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# REPRESENTATION OF PROVERBS WITH ZOONYMS IN TATAR LINGUISTIC VIEW OF THE WORLD

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### *Abstract*

Linguistic study of Tatar proverbs has become a vital branch of modern Tatar linguistics, which has been actively developing in recent decades. The variety of proverbs represents a powerful source for text interpretation, and it is through proverbs that the language is traditionally passed on from generation to generation; the language represents a centuries-old culture and reflects all philosophic affirmations of native speakers. This article is an attempt to study the conceptual and ethnolinguistic features of Tatar folk proverbs which contain a zoonymic component in their structure; it is also essential to determine their role in shaping the folklore picture of the world. The research work is driven by the need to resolve both practical and theoretical disputes of studying the proverbs' national and cultural specifics. The article analyzes the corpus of zoonyms found in proverbs, determines their role in the structure of Tatar proverbs. Our study presents a thematic classification of proverbs with the names of animals. Analysis of the Tatar proverbs in the selected thematic group showed that these proverbs reflect different life spheres of the Tatar people. The work defines the zoonym components in the proverbs as cultural phenomena. The study showed that the proverbs often use the names of those animals that live in the settlement area of Tatar people. Moreover, the analysis shows that zoonymic Tatar proverbs carry the information about the geographic region. The study of animalistic images in Tatar proverbs enables a deeper understanding of their ethnolinguistic specificity.

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**Keywords:** Animal world, image, proverb, the Tatar language, thematic classification, zoonym.



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## 1. Introduction

It is well known that the study of folklore language remains one of the philologically important tasks. It can be explained by the fact that folklore is a reflection of a special picture of the world that has been developing in the national consciousness for millennia and has not lost its significance in our days. The worldview becomes prior for realizing the ethnic identity.

We have noted that a proverb is one of the most popular folklore genres. A proverb is a *short wise popular saying* that has instructive *meaning*. They form an integral part of spiritual culture. Most proverbs with a complex internal content reflect the typical features of popular consciousness. Having a reasonably short form, not only do proverbs represent not only a system of moral and ethical standards, but they also embody all the knowledge about the external order of things and the inner world of a person. This is why proverbs are of great evidential interest being the richest material for research.

Recently, Tatar linguists have been particularly interested in studying the problems of the proverbial language. Various aspects of Tatar folk proverbs investigations are quite fully presented in their works (Galimova, Yusupova, Nabiullina, & Oner, 2018; Gulimila, Yusupova, & Denmukhametova, 2016; Kajumova, Galiullina, Yusupova, & Yusupov, 2017; Seylesh, Yusupova, Denmukhametova, & Akhmetova, 2017; Tarasova & Mukharlyamova, 2014; Zamaletdinova, 2014). Tatar proverbs, the Tatar language, its artistic and structural identity continue to be interesting for researchers. The prevailing attention is paid to those elements of folk poetry that form its specificity. Many modern studies are devoted to the general problems of the folklore picture of the Tatars. The works by Zamaletdinova R.R. and Zamaletdinova G.F.; Gabdrakhmanova F.H., Sattarova M.R. and Nurmukhametova R.R.; Sibgaeva F.R., Salakhova R.R. and Mukhamedova S., Gilazetdinova G.H., Edikhanova I.D. and Aminova A.A., as well as by other scientists (Gabdrakhmanova, Sattarova, & Nurmukhametova, 2016; Gilazetdinova, Edikhanov, & Aminova, 2014; Sibgaeva, Salakhova, & Mukhamedova, 2017; Zamaletdinov & Zamaletdinova, 2010) have been particularly helpful in our research work.

Pimenova (2012) notes that “The folklore image of the world forms an important, fundamental part of the conceptual picture of an ethnic group” (p. 95). Reflecting folk wisdom and the values of the world of Tatar people, proverbs are highly metaphorical, imaginative, aided by their two-dimensional nature, the presence of literal and figurative meanings; they can also express both authoritarian and humanistic ethical systems.

## 2. Problem Statement

Here is what Yusupova, Galiullina, and Denmukhametova (2014) think about studying the paremias in the cultural-linguistic aspect: “Factual material analysis showed that Tatar proverbs usually express some national characteristics, devotion to one’s homeland, perseverance, respect for elders, positive attitude and modesty. Moreover, proverbs also express some ethno-cultural information” (p. 257). Indeed, the proverbs with a zoonymic component turn out to be unique material for revealing ethno-linguistic universality and ethnic specificity.

Zoonyms appear to be complex linguistic units of an important information potential. Proverbs with animal names are undoubtedly universal and well-known, since they are dynamically used in speech as a

figurative characteristic of a person, a situation or an event; they have a high evaluative potential, attributable to the internal form of zoonyms. Such proverbs have a marked cultural component, which requires to be studied and described separately. The proverbs always address to the subject. They appear in order to interpret, evaluate and express a subjective attitude towards the world, not just to describe it.

Our study is based on the texts of Tatar folk proverbs in Isanbet's (2010) miscellany "Tatar Halik Mekalleri". The proverbs were chosen as a material for research due to the fact that they have been used in Tatar speech for ages, they are a place where language meets culture. These works of folklore art show the most complete picture of the Tatars, since they reflect the naive picture of the world, the history of the people, their way of life and worldview. We agree with Ibrahimova, Tarasova, and Yarullina (2017) that as a valuable object of linguo-culturological research, proverbs perform not only the functions of the language, but also the functions of culture. Proverbs and sayings are an integral part of the national linguistic image of the world. Indeed, Tatar folk proverbs are rich material for numerous studies in this area. Thus, the results of a long study of proverbs allow us to accept the scientists' conclusions that "... the study of Tatar paremias is a necessary step to describe the Tatar and Turkic naive world image" (Zamaletdinov & Zamaletdinova, 2010, p.78). This fact determines the choice of our research topic.

### **3. Research Questions**

The article observes lexico-semantic and linguo-cultural features of animal names in Tatar proverbs. The study was theoretically and methodologically based on the achievements of modern linguistics and the works of Turkic scholars studying the problems of lexicology.

The vocabulary describing wildlife: the names of plants, birds, fish, insects, wild and domestic animals - always played a significant role in forming the thematic groups that we analyze. Since ancient times, the outside world has always been in the spotlight of human's attention, therefore the lexical-thematic groups with the names of objects and phenomena of the environment began to form when people have appeared; later these words served as the basis forming the terminological variety of these groups. It is commonly known that words denoting animals belong to the most ancient vocabulary layer in all languages of the world. A significant part of Tatar zoonyms goes back to ancient times, therefore it is not surprising that proverbs with animal names contribute significantly to the whole variety. In this regard, Yusupova and Tuersyuntai (2014) note: "The vocabulary of this thematic group has been thoroughly studied in Turkic linguistics. Words related to economic life were fundamental for Turkic peoples. These words convincingly show the connection of vocabulary with the labor activities of the Turkic peoples" (p. 211).

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

Therefore, this article is aimed at clarifying the lexico-semantic, linguo-cultural specificity of zoonymic components in Tatar proverbs and determining whether the national-cultural specificity influences their usage. This purpose implies the solution of a number of specific tasks: analysis of positive and negative connotative semes in proverbs, concretization of the zoonymic component, containing this or that seme and performing the function of evaluativity. At the same time, the data of the paremiological

analysis is distinctly significant for determining the cultural concepts specifics. Thus, the analysis of this language material will complement the revealed conceptual features of Tatar zoonyms.

## 5. Research Methods

In order to perform the missions assigned in the article, we have used a number of methods and techniques. During the study, a descriptive method was used - it presumed observation and classification of the investigated material: we have examined zoonyms of Tatar proverbs one by one, which is the most common synchronic analysis method. To study the contensive side of the significant units of the language, we have used the component analysis as one of the descriptive method's techniques. The work tries to reveal the features of the use of zoonyms and their meanings from the point of view of both linguo-culturology and the features of their use in Tatar folk proverbs.

## 6. Findings

The animal world has always been an integral part of the life of Tatar people. The connection between the animal kingdom and humans has always been obvious, as people compared themselves with animals. This connection is best reflected in the proverbs of the Tatar language. The amount of these proverbs is quite big and provides extensive material for linguistic research. Since ancient times, man has inspired animals, induced them with human qualities. It should be noted that this is why each animal has a long-established typical image, which characterizes it most accurately and emotionally.

From a semantic point of view, all the proverbs investigated in this work can be divided into the following thematic groups: "livestock", "domestic animals", "domestic birds", "wild animals", "wild birds", "fish and reptiles". An analysis of the lexicographic source made it possible to identify the following zoonyms found in the proverbs of the Tatar language: at (horse), sarık (sheep), teke (male sheep), kece (goat), sıyr (cow), et (dog), pesi (cat), büre (wolf), tölke (fox), kuyan (hare), ayu (bear), arıslan (lion), yulbarıs (tiger), etc. Among the listed animals, at (horse), sarık (sheep) and sıyr (cow) usually have a special place.

Almost all proverbs are related with humans. In proverbs with the zoonymic component, considerable attention is paid to the external, physical, moral, psychological, emotional characteristics of a person, because most of the proverbs are anthropocentric. In particular, the studied proverbs can be divided into the following semantic groups: describing the actions and behavior of a person, qualities and character traits, human relationships, appearance. For example, *Örgen etten kırıkma: astırtın etten kurak* (lit. Do not be afraid of a barking dog, but be afraid of a silent dog); *Et simerse iyesen talıy* (lit. If the dog is getting fat, it will bite the owner); *At yulda, keşe yuldaşlıkta sına* (lit. A horse is tested on the way, a man - being a companion); *Bereüğe ügeze kıybat, bereüğe mögeze kıybat* (lit. Some people value a bull, others - a horn); *Büre suga torgan eyet belegennen belene* (lit. The muscles of a man's arm show that he can kill a wolf.); *Öyde arıslan kebek, uramga çıksa - tıçkan kebek* (lit. He is a lion at home, but outside his home he is a mouse); *At — tuygancırlerene, ir — tугan cırlerene* (lit. A horse is useful for the place where it is fed, a man— for the place where he was born), etc.

Proverbs usually have figurative meaning when describing the human world using animal images. Such proverbs can have a connotation, both positive and negative. It is important to note that most of the analyzed proverbs have a negative connotation, due to the fact that the meaning and essence of proverbs is to figuratively indicate to a person his or her shortcomings. Here are some examples with a negative connotation: *Biş tiyenlek kuyan – un tiyenlek zıyan* (lit. *A hare costs for five cents, but the loss is ten cents*); *Ber kırıkkan et öç kön öre* (lit. *A scared dog will be barking three days long*); *Arıslannın koyırığı bulgançı etnen başı bul* (lit. *It is better to be the head of a dog than the tail of a lion*). Along with the predominance of negative connotations, there are also positive ones, such as: *At ayagina at basmıy* (lit. *A horse won't hurt another horse - lat. Lupus non mordetlupum*).

Many domestic animals take part in people's labor activities, and sometimes work themselves, therefore, a large number of zoonymic proverbs are directly related with labor. For example, *Et eş tapmasa, avızı belen çeben totar* (lit. *If the dog is not working, it will laze around*); *Atnı Allaga tapşır, dilbegene üzen tot* (lit. *Trust the horse to God, but hold the reins yourself*).

One of the largest thematic groups in our sample is the one describing livestock. These proverbs do not form in the same way. The zoonyms meaning at (horse), sarık (sheep) and sıyr (cow) are the most frequent. The proverbs emphasize respect for the horse as it executes hard agricultural work; this is explained by the exceptional significance of this animal for Tatars: *Atı barnın çatı bar* (lit. *The one who has a horse is the one who has a big family*); *Atı da yuk, zatı da yuk* (lit. *No horse, no tribe*); *Atı-tunı bar keşede Alpaşnın köçe* (lit. *A man with a horse has power*); *Atı barnın kanatı bar* (lit. *A man with a horse has wings*). These proverbs show the role of a horse in the value picture of the Tatars. Among the proverbs with the "horse" zoonym component there are some examples with an edifying connotation: *Atan belen maktanma, atın belen maktan* (lit. *Do not show off your father, show off your horse*); *Atka ısanma, İdelge tayanma* (lit. *If you do not trust your horse, you do not trust the river Volga!*) and others. A negative evaluation can also be met, for example, a proverb *Ber attan ala da tuar, kola da tuar* means that *There are obviously bad apples in the bunch*.

In the Tatar language, proverbs with the lexical unit meaning a horse have both a positive and a negative connotation. The following proverbs show a positive assessment of a person who loves doing good deeds when it is possible, so he finds success: *Atın barda il tanı* (lit. *Go travelling if you have a horse*); *Atın bulsa arımassın* (lit. *You won't get tired if you have a horse*).

In addition to the lexeme *at* (horse), there are other synonyms reflecting gender and age differentiation: *kolin* (a one-year-old foal), *tay* (a two years old foal, a yearling), *aygır* (a stallion), *biye* (a mare), *alaşa* (a gelding). For example, *Altmuş kolin at bulmas, Bulası at kolınnann bijgele*; *At ezen tay taptıy* (lit. *a foal follows a horse's steps*); *Aygır öyeren taşlamas*; *At biyeden tua*; *Biye küp bulsa, kolin küp*. The above examples show that proverbs with the indicated lexemes embody the block of information that displays the real, its typical features. In the linguistic picture of the world of Tatar language speakers, a horse is not only a means of transportation, but also one's honor, pride, wings of the soul; it is presented to the most honorable and respected person. Moreover, to have a horse means to have food, clothing and medication.

As it was noted above, the thematic groups "domestic animals" and "livestock" are the most numerous. It is not surprising that the lexeme *sıyr* (cow) is also the most frequent in such paremias as

*Ülgen sıyrın sôte maylı bulır* (lit. *A dead cow's milk is creamier*); *Sıyrı barnın sıyı bar* (lit. *A man with a cow always has foo*); *Sıyr sawa belmegenge abzar kınğın kerener* (lit. *The one who does not know how to milk a cow is butter-fingered*); *Sözgek sıyr hoday mögez birmi* (lit. *The god horns do not give horns to a butting cow*). In Tatar proverbs, a cow is considered as a valuable but stubborn animal; in general, this animal is characterized positively: *Hucanın küze töşse, sıyr simere* (lit. *A cow is growing fat if it is looked after*); *Sıyr suga yatmas* (lit. *A cow will not lie on the water*); *Sıyr da aşagan cirene kayta* (lit. *A cow returns to the place where it was fed*), etc.

Here are the examples with zoonyms describing cats (pesi, meçe) and dogs (et): *Ak et belese kara etke* (lit. *A black dog was punished, not the white one*); *Et ayagina et basmıy* (lit. *A dog will not eat a dog*); *Et belen ezlesen de tabarlık tügel* (lit. *You will find nothing even with a dog*); *Et oyasında köçle* (lit. *The dog is stronger in its kennel*); *Pesi açka sızlanır, aş saldımmı – sırlanır* (lit. *Even if a cat is starving, it will hesitate when you give it some food*); *Yalkau meçe yanında tıçkannar uynar* (lit. *Mice play around a lazy cat*); *Meçesiz urında tıçkannarga irken* (lit. *When the cat is away, the mice will play*). The zoonym “dog” has a negative connotation in Tatar proverbs: this animal is a symbol of shamelessness (*Awılga citer et uzar* – lit. *The dog will leave you behind*); *Et küze töten belmes* – lit. *A dog's eyes are resistant to smokes*) and flattery (*Этнең койрыгын киссэн, «жизни» дипәйтер* – lit. *If you cut off a dog's tail, it will blame the son-in-law*). However, some proverbs characterize a dog as being loyal and patient: *Et– wafa* (lit. *Dog means loyalty*), *Kötüçe ete aşamıy da, aşatmıy da* (lit. *A shepherd's dog won't eat sheep, it will protect them instead*).

Tatar proverbs have a tendency to present a cat as a cunning, crafty creature that constantly pranks people: *Azgın meçenen awızı peşken* (lit. *Even if you are sly, cats can play you a trick*); *Zıyançı pesi küzen yıltıratr* (lit. *A sly cat has fiery eyes*). Moreover, the zoononym “cat” is very often found together with the zoonym “mouse” in Tatar proverbs, since the Tatars were mainly farmers and their harvest is often destroyed by rodents. Therefore, the Tatars keep cats to hunt on mice: *Meçe tıçkan önene kere almas* (lit. *A cat cannot get into a mousehole*); *Meçe yoklasa da, küze tıçkannı küre* (lit. *A cat sleeps with one eye opened*), etc.

Now we will study the proverbs featuring goats (kece) and sheep (kuy). Proverbs containing these lexemes also show the presence of these animals in the lives of Tatar people. These animals are characterized as lazy, spoiled and nasty: *Ber sarık kurıksa, meh sarık kubar* (lit. *If one sheep is frightened, thousands of sheep will run away*); *Kece mal tügel* (lit. *Goat is not a cattle*); *Kecenen ber isme –kaza* (lit. *A goat's second name is misfortune*).

As it was noted above, the proverbs of the thematic group “livestock” express sexual, age, and species differentiation of animals: *beren, sarık, teke* – a lamb, a sheep, a male sheep; *bozau, sıyr, ügez* – a calf, a cow, a bull. For example: *Ber sıyrın pıçrak koyrığı men sıyrını pıçratur* (lit. *A dirty tail of one cow will stain a thousand of cows*); *Ügez saw söt bir* (lit. *Try to milk a bull*); *Ike teke başı ber kazanga sıymıy* (lit. *Two lamb heads is too much for one pot*).

The thematic group “wild animals” is less numerous. Proverbs featuring bears (ayu), wolves (büre), foxes (tölke), lions (arıslan) and hares (kuyan) are prevailing. The connotative semantics of these proverbs directly indicates human nature. For example, since ancient times, büre (the wolf) lived near the Tatars and was notorious as it is a predator, therefore in Tatar proverbs this animal is characterized by blood thirst: *Büre*

*kanga tuymas*(lit. *There will never be enough blood for a wolf*); *Büre kartaysa da, ber kuyluk köçe kala* (*Even if the wolf grows old, one sheep's strength still remains*); *Bürene söyek belen aldıy almassın* (lit. *You can't fool a wolf with a bone*).

However, the Tatars prefer not to exaggerate the danger of wolves: *Büreden kurıkkın urmanga barma* (nothing venture, nothing win); *Büreden kurıkkın kötü kötmes, tıçkannan kurıkkın igen ikmes* (A person who is afraid of wolves will not become a shepherd, a person who is afraid of mice will not become a farmer).

Tatar people think that a wolf is a very unfriendly animal: *Büre balasın bürekke salsan da, urmanga karar* (lit. If you even put a wolf cub in a cap (so that he won't see anything), he'll still look at the forest); *Bürege yuldaş kirekmi* (lit. A wolf doesn't need a fellow traveler).

The next connotation of the zoonym "wolf" is love of freedom; wolves do not obey people: *Büre açka tüzer, kollıkkı tüzmes* (lit. A wolf will endure hunger, but not slavery); *Büre yonın alıştırır, tabigaten alıştırmas* (lit. A wolf molts, but does not change its habits).

In Tatar proverbs, a fox (tölke) is most often associated with cunning. A person compared with this animal is believed to have the same qualities: dexterity and gumption. For example: *Kart tölke heyleker bulay* (lit. *An old fox is sly*); *Tölkene aldamlıylar* (lit. *A fox cannot be fooled*); *Tölkenen heylese üze belen* (lit. *A fox carries its cunning with itself*).

A hare (kuyan) is associated with dexterity and cowardness: *Ber kurıkkın kuyan kırık kön tösenen çıkmaz*(lit. A hare, once frightened, will not go out for forty days); *Kuyan üz külegesennende kurka* (lit. The hare is afraid even of its shadow).

The most paradoxical lexeme in Tatar proverbs is the word *donkey* (işek). In ancient times, a donkey was considered a sacred animal, however, among Tatars, it is mostly associated with stupidity, stubbornness, therefore this word carries a mostly negative evaluative connotation: *Kara işekke yögen orsan, kaçır bulmas, kurawıçka tun kidersen, hatın bulmas* (lit. *A donkey will not become a mule, even if you put reins on it, a slave will not become a mistress, even if she wears an expensive fur coat*).

Proverbs featuring birds (kosh) are also quite numerous: *Koş oçunnan bilgele*(lit. *A bird may be known by its song*). Tatar people think that birds are a favorable sign; they are an embodiment of wisdom, intelligence and hard work. Many nations consider birds as a symbol of unlimited freedom and carefree. The names of wild birds prevail in proverbs. The most frequent is a hag (a crow): *Çıpçık çıbıgım, di, karga kayınım, di* (lit. *A sparrow owns a branch, a crow owns a whole bush*); *Karga küzen karga çukımıy* (lit. *A crow will not peck another crow*). In proverbs a crow has a negative assessment, designating, in some cases, people of average or low dignity from the point of view of the speaker, in others - representatives of the upper social strata: *Zur urmanda karga bulgançı, ber kuakta bilbul bul* (lit. *It is better to be a nightingale in a bush than to be a crow in a big forest*).

The zoonym tawık (chicken) is the most common among the names of poultry in proverbs: *İrtenge tawıktan bügege kükey artık*(lit. It's better to have an egg today than a chicken tomorrow); *Tawık börtöklep çukıp ta tuya* (lit. little by little makes a mickle); *Tawık eteç bulıp kıkırır, üz başına* (lit. It's not good when a hen sings like a rooster); *Wakıtıça tawık ta eteç bulıp kıkırır* (lit. It happens when a hen sings like a rooster). Of course, hens in the folklore text are fussy and cowardly, searching for food all the time, obedient with roosters.

Among other representatives of the lexico-semantic group of “birds”, the most common in Tatar proverbs are kaz (goose), ürdek (duck) eteç (rooster), as well as wild birds, such as yabalak (owl), torna (crane), çipçik (sparrow), sandugaç (nightingale), bilbil (nightingale) and some others: *Behete alga bargannın eteçe de kükey sala* (lit. *A lucky person has everything, even a rooster who is able to lay eggs*); *Hawada gı tornaga aldanıp, kulındağı çipçikni ciberme* (lit. *A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush*).

We may also note that favorable natural conditions and the presence of rivers contributed to the development of fishing among the Tatars; therefore, proverbs about fish (balık) and pike (curtan) have appeared in the Tatar language: *Balık baştan bozılır* (lit. *The fish rots from the head*).

It should also be noted that proverbs with the lexeme böcek (insect) are less common in the Tatar language. There are proverbs about kırmıska (ant), sölek (leech), çeben (fly), çerki (mosquito), bet (lice), tarakan (bug), kırgayak (centipede), balkortı (bee): *Ber korttan küp bal bulmy* (lit. *One bee will not give a lot of honey*); *Kayda bal, anda çeben* (lit. *Where there is honey, there are flies*).

In our opinion, this information indicates the semantic range and linguistic applicability of the zoonymic components in Tatar proverbs. The proverbs describe both domestic and wild animals.

## 7. Conclusion

This semantic and linguo-cultural review of Tatar proverbs (which is not yet complete) shows that there are much more negative values in animals than positive ones. The findings of the study once again convince that the names of animals in the Tatar language, which have been formed over the centuries, are indeed one of the richest and most diverse lexical systems of the Tatar language, their study is significant not only for the Tatar, but also for many Turkic languages. The names of animals are reflected in the proverbial foundation as a system of ethnic values, which allows us to draw conclusions about the essence of the linguistic personality of the Tatars. Zoonyms are actively used as part of the Tatar paremias and represent one of the most significant fragments of the Tatar paremiological image of the world.

Thus, zoonyms in Tatar proverbs represent a rather extensive and noteworthy layer of vocabulary. Proverbs with animal names are characterized by universality and common knowledge, because they are dynamically used in speech activity as a figurative characteristic of people, situations, events; they have a high potential of value, due to their zoonymic internal form.

Zoonyms in Tatar proverbs surely perform several important functions, contributing to a more complete disclosure of meaning and the formation of the proverb’s general meaning.

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