

Railya R. VILDANOVA, Radif R. ZAMALETDINOV, Madina R. SATTAROVA,
Gulnara F. ZAMALETDINOVA

Tatars Names as a Phenomenon of Traditional Culture*

Railya R. VILDANOVA, Radif R. ZAMALETDINOV, Madina R. SATTAROVA,
Gulnara F. ZAMALETDINOVA

Kazan State Federal University

Abstract. *This paper studies a linguistic and cultural description of the vocabulary of the Tatar language associated with the rite of naming. This ritual of the Tatars attracts the attention of researchers from different fields. In the present study, the results of studies of ethnographers, historians, dialectologists, where the features of the ritual with the object of revelation of national specifics are used. The authors of the article suggest an analysis of the concepts associated with the ritual of naming the Tatars. This rite has a deep content that includes both national and religious worldviews. The semantics of phraseological units, lexical units used in describing the rite, emphasize the ancient rite, the complexity of its formation and diversity, depending on ethnic groups. Despite the fact that the Tatar people went through various historical events, he managed to preserve the value of the phenomenon in the Soviet era. When collecting and systematizing the materials, descriptive method, method of continuous sampling, excico-semantic method, methods of linguocultural, component and semantic analysis were used to expose the cognitive features of the functioning of linguistic units. In order to reveal the specifics of the reflection of the content of the ritual on the linguistic material, the materials from explanatory, dialectological, phraseological dictionaries were selected and analyzed.*

Keywords: Tatar language, naming, linguoculturology, ritual vocabulary.

Introduction

Modern studies in the field of linguistics aim to analyze the linguistic material as a source of information about culture, ethnography, originality, national self-consciousness of the people. All peoples associate the birth of a child with a certain mystery, sanctity, miracle. There is a depth of meaning in every custom connected with the birth of a baby. One of the rituals of the Tatars, which expresses the desire for a deep knowledge of the traditions, the cultural heritage of its people is naming. The researchers noted that “family ceremonial rites, being the most important source for the ethnographic characteristics of the people, undergoing the inevitable evolution, in comparison with other areas of spiritual and material culture of the people, are more conservative and distinctive and have long attracted the scholars”.¹

Such an interesting ritual as naming at the Tatars has attracted the attention of ethnographic researchers, historians, dialectologists for a long time. Scientific literature, which covers this topic, refers to several areas, and each of them contributes to the search for ways to solve the problem of linguocultural research on naming at the Tatars.² Despite the fact that the rituals associated with naming

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¹ F. T. Fatykhova, *Traditional Rites and Customs of the Bashkirs Associated with Birth and Death: the Author's Thesis for Candidate of Historical Sciences*, Sankt Petersburg, 1994.

² *Ibidem*; F. S. Bayazitova, *Өмөрнең Өч түе (татар халкының гаилә йолалары)*, . – Kazan, Татар. кит. нәшр. 1992; R. K. Urazmanova R. K., *Contemporary Rituals of the Tatar People (Historical and Ethnographic Research)*, Kazan, The Tatar Publishing House, 1984; N. I., Vorobyov, G. M. Khisamutdinov, *The Tatars of the Middle Volga Region and Cisurals: Monography*, Moscow, Nauka, 1967.

the Tatar people have been studied in more detail, there has been no monographic study devoted to the analysis of the vocabulary of naming so far. Based on this, the purpose of this study is to determine the linguistic and cultural analysis of the vocabulary associated with the ritual of naming at the Tatars.

Materials and methods

The material for analysis was the ritual vocabulary of the Tatar language connected with naming. Lexical units were selected by means of continuous sampling from the Explanatory Dictionary of the Tatar language, the Large Dialectological Dictionary of the Tatar Language. Moreover, in order to reveal the specifics of reflection of the studied units in the minds of native speakers, an analysis of Tatar personal names was conducted. Etymological and semantic analysis of personal names also was a material for analysis.³ Of particular interest are phraseological units with the components containing concepts related to naming.⁴

The methodological basis of the study is a combination of a number of general scientific and concrete linguistic methods. In order to study the reflection of the world outlook of the people in the analyzed thematic group of the Tatar language, the following research methods were used: the method of continuous sampling and the descriptive method were used to collect and systematize materials on the research topic; with the help of the lexical-semantic method, a systematic analysis of the lexical material was carried out; the methods of linguocultural, component and semantic analysis were used to reveal cognitive features of the functioning of linguistic units. In the process of work, such methods and techniques as observation of linguistic facts, analysis and synthesis, classification were also used. From the point of view of the theory of scientific research, the chosen methods are the best.

Results and discussion

As it turned out, the family-ritual culture is an important part of the historical, genetic, spiritual, economic-legal, ideological life of the people. Depending on the circumstances, the rite of naming is conducted on the third, seventh or fortieth day from birth. However, in any locality it was not recommended to postpone this ceremony for a long time. There was also a popular belief that if a child often cries, then he asks a name to be given to himself. The smile on the child's face during the ritual of naming was understood as the adoption by a newborn of his name. In this regard, it should be noted that in the

³ Z. M. Kajumova, G. R. Galiullina, G. K. Khadieva, "History and culture in the onomasticon of the tatars (as exemplified in cadastres of the xvi-xvii centuries)," in *Modern Journal of Language Teaching Methods*, V (2016), no. 2, p. 71-75.

⁴ G. R. Muqtasimova, G. A. Nabiullina, E. N. Denmukhametova, "Paremiological fund of the Tatar people in the ethno-linguistic aspect," in *Life Science Journal*, XI (2014), no. 11, p. 409-412; F. R. Sibgaeva, G. F. Zamaletdinova, R. S. Nurmukhametova, "Linguoculturological specific features of phraseological units of the Tatar language," in *Modern Journal of Language Teaching Methods*, V (2016), p. 116-119.

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Tatar language the state of the soul, emotions, attitude towards the surrounding world is very clearly mirrored in the linguistic material.⁵

The process of naming at the Tatars is described approximately equally and rather concisely in all sources. This day is a family holiday for the Tatars. The parents of the child invite the mullah, as well as their relatives and acquaintances. All the guests brought eatables and clothes for the newborn. There were gathered an abundance of presents, especially among the rich Tatars, who celebrated the day of giving the name to the child solemnly and lavishly. The ceremony itself is that the baby on the pillow is brought to the mullah, and he, reading excerpts from the Koran, pronounces in the ear of the newborn its name several times.

Within the framework of the research, the stages of the sacred ceremony studied were analyzed and lexical units from different stages of the process of naming were classified. The study of dictionaries from the point of view of the concepts we are interested in allows us to analyze the frequency of their usage depending on the era and make certain conclusions.⁶

Choosing a name for the child. This process is complex and interesting at the same time. However, it is necessary to take a responsible approach to it. It is important to think about the name in advance, before the birth of the baby. The name of the child born in the Tatar family must be of a Turkic-Tatar, Arabic or Persian origin and not contradict the canons of the Koran. The usual names are the models of the names like "Gabd + the name of Allah" *Габдулла/ Gabdulla, Габделкарим/ Gabdelkarim*, etc. The names of the prophets are considered to be blessed: Ильяс / Ilyas, Муса / Musa, Аюп / Ayup, Сулейман / Suleiman, Юсуф / Yusuf. However, the experts note that it is not recommended to name the child as Prophet Muhammad without any additional component. Therefore, the names such as *Мухамметзян/ Muhammetzyan, Мухаммадамин / Muhammadamin, Мухамматгали / Muhammatgali*, etc. were common among the Tatars. Beautiful, sonorous are the names of the Turkic origin, having a positive meaning. Common names among such Tatar names are the following ones with the component *ил/ il* (country), *ай / ai* (moon), *гөл / gul* (flower). For example, *Айнур / Ainur, Айсыйла/ Aisyula, Гөлназ/ Gulnaz, Илшат/ Ilshat, Илнур / Inur*, etc.

There are the names determined as undesirable, banned, which are considered to be discordant in meaning, inciting to commit a sin, the names of famous tyrants; the names of Satan *Иблис/ Iblis, Люцифер/ Lucifer*, etc. It should be noted that the responsibility for choosing a name completely lies on the shoulders of the mother and father and at present the public is concerned about the enormous number of identical names.

The process of naming. The ritual is performed in the following sequence: the child is turned to the side of the kyibl (the child's face is laid on the pillow, legs are

⁵ R. R. Zamaletdinov, G. F. Zamaletdinova, R. S. Nurmukhametova, M. R. Sattarova, "The lexicon and its reflection in the inner world of the individual (on the basis of the Tatar language)," in *Journal of Language and Literature*, V (2014), no. 4, p. 333-335.

⁶ R. S. Nurmukhametova, R. R. Zamaletdinov, M. R. Sattarova, "The vocabulary of Tatar literary language (the first half of the XX century)," in *Life Science Journal*, XI (2014), no. 10, p. 670-673.

stretched towards the cueble and placed in front of the mullah); the adhan is read; the name is pronounced (the mullah repeats the child's name three times in its ear). The final stage of the process of naming is considered to be "бәби туге" (baby's wedding), that is, a festive meal. The rite of naming is accompanied by giving gift, wishes to the newborn, which are comprehended in a rich folklore material. The good wishes pronounced in the process of naming reflect the ideals of the people about honor and nobility, focus attention on duty, filial duties to parents and rules of life. They depict the echoes of archaic beliefs in amulets, in the sacral force of objects.

The following stage of the ritual of naming as *changing a name, renaming* occurs sometimes. According to the Muslim religion, to change the name is not forbidden. This is done if the child is often sick (it is believed that "the name did not fit"), moles appear, after attaining adulthood, a person has the right to change the name, based on personal considerations. It should be noted that this does not contradict the active laws of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Tajikistan, as well as the canons of Islam, but clergymen do not approve of this action without good reason.

The present material shows that the ceremony of naming is a complex process that requires preparation, material costs, presence of a clergyman (mullah). This causes the presence and special vocabulary, characteristic only for this rite or acquiring a special connotative meaning only in the context of the ritual of naming. A number of such names disappear, having been preserved only in dialectological vocabulary, some of them are transformed, according to new realities, and some are used in several variants. For example, naming – *сем кушу / сем бурҗ / ам бурҗ / ам кычкырты / ам салу / ам кушу (to give a name)*, etc. With the course of time the participants of the ritual, the place of performing the ritual have been changing, the ritual of common meals has undergone certain changes.

Interesting is, in our opinion, an attitude towards the newborn in the period of the Soviet power, when, on account of atheistic education, anti-religious propaganda, young people did not perceive the ceremony of naming as something obligatory, since the name of a child is registered by the state services. Thus, the birth of the child began to be perceived not only as sacral, but also as the birth of another member - a fighter for the prosperity of the Soviet power and the attitude towards it was built on the principle of attitude to all representatives of the state: it was recorded by state authorities, under the close supervision of the Soviet authorities, namely catered by a kindergarten, school, provided by work, its behavior was regulated by social and pedagogical institutes of that time.

At present, due to the revival of religion, performance of the rituals related to the birth of a child became again meaningful for many families, the mullah again became an honored guest in the process of naming the child; the practice of the circumcision rite again became common, although it began to be done in medical institutions. More and more attention has been paid to the scientific study of the peculiarities of the rituals connected with the birth of a child.

It is important to note the fact that the culturological features of the process of naming were preserved in the phraseological foundation of the Tatar language: *изгеат* (sacred, good name) is a name that is remembered only in the good light; *исем алу* (get a name) - to gain recognition, fame; *исембуяу / исемнә тап салу* - sully one's name; *исеммаклану* - about the cases when a person prays for forgiveness of his sins with kind gestures; *исеме генә калу* (only the name remains) - about someone's death; *исемем фәләһ булмасын* (let my name not be not that) - it is said in cases when a person expresses a willingness to renounce his name, if he commits an action, often associated with revenge; *исемн чыгару* (take out name) - to disgrace; *исеме һисемнә туры килгән* (the name coincided with the subject) - about the cases when the meaning of the name coincides with the character, the appearance of a person; *исемнәре алтын хәрәф бәләһ яздылу* (to write the name in golden letters) - about personalities whose acts have brought great benefits to the country, its people, and are remembered with the deepest respect; *исемн һую* (lose name) - about a forgotten person, about lost glory; *ат алу* (get a name) - win the name / deserve a good name; *ат бирү* (give a name) - to name; *аткалдыру* - leave a good name; *аткүтәрү* (pick up a name) - lose a good name; *атсату* (sell out a name) - dishonor a name, etc. The most terrible wish to the enemy of the Tatars was *атык коргыры* (let the name get dry), *исемн телгә алсаң, тел әрәм* (I pity my tongue to pronounce his / her name).

As one can see, naming is associated with a variety of rituals and concepts that emphasize the importance of this event in human life. In the worldview of the Tatars, the person's name is fully identified with his personality, doings, and occupation. Moreover, the Tatar people believe that man is mortal, and name is immortal. That is why in every family all members of the family participate in choosing a name and in many lexical units the semantic potential of the people's perception of this responsibility remains.

It is necessary to say about another important stage of the ritual of naming, which has almost outlived itself today. The fact is that one used to give the first temporary name to a child immediately after its birth - *кендек исем* (a umbilical name). This tradition exists in many Turkic peoples and has archaic roots, since, in ancient times, there was a popular belief that to have several names implied an additional protection for a person. As the scholars note, “кендек исем” (for Bashkirs – “йүргәк исем” – “the name of diapers”) almost always refers to a group of the names that have arisen on the basis of ancient Turkic language and customs, nature-worship ideas reflecting life, historical changes, etc.

The rite of naming, like all rituals, performs the functions of socialization (having received a name, the child officially becomes a member of society), the integrating function (in the process of rite, the connection between ancestors and descendants, the past and the present is restored), the reproducing function (ancient traditions are maintained, in accordance with the epoch they are renewed) and the psychotherapeutic one (having given a name to a child, its parents believe that they protected the child from the influence of evil spirits, and when ritualizing the name - that they chased the disease out through the chimney, etc.). It should

also be noted that the faith in power of the name is not the vestiges of the past, but the actuality of the present, as evidenced by clergymen, mullahs, who are often addressed to by people seeking to change their names in order to attract luck, not to become a victim of the evil eye, etc. Thus, the ceremony of naming has an important cultural and ethnographic significance, demonstrates spiritual wealth and purity of thoughts of the Tatars.

Summary

Summing up the preceding, it should be noted that the rite of naming is the first wedding, the first celebration in man's life. The tradition of the Tatar people, having been developed over centuries, contains all the best that it has to conduct this ritual: it involves a mullah reading passages from the Koran and thereby deterring the Shaytans from the child; one whispers the name chosen by the parents and that bears the wishes for the child to have beauty, longevity, health, to have the qualities of Allah, etc. in the child's ear three times; a lavish feast with marvelous spread laid on is arranged; relatives and near friends are invited; special honors are rendered to a woman in childbirth (previously to midwife too). The rite of naming includes mythological components (frightening the shaytans, closing the doors, chimney so that the name does not run away), folklore motives (wishes, congratulations to the child), linguistic components (euphony of the name), and also reflects the value orientations of the Tatar people (generosity, readiness to share joy, respect for elders, respect for the woman in childbirth and for all those who are involved in the birth of the child). The educational potential of this ritual is immense. Observance of age-old traditions and active use of lexical units containing national worldview allow to analyse the national distinctness as a unique phenomenon that has developed as a result of the fusion of the sacral, the day-to-day, the desired.

Conclusion

The study of the ritual vocabulary of naming of the Tatars makes it possible to ascertain the attitude of the people to the child from century to century, from the times of paganism, when the relatives of the newborn together with the patroness of Umai's children and mothers fought for its life and treated everyone to oil, until the time of the Islamic period when it was believed that the name whispered by the mullah thrice in the baby's ear would help it to survive in the world and not become a victim of the jinns. In connection with the changes in society throughout the twentieth century, the attitude towards national rites and rituals has changed to some extent, but in general, in our view, the naming ceremony retains its main features.

The function of socialization is manifested in the fact that the ritual prepares the individual for social life. During the rite of naming the newborn first appears as a new member of society. The integrating function helps to realize the interconnectedness of the members of the collective, and also that the connection between the ancestors and descendants, the past and the present is restored. This is especially evident in the situations where the child is named after the deceased

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members of the family. This naming has its own rules, canons. An important factor in choosing a name for a newborn child was the fact that the Tatars had to know 10-12 generations and not to give their names to their children.

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p. 169-175