The comparison of comparative constructions of synthetic and analytical type in Yakut and Altai heroic epics

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Abstract—This article describes comparative constructions of the synthetic-analytical type in the Yakut and Altai languages, in other words, comparisons formed by means of functional words-indicators. The material of the study was taken from the heroic epics of the Turkic peoples: the Yakut epic "Djuluruyar Nyurgun Bootur" by P.A. Oyunsky and the Altai epic "Maadai-Kara" by A.G. Kalkin. The comparative analysis of the Yakut and Altai comparative constructions revealed words-postpositions unique for each language: күрдүк, ыдылы, көрөтүү, саа, тыйыл in the Yakut language, түней, көпүү, көбөрүү in the Altai language as well as the standards and objects of comparison in the heroic epics of the Yakut and Altai peoples.

Keywords—Turkic epic, comparison, comparative construction, standard of comparison, imagery

I. INTRODUCTION

Comparison is a structural-semantic category comparing objects and phenomena based on the similarities considering one or a set of common characteristics. We distinguish between the terms comparison and comparative construction, the latter being a comparative structure operating as comparison which is linguistically represented by syntactic constructions with a comparative conjunction within a simple or compound sentence.

The ways to express comparison in the Turkic languages have been theoretically covered in the studies of Yakut (Ubyratova [1], Vasiliev [2]), Tuva (Cheremisina and Shamina [3], Olchat-oöl [4]), Khakass (Tybykova [5]), Altai (Tybykova [5, 6]), Shor (Antonova [7]), and other Turkic languages. Recently, functioning of comparative construction in heroic epics has been the focus of researchers (Anisimova [8], Bayzhanova [9], Gerasimova and L’vova [10]).

The purpose of the paper is to reveal and describe Yakut and Altai comparative constructions formed by indicator words in simple sentences. The present paper considers comparisons taken from the Yakut heroic epic “Dyuluruyar Nyurgun Bootur” by P.A. Oyunsky and the Altai heroic epic “Maaday Kara” by A.G. Kalkin.

“Dyuluruyar Nyurgun Bootur” is one of the best and most popular Yakut epics. It was recreated by P.A. Oyunkskiy based on people’s legends. With more than 36,000 poetic lines, it is the greatest Yakut epic. P.A. Sleptsov claims that “an outstanding expert and a brilliant story teller perfectly and adequately captured the language and style of epic” [11]. “Maaday Kara” is one of the best monuments of the Altai epic heritage, having 7,000 poetic lines in the interpretation by A.G. Kalkin [12].

II. METHODS

Every comparative construction possesses such obligatory components as “subject” and “reference” of comparison. The term “reference” may be used to the scale or unit referred to by the subject for any semantic-stylistic type of comparison. The reference objects may be subject nouns, i.e. nouns, personal pronouns. The subject and the object are the base of comparison, with comparison itself being interpreted as a verbal construction, the components of which allow to express an image through linguistic means.

The research was performed using the method of component analysis, the method of morpheme word division in comparative constructions, the distributive and comparative analyses.

III. RESULTS

It was revealed that the most common Yakut indicator word is күрдүк ‘like’. Less common are дөлү ‘similar, like’, кырытып ‘as if’, саа ‘the same as’, тэңч ‘equal to’.

The Yakut epic “Dyuluruyar Nyurgun Bootur” shows comparative constructions formed by the indicators күрдүк and саа. The references for comparison are bionyms, phytonyms, artifacts, and celestial bodies.

In the Altai heroic epic “Maaday Kara”, comparative constructions are formed using the
The references for comparison are bionyms, celestial bodies, colors, metals, and natural phenomena.

A. Comparative constructions with auxiliary indicator words in the Yakut heroic epic

Comparison may be expressed by various auxiliary indicator words, such as Yakut postpositions күрдүк ‘like’, дыл ‘similar’, like’, күрдүк ‘as if’, саа ‘the same as’, тэнэ ‘as, as if’. Besides, auxiliary words such as буул ‘being like’, бэнээ ‘looking like’, айылаах ‘as though’ are found. In the Yakut heroic epic the postpositions күрдүк and саа are used.

Comparative constructions with the indicator күрдүк

The indicator күрдүк takes a special place among indicators of comparison. A story teller mainly used this one to describe appearance of a character, e.g. a hero:

(1) Хотпо күрдүк \textit{курдүк / Курран далай ойтнынаан} [13] ‘With a hand wide like a shovel’.

хотпо=Ø box=NOM
күрдүк=Ø shovel=NOM
курдук POSTP
курран далай wide
мөөс=а=нан hand=POSS.3SG=INSTR

(2) Эриээнигеээ яүү тигрэнин күрдүк \textit{/ Энгисийнээ эрчээй турдүүк, / Хатаандыннаах хара чоозл, / Хатны-тутуу хараахтаа эбэт} [13]. ‘They say, (he) has sharp, round, with shining pupils, like in a bridle two silver rings alert eyes’.

эриээнигеээ=Ø fanciful=ADG
йүү=Ø bride=GEN
тиэрбэхин ring=POSS.3SG=GEN
cүрдүк POSTP
энгисийн=Ø wide-ranging=ADG
эриээй турдүүк round
хатаан=наах hard=ADG
хара чоозл black, shining
хатны-тутуу шар жаа
хараах таах eyes=ADG
эбэт=EVID

Using these comparisons, a story teller describes power and strength of the hero Nyurgun Bootur the Swift. The hero’s hand is likened to a broad shovel and his eyes are compared to the rings in a bridle. The reference for comparison are күрдүк ‘shovel’ and яүү ‘bridle’, with the objects being a hand and the nose.

The following examples describe the appearance of a hero from the underworld Esekh Kharbyyr. Here, the story teller uses a stylistically colored word ‘mouth’, with the reference being a pit, the object being a mouth. These comparisons communicate the underworld hero’s unpleasantness and ugliness.

(3) Ахпа-даахна күрдүк \textit{/ Амаан-дамаан айыраа} [13]. ‘Like a pit, fathomless is his mouth’.

ахпа-даахна= Ø pit= NOM
cүрдүк POSTP
амаан-дамаан fathomless
айыраа=а= mouth=POSS.3SG

(4) Толомон мааэн күнү \textit{/ Туналҕанын күрдүк / Туналҕаннаах ньюрдаах} [13]. ‘With the golden cheeks of the sunset’.

tоломон мааэн snow white
күн=ым sun=POSS.1SG
tуналҕан=а=н light=POSS.3SG=GEN
cүрдүк POSTP
tуналҕан=наах light=ADG
ньюрд=дэах face=ADG

Thereby, comparative constructions with the indicator күрдүк are mainly used when describing the appearance of a character.

Comparative constructions with the indicator саа

The auxiliary word саа is used for the most part to describe particular items.

In the following example snowstorm is likened to young cattle, blizzard to a young bull.

(5) Тигээ ээах саа / Дэрэээгээ таас тигээ, / Күнүөс саа / Лочугураас таас бүүртээ [13]. ‘Hurricane with stones, gravel as big as young cattle, snowstorm to a young bull’.

тигээ ээах=Ø young cattle= NOM
саа POSTP
dэрэээгээ=Ø gravel= NOM
таас= Ø stone= NOM
tигээ=тэ snowstorm=POSS.3SG
күнүөс=а= young bull= NOM
лочугураас split
таас=Ø stone= NOM
бүүртээ=тэ blizzard=POSS.3SG

In the examples 6 and 7 insects are hyperbolized: a bug as big as a one-year-old calf, a frog as big as a horse, larvae as big as a two-grass (two-year-old) calf, bugs with protruding horns as big as a three-year-old bull. The reference for comparison are a one-year-old calf, a horse, a calf and a three-year-old bull, the objects of comparison are a bug, a frog, and larvae.
Comparative constructions with the indicator кептӱ

In the example (9) hero’s breath is compared to wind. The reference for comparison is wind (тыныштары), with the object being air (салкын).

(9) Тыныштары салкын кептӱ [14]. ‘Their breath is like a wind’.

Comparative constructions with auxiliary indicator words in the Altai heroic epic

In Altai, comparisons may be expressed by indicator words such as тӱҥей ‘the same as’, кептӱ ‘like’, кӱлер ‘similar to’, чылап ‘like, as’, бӲдӲштӲ ‘similar, alike’. The indicator тӱҥей is common for oral speech and literature, comparisons in the Altai heroic epic “Maaday Kara” are mostly expressed by the indicator кӱлер. The indicators тӱҥей and кептӱ are rarely used.

Comparative constructions with the indicator тӱҥей

In the Altai heroic epic “Maaday Kara”, the indicator тӱҥей is not common. The objects for comparison are бӲрӲкти ‘similar, alike’. The indicators тӱҥей and кептӱ are rarely used. Comparative constructions with auxiliary indicator words in the Altai heroic epic

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The story teller compares the face of Maaday-Kara’s wife Altyn-Targa to the mood and the sun. The references for comparison are the moon (ай) and the sun (кӱн), the object of comparison is the face (чырай).

(13) Ай кеберлӱ ог чырайын / Айга бербес алтын кептӱ / Кӱн кеберлӱ бу чырайын / Кӱнге бербес кӱмӱш кептӱ [14]. ‘Her face is as round as the moon / Like gold it was that is brighter than the moon / Her face is as round as the sun / Like silver it was that is brighter than the sun’.

Comparative constructions with the indicator кеберлӱ

A.T. Tybykova, M.I. Cheremisina, L.N. Tybykova point out that an ancient indicator of comparison was used in epics [15]. L.N. Tybykova emphasizes that comparative constructions with the indicator кеберлӱ contribute to poetic figurative comparisons in a heroic epic. It is suggested that traditional folklore symbols of beauty are mainly used as the reference for comparison [5].

In the examples (14) and (17) the objects of comparison face and eyes are compared to celestial bodies (ай ‘moon’, кӱн ‘sun’, чагылган ‘lightning’). These qualitative characteristics of a reference are figuratively transferred to the subject’s characteristics. The face features are related to the moon characterizing its roundness, his sharp eyes to a lake, and the mouth to the half-moon.

(14) Ай кеберлӱ бу чырайын / Кӱн кеберлӱ бу бӱдӱжи [14]. ‘Moon-like his face, Sun-like his front’.

(15) Кӧл кеберлӱ бу чырайы [14]. ‘On lake-like eyes’.

(16) Ай кеберлӱ бу чырайын [14]. ‘The face as round as the moon’.

(17) Кӧргӧн кӧз кӧл кеберлӱ / Кӧгӧргӧн лӧ бу чагылган ‘Looking his eyes like lakes, are turning blue and shining’.

In the example (18) the warriors are compared to a snake and a frog. The objects of comparison are the warriors (черӱ), the reference is a snake-frog (ъылан-бака).

(18) Ъылан-бака бу кеберлӱ / Кара черӱ турбай кайтты [14]. ‘Like snakes and frogs the black army was standing’.

N.R. Bayzhanova notes that in an Altai epic a character as well as his body parts are compared to phenomena and objects of the environment, with the objects of comparison usually being celestial bodies.
(stars, the moon, the sun, rainbow, sunset), plants (flowers), relief (mountain, clearing, lake) [9].

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Yakut and Altai heroic epics “Dyuluruyar Nyurgun Bootur” and “Maaday Kara” are rich in comparative constructions. The study suggests that:

1) the Yakut heroic epic “Dyuluruyar Nyurgun Bootur” shows auxiliary indicator words үрүдүк and үйү. The reference for comparison are: bionyms (харса 'bull', қырынча 'ermine'), улар 'wood grouse'), phononyms (түүн 'larch'), artifacts (багас 'weapon (glaive type)', ырык 'spear'), үүн 'bridle', ох 'arrow', түбаш 'loop'), celestial bodies (күн 'sun'), natural phenomena (кайа 'mountain', күстүк 'rainbow');

2) the Altai heroic epic “Maaday-Kara” shows comparative constructions with the indicators мүйрөй, көңүү, көөберүү in simple sentences. The reference for comparison are: bionyms (юлм-бака'snake-frog'), celestial bodies (күн 'sun'), ай 'moon', чоолмонды 'star'), natural phenomena (алымы 'diamond', салык 'wind', көз 'lake'), phononyms (араг 'forest', барал 'marsh tree forest'), metal (алтын 'gold', кумуу 'silver'), бөлөк 'steel'), colors (тара кырг 'black velvet'), relief (кырынаас 'mountain ridge', кайа 'rock'), жалын 'field', айыр 'meadow').

It was revealed that the references for comparison in the Yakut epic are mainly phononyms and artifacts, whereas in the Altai epic these are celestial bodies and natural phenomena.

DESIGNATIONS

3SG – personal affix, 3 person singular; 3PL – personal affix, 3 person plural; NOM – indefinite case; DAT – dative case; ACC – accusative case; AUX – auxiliary verb; CONJ – соос; NEG – negative form of verb, participle, adverbial participle; POSTP – postposition; PP – past participle ending with =быат; POSS – изафет, PRTCL – particle; equality sign = morpheme joint of word-forming and form-building affixes; dash – morpheme joint of morph superposition.

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