

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: *курдук, дылы, кэриэтэ, саба, тэнэ* in the Yakut language, *түңгөй, кептү, кеберлү* 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 (Ubryatova [1], Vasiliev [2]), Tuva (Cheremisina and Shamina [3], Olchat-ool [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. Oyunskiy

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. Oyunskiy 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 *курдук* 'like'. Less common are *дылы* 'similar, like', *кэриэтэ* 'as if', *саба* 'the same as', *тэнэ* 'equal to'.

The Yakut epic "Dyuluruyar Nyurgun Bootur" shows comparative constructions formed by the indicators *курдук* and *саба*. The references for comparison are bionyms, phytonyms, artifacts, and celestial bodies.

In the Altai heroic epic "Maaday Kara", comparative constructions are formed using the

indicators *түңгөй, кентү, кеберлү*. 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 *курдук* ‘like’, *дылы* ‘similar, like’, *кэриэтэ* ‘as if’, *саҕа* ‘the same as’, *тэнэ* ‘as, as if’. Besides, auxiliary words such as *буолан* ‘being like’, *быһыылаах* ‘looking like’, *айылаах* ‘as though’ are found. In the Yakut heroic epic the postpositions *курдук* and *саҕа* are used.

Comparative constructions with the indicator *курдук*

The indicator *курдук* 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) *Хопто күүрдьэх курдук / Куораан далай ытыһынан* [13] ‘With a hand wide like a shovel’.

хоппо=Ø box=NOM
күүрдьэх=Ø shovel=NOM
курдук POSTP
куораан далай wide
ытыс=a=нан hand=POSS.3SG=INSTR

(2) *Эридэһиннээх үүн тиэрбэһин курдук / Эңсиһлээх эрилкэй турулук, / Хатааһыннаах хара чабыл, / Хатыы-түтүү харахтаах эбит* [13]. ‘They say, (he) has sharp, round, with shining pupils, like in a bridle two silver rings alert eyes’.

эридэһин=нээх fanciful=ADG
үүн=Ø bridle=NOM
тиэрбэһин ring=POSS.3SG=GEN
курдук POSTP
энсии=лээх wide-ranging=ADG
эрилкэй турулук round
хатааһын=наах hard=ADG
хара чабыл black, shining
хатыы-түтүү sharp
харах=таах eyes=ADG
эбит EVID

Using these comparisons, a story teller describes power and strength of the hero Nyurgun Bootor 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 *күүрдьэх* ‘shovel’ and *үүн* ‘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-дьахпа курдук / Амаан-дьамаан айаҕа* [13]. ‘Like a pit, fathomless is his mouth’.

ахпа-дьахпа= Ø pit=NOM
курдук POSTP
амаан-дьамаан fathomless
айах=a mouth=POSS.3SG

(4) *Толомон маҕан күнүм / Туналҕанын курдук / Туналҕаннаах ньуурдаах* [13]. ‘With the golden cheeks of the sunset’.

толомон маҕан snow white
күн=үм sun=POSS.1SG
туналҕан=a=н light=POSS.3SG=GEN
курдук POSTP
туналҕан=наах light=ADG
ньуур=даах face=ADG

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

Comparative constructions with the indicator *саҕа*

The auxiliary word *саҕа* 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) *Тингэһэ ынах саҕа / Дэриэспэ таас тибииһэ, / Кунан оҕус саҕа / Лочугураас таас буурҕата* [13]. ‘Hurricane with stones, gravel as big as young cattle, snowstorm with huge stones as big as a young bull’.

тингэһэ ынах=Ø young cattle=NOM
саҕа POSTP
дэриэспэ=Ø gravel=NOM
таас= Ø stone=NOM
тибии=тэ snowstorm=POSS.3SG
кунан оҕус=Ø young bull=NOM
лочугураас split
таас=Ø stone=NOM
буурҕа=та 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.

(6) *Торбос саба / Чоху кыылардаах, / Байтаһын биэ саба / Баарабай бабалардаах* [13]. ‘As big as a one-year-old calf / With water bugs-beasts / As big as a horse / With big frogs’.

торбос=Ø calf=NOM

саба POSTP

чоху=Ø water bug=NOM

кыыл=лар=даах beast=PL=ADG

байтаһын биэ=Ø mare=NOM

саба POSTP

баарабай big

баба=лар=даах frog=PL=ADG

(7) *Өгүрүмэр обус саба / Үрүн үөннээх, / Кунан обус саба / Хончоннос чохулаах* [13]. ‘With white larvae / As big as a two-grass (two-year-old) calf / With bugs with protruding horns / As big as a three-year-old bull’.

өгүрүмэр huge

обус=Ø bull=NOM

үрүн white

үөн=нээх worm=ADG

кунан обус=Ø young bull=NOM

хончоннос protruding=ADV

чоху=лаах water bug=ADG

B. Comparative constructions with auxiliary indicator words in the Altai heroic epic

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

References for comparison are bionyms, celestial bodies, colors, metals, and natural phenomena. Studies suggest that Altai shows complicated sentences with a comparative phrase of the nominal type by analytical indicators of comparison, i.e. auxiliary words, verbal (process) relations are expressed by the analytical-synthetic way [9].

Comparative constructions with the indicator *түней*

In the Altai heroic epic “Maaday Kara”, the indicator *түней* is not common. The objects for comparison are *бөрүктү* ‘helmet’, *аракы* ‘arrack’, for example:

(8) *Айга түней бу чолмонду / Алтын күлер бу бөрүктү* [14]. ‘With a moon like star, golden-bronze is this cap’.

ай=га moon=DAT

түней POSTP

бу this

чолмон=ду star=POSSV

алтын golden

күлер bronze

бу this

бөрүк=ги cap=ACC

Comparative constructions with the indicator *кептү*

The storyteller of the heroic epic “Maaday Kara” mainly uses the auxiliary word *кептү*.

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 кептү* [14]. ‘Their breath is like a wind’.

тыныш=тар=ы=Ø breath=PL=POSS.3=NOM

салкын=Ø wind=NOM

кептү POSTP

In the example (10) the mountain ridge is likened to gold, a precious metal. Altai is famous for its high mountains and ridges, therefore the mountains are compared to gold and hero’s appearance to a mountain ridge.

(10) *Жал-арказы алтын кептү* [14]. ‘Its mountain ridge is like gold’.

жал-арка=зы=Ø ridge=POSS.3=NOM

алтын=Ø gold=NOM

кептү POSTP

The example (11) describes the appearance of the hero Kogydey-Mergen. His chest is likened to a plain, his eyebrows to taiga. As the reference for comparison serve a plain (*төжи*) and taiga (*айан*), the objects of comparison are chest (*жалаң*), an eyebrow (*кабак*). The comparisons represent us a strong, mighty, stately hero.

(11) *Жалаң кептү бу ла төжи* [14]. ‘His chest, like a plain’.

жалаң=Ø plain=NOM

кептү POSTP

бу this

ла PTCL

төж=и=Ø chest=POSS.3=NOM

(12) *Айан кептү бу кабагы* [14]. ‘[Thick] as taiga his eyebrows’.

айан=Ø taiga=NOM

кептү POSTP

бу this

кабаг=ы=Ø eyebrow=POSS.3=NOM

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 (*күн*), the object of comparison is the face (*чырай*).

(13) *Ай кебери ол чырайы / Айга бербес алтын кептү / Күн кебери бу чырайы / Күнге бербес күмүш кептү* [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'.

ай moon=NOM

кебер=и=Ø face=POSS.3=NOM

ол that

чырай=ы=Ø face=POSS.3=NOM

ай=га moon=DAT

бер=бес give=NEG.PrP

алтын=Ø gold=NOM

кептү POSTP

күн=Ø sun=NOM

кебер=и=Ø face=POSS.3=NOM

бу this

чырай=ы=Ø face=POSS.3=NOM

күн=ге sun=DAT

бер=бес give=NEG.PrP

күмүш=Ø silver=NOM

кептү POSTP

Comparative constructions with the indicator *кеберлү*

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 *кеберлү* 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', *күн* '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 кеберлү бу чырайы / Күн кеберлү бу бүүдүжи* [14]. 'Moon-like his face, Sun-like his front'.

ай=Ø moon=NOM

кебер=лү face=POSSV

бу this

чырай=ы=Ø face=POSS.3=NOM

күн sun=NOM

кебер=лү face=POSSV

бу this

бүүдүж=и=Ø front=POSS.3=NOM

(15) *Көл кеберлү бу көзине* [14]. 'On lake-like eyes'.

көл=Ø lake=NOM

кебер=лү look=POSSV

бу his

көз=ин=е eyes=POSS.3=DAT

(16) *Ай кеберлү бу чырайы* [14]. 'The face as round as the moon'.

ай=Ø moon=NOM

кебер=лү face=POSSV

бу his

чырай=ы=Ø face=POSS.3=NOM

(17) *Көргөн көзи көл кеберлү / Көгөргөн лө бу чагылган* 'Looking his eyes like lakes, are turning blue and shining'.

көр=гөн look=PFCT

көз=и=Ø eyes=POSS.3=NOM

көл=Ø lake=NOM

кебер=лү look=POSSV

көгөр=гөн turn blue=PFCT

лө CONJ

бу this

чагыл=ган shine=PFCT

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

(18) *Жылан-бака бу кеберлү / Кара черү турбай кайтты* [14]. 'Like snakes and frogs the black army was standing'.

жылан-бака=Ø snake-frog=NOM

бу this

кебер=лү **look=POSSV**

кара black

черү=Ø army=NOM

тур=бай кайтты stand=NEG.CV MOD

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 *курдук* and *саба*. The reference for comparison are: bionyms (харса ‘bull’, кырынаас ‘ermine’, улар ‘wood grouse’), phytonyms (тиит ‘larch’), artifacts (батаас ‘weapon (glaive type)’, үнүү ‘spear’, күрдьэх ‘shovel’, үүн ‘bridle’, ох ‘arrow’, турах ‘loop’), celestial bodies (күн ‘sun’), natural phenomena (хайа ‘mountain’, кустук ‘rainbow’);

2) the Altai heroic epic “Maaday-Kara” shows comparative constructions with the indicators *түңгөй*, *кентү*, *кеберлү* in simple sentences. The reference for comparison are: bionyms (жылан-бака ‘snake-frog’), celestial bodies (күн ‘sun’, ай ‘moon’, чолмоноды ‘star’), natural phenomena (алмыс ‘diamond’, салкын ‘wind’, көл ‘lake’), phytonyms (агаш ‘forest’, барал ‘marsh tree forest’), metal (алтын ‘gold’, кумуш ‘silver’, болот ‘steel’), colors (кара килин ‘black velvet’), relief (кырлан ‘mountain ridge’, кайа ‘rock’, жалаң ‘field’, айаң ‘meadow’).

It was revealed that the references for comparison in the Yakut epic are mainly phytonyms 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** – союз; **NEG** – negative form of verb, participle, adverbial participle; **POSTP** – postposition; **PP** – past participle ending with =быт; **POSS** – izafet, **PRTCL** – particle; **equality sign** – morpheme joint of word-forming and form-building affixes; **dash** – morpheme joint of morph superposition.

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