The status of linguistic identity is accessible to members of a language community who are distinguished by intellect, profound knowledge and cognitive ability to artistic thinking, contribution to the development of national and cultural values. This group includes, first of all, poets, writers, mass media workers, playwrights whose creative approach contributes to the development of a literary language and strengthens the position of idioms, metaphors and other evidence of verbal art that come as a cultural heritage from preceding generations.

The analysis of natural speech shows, however, that native speakers of Modern Tatar and Kazakh resort more frequently to newly formed idioms rather than to those that have been codified in dictionaries and have a long history of use. Moreover, the number of these newly coined idioms is far from being sufficient to represent all changes taking place in people’s culture and lifestyle.

The situation highlights a lot of significant issues: among these are the ways to keep the position of phraseology, old and new, strong enough to resist to the modern tendency to disregard this part of word stock by a greater part of a community and, consequently, to prevent national mentality and national

culture from being completely changed and distorted. The search of solutions presents a challenge to all native speakers including language researchers.

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