# Imitative Words in Yakut and Khakass Epic Texts: Lexical and Semantic Features

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## Abstract

The article presents a comparative study of the sound and image imitative words incorporated in the Yakut and Khakass languages. The study is based on the analysis of the following epic texts: the Yakut olonkho *Kyys Debiliye* by N.P. Burnashev and the Khakass alyptyh nymaha *Ai-Huuchin* by P.V. Kurbizekov. These epic texts were selected specifically due to their similarities in plot composition and Yakut and Khakass languages close genealogical relativeness; both languages almost equally contain an abundance of imitative words. The main objective of the present research is to decipher the lexical and semantic features of imitative words contained in the epic text as well as to define the traditional cultural features and universal features, distinctive for both languages under study. In order to achieve the objective, we have set and fulfilled the following goals: lexical material selection form the epic texts; classification of the imitative words by grouping them into thematic categories and subcategories; distinction of the phonetic and semantic correspondences as well as the singling out of universal tendencies, common for both languages, in terms of their use of imitative words. In order to fulfill the main objective of the research, i.e., to study the two closely-related languages based on the *olonkho* and *alyptyh nymah,* the following research methods were applied: the method of lexical and semantic analysis, comparative historical research method; when applied, both of these methods allow defining the general Turkic universals and the specific features of the lexical group in question in the two languages, i.e., Yakut and Khakass. In the course of the study, we discovered that the Yakut language imitative words units prevail in quantity. Moreover, the Khakass imitative words possess universal semantic meanings. The author of the present article points out the similarity in the sound and semantic features of imitative words, thus, confirming that both, the Yakut and Khakass people perceive and produce sounds in a similar manner.

**Keywords:** Epic, onomatopoeic words, image-imitating words, epic language, related languages, Turkic languages.

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**Introduction**

Studies on the comparison of the Yakut olonkho with other Turkic epic texts began in the second half of the 20th century with the publication of fundamental research conducted by such folklore researchers as V.M. Zhirmunsky (1974), E.M. Meletinsky (1963, 2006), B.N. Putilov (1972, 1997), S.U. Nekludov (2009); these scholars classify olonkho as an epic belonging to the general Turkic epic group. As for Yakut epic studies, the first comparative study on olonkho and other Turkic epics was conducted by I.V. Pukhov (2004). The scholar was able to identify the general origin features of the Yakut and Altai-Sayan epic.

As for the modern comparative studies of the Yakut and Khakass languages, research was conducted by M.T Gogoleva (2014, 2015) in the article on the plot and composition structure and stylistic devices implemented in epic texts; another research paper was written by U.P. Borisov (2017a, 2017b) on the study of the rhythmic and syntactic parallelism in olonkho and other Turkic-Mongolic epic texts. In his article, P.A. Sleptsov (1990) was the first scholar in Yakutia to identify olonkho, more specifically, the language of this epic, as a separate research topic. The scholar identified the main features of the language used in olonkho (speech formulas, archaic and language variation features); the scholar claims that it is precisely these features make it different from the literary Yakut language. A special study on the language of olonkho was conducted by L.V. Robbek (2014), in which the scholar singled out the lexical and semantic features of the Yakut epic.

The language of the Khakass epic was initially and systematically studied by V.E. Mainogasheva in her dissertation devoted to the Khakass epic *Altyn Aryg* (1988). In terms of its organizational and morphological structure as well as its vocabulary and syntax features, the language of the Khakass heroic epic was closely studied by O.V. Subrakova (2007) in her monograph; N.S. Chistobaeva (2007) studied the same epic in terms of its thematic and poetic features.

Imitative words presented in the Yakut epic were first mentioned by the Yakut scholar, P.A. Sleptsov, who noted that these words are one of the significant literary and image-forming tools. The scholar mentioned this fact in his study on the development of the Yakut literary language, specifically in a chapter devoted to the folklore language. O.V. Subrakova discusses imitative words in the Khakass epic within the scope of analysis of paired words and their features used in the heroic epic; her study revealed that these words perform a word-forming and meaning-enhancement functions. However, there are no specific studies, among those existing today, devoted to the imitative words in the Yakut and likewise the Khakass epics.

The given article attempts to conduct a first comparative study of imitative words usage and their features in the context of two related languages – Khakass and Yakut. The following epic texts were used as the case-study materials: alyptyh nymah *Ai-Huuchin* by P.V. Kurbizhekova (1997) and olonkho *Kyys Debiliye* by N.P. Burnashev (1993). These texts were chosen for the analysis specifically due to their similarities in the plot composition, since both texts tell a story of female warriors; another reason is that both of these tales were told and recorded in text-form in the nearly the same time-period (first half of the 20th century).

Another important factor in the decision to conduct a comparative study of olonkho and alyptyh nymah lies in the fact that the Yakut and Khakass are closely related languages. The Khakass language belongs to the Turkic group of languages, specifically the East-Hunnic branch and Ugur group; within the latter language group, the Khakass language forms a special Khakass subgroup, which includes other Turkic languages: Kamassian, Chulym, Shor, Sary-Uyghur and northern dialects of the Altai language. The modern Khakass language formed as a result of historic consolidation of the tribal languages, namely: Kachin, Sagay, Kyzyl, Shor, Koibal, and Beltir languages.

The Khakass dialects underwent a long process of alignment, as a result of which, some general norms were created and they form the foundation of the generally spoken Khakass language; these norms are chiefly based on the wide usage of two main dialects – Kachin and Sagay (Khakass Language Grammar, p. 3). The Yakut language also falls under the group of Turkic languages, specifically the East-Hunnic branch of the Uyghur group and forms the Yakut language subgroup. However, the Yakut language stands apart from all the Turkic languages; this is manifested in the fact that all the other native speakers of numerous Turkic languages can easily understand each other, while speaking in their corresponding native language. Nevertheless, these native speakers would not be able to fully understand Yakut language native speakers when they speak in their language. This tendency applies to both spoken and written form of the Yakut language. This feature can be explained by the fact that there is a large range of phonological changes in the majority of general Turkic words as well as deviations in the system of grammatical forms and the presence of a great portion of words originating from the Mongol language in the Yakut language (Grammar of the Modern Literary Yakut language, p. 5). Taking this into account, we define the objective of the present study: to distinguish the lexical and semantic features of imitative words in the Yakut and Khakass languages based on the analysis of the corresponding epic texts.

**Methods**

The following scientific methods were incorporated in the course of the studying the imitative words in the closely related languages and their specific representation in the olonkho and alyptyh nymah: lexical and semantic analysis and historical comparative method. These methods will allow identifying the general Turkic universal features and specific aspects of this lexical layer in both languages, the Yakut and Khakass languages respectively.

**Discussion and results**

Onomatopoeic and image-imitating words are a wide-spread linguistic phenomenon in the Turkic languages. Depending on their quantitative and qualitative representation in the analyzed languages, they are either regarded as two independent language groups or joined into one group of *onomatopoeic words*, *mimemes*, *imitative words* or *sound-representation words*.

The terminology may vary, the essence, however, remains the same: onomatopoeic words are lexical units which imitate the sounds of human and non-human nature; the image-imitating words

are lexical units which express movement representations, features and conditions of the objects by means of their sound components.

In the Khakass language, this group of words is traditionally defined as *mimemes*, a term suggested by A.M. Ashmarin (1918). Mimemes, or imitative words, form an independent lexical group. "In accordance with their semantics, all imitative words are subdivided into two classes: sound-imitating (onomatopoetic) and image-imitating words" (A Grammar of the Khakass Language, p. 132). Imitative words in the Khakass language became a research topic studied by A. S. Kyzlasov, who wrote a dissertation on the one-syllable roots and stems in the Khakass language (Kyzlasov, 1998). In his study, S. Kyzlasov carried out a phono-semantic analysis of the one-syllable imitative roots in the Khakass language and defined the complex and closed syllable phonetic form of these lexical units which prevailed with a few instances of semi-closed and open syllables; the scholar also determined that the traces of sound- and image-forming elements can be distinguished in modern words, which partially or completely lost their most archaic initial imitative roots. Another scholar, F.I. Rozhansky, conducted valuable research on imitative words within the scope of his research, which mainly focused on reduplication as word-forming and word-changing mechanism. He claims that the majority of imitative words of the Khakass language have a reduplicated form; he singles out *ideophones* within this language group. These are words which are not mimemes in their general sense, however, the can express not only the sound, but also other images. He also points out that regardless of this, not every word which expresses a sound can be considered an ideaphone (Rozhansky, 2008, 2011).

In the Yakut language, there is a clear distinction between the onomatopoetic words and imitative words. They are regarded as two independent word groups. L. N. Kharitonov conducted special research on these word groups. Onomatopoetic and image words are thoroughly overviewed in his scientific research papers, which provide full structural and semantic characteristics of these words. These papers are: *Non-derivable words in the Yakut language* (1943), *Types of verbs stems in the Yakut language* (1954), and *Verb tense forms in the Yakut language* (1960).

Frequent topics connected with onomatopoetic and image-imitating words are described by the following scholars in their papers: L.A. Afanasyev studied the phono-semantic aspect of this lexical layer (1992), S.D. Eginova conducted a thorough research on the semantics of image-forming adjectives (2014) and A.M. Nikolaeva analyzed the expressiveness of the image-forming words within the scope of her research on the expressive means and devices in the Yakut language in general (2014).

Imitative words are widely used in fiction as well as oral folk art. A large folklore genre, such as epic is not exception. In this genre, such vocabulary units can be introduced to describe the appearance and actions of the characters, nature as well as to express the large variety of sounds produced by the characters and diverse objects. Owing to their expressive features, imitative vocabulary can help the storyline to acquire a special tone: from a festive and pompous one (epic world nature descriptions) to sarcastic and humorous one (negative characters - beasts).

Using the random selection method to analyze the epic texts presented by the two languages in question, we reached the following results: 178 sound- and image-imitating vocabulary units in the Yakut epic and 89 of vocabulary units of the same categories in the Khakass epic; repeated vocabulary units were disregarded. The deciphered imitative lexical units in the Yakut and Khakass epic texts were further subdivided into 2 groups: *onomatopoeic words* and *image-forming words.* Thematic groups (in terms of their meanings) were then singled out.

***Onomatopoeic words***

The range of these word units used in the epic texts of the two languages under study varies depending on thematic subgroup which they belong to. This group of words can be subdivided into the following imitative words depending on: 1) sounds produced by human beings; 2) sounds produced by animals; and 3) sounds produced by non-living objects.

1) Among the onomatopoetic words presented in the Yakut epic, the vast majority comprises of sound-imitating words, which are pronounced by human beings (*botuguraa* "to mutter, to whisper" (Kharitonov, 1954, p. 266), *ballygyraa* "to blab, to chatter, to mutter" (Kharitonov, 1954, p. 265), etc.). This word category is featured in the speeches of all the olonkho characters: bogatyrs, deities and abaasy (demons). However, during the analysis of the study material, we also distinguished onomatopoetic words, which are typical for human speech but which are used in the epic text to refer to non-human objects.

Due to its poetic and imaginative nature, the language of the epic storyline is abundant with these kinds of personifications. This feature can be illustrated by the following example:

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|---|---|
| *Tangnary tuttahha* **chaskyian** *ylar,*<br><br>*Oro tuttahha uoguluu tuher,*<br><br>*Sytyary tuttahha* **synalyian** *barar,*<br><br>*Umsa tuttahha* **uhuutaan** *kebiher*<br><br>(Kyys Debiliye, 1993, p. 159). | *if you lower it down with the blade side going head-first – it will* **screech**,<br><br>*if you lift it up – it will* **scream**,<br><br>*if you put it down flat, it will* **moan**,<br><br>*if you hold it with it blade pointing down – it will begin* **to wail** (Kyys Debiliye, 1993, p. 159). |

This example provides a description of a long *batas* (a Yakut hunting knife – an ancient weapon in the shaped of a large knife with a long hilt). This weapon was described using personification.

In this description, *batas,* depending on its position, produces different sounds, similar to those of human beings: *chasky* ("to scream, to screech" (Kharitonov, 1954, p.281)); cf.: Kalm. *tsashki* "to whistle, to hiss; to chatter, to chirp"; Bur. *sashka* "to screech", *uogulieie* ("to call out"; to wail (Kharitonov, 1954, p.278)); cf.: Turk. *ogur* "to scream", *synaly* ("to weep, to wail from pain or sorrow" (Kharitonov, 1954, p.276)); cf.: Mong. *shanalah* "to lament, to grieve; to suffer, to anguish"))'; *uhuutaa* ("to give out a deep sigh loudly; to cry out loud").

These sound-imitating verbs contain a sound imitation element in their root: *chas-, uo-* or *uogu-, huu-,* or *uhuu-*. The origin of the *synaliy* verb stem remains unknown. Another interesting example is the paired words, such as *kingir-hangyr* "irritated, thick, broken (speech, to talk to each other)" (BDYL, 2007, V.4, p. 129), which in terms of their meaning belong to the image-imitating word; however, L.N. Kharitonov claims that the root of such words originates from the sound imitation of the sounds *king-hang* (Kharitonov, 1954, p.175). The Khakass language contains a full equivalent of this word – *kingir-hangyr*, which means "conversation"; when combined together with the auxiliary verb *tus-*, it means "to chat" (The Basics of Khakass Grammar). In the Khakass epic, this subgroup is also prevalent. However, there was a challenge in choosing the material, since one and same units of the onomatopoeic vocabulary can denote sounds produced by various objects – both human and non-human. In our opinion, this demonstrates a wide range of meanings which these words can denote: they are used to describe actions performed by human objects (Ai-Huuchin, Khan-Mirgen, horse, ravens, falcon) and non-human objects (river, the top-layer of the sky, earth, kitchenware, and fishing harnesses).

A more frequently used onomatopoeic word was the verb *soola-*, which means "to hoot, to make noise" (Khakass-Russian Dictionary, 1953, p. 139), the number of this verb being repeated throughout the Khakass epic reach 35 times.

The verb *soola-* was used both, independently, as in: *(Aghyn sugh chili, at chahsy / **Soolap**, oylap syhhan* "A worthy horse, as fast as a river / it leaps along **noisily**"), and in combination with a word pair, which also conveys a sound-imitating meaning – *yyla-*, which means "the noise of a large river, large sea or strong wind": ***Yylas-soolazyp**, iki hushun / Yrahhy charge tus choribiskenner* "Making hoot-noises, two ravens / Flew away to the faraway lands"; this verb can also be a component part of the rhythmic-syntactic parallelism with a semantic differentiation of the word pairs[2]: *Salghyp ah kilgen sughlar chili / Soolap kiledir / Yylap tusken chil chili, / **Yylap**, kilchededir.* "Like the fast-stream rivers flow, / He approaches with a **noise /** Like the moaning wind, / He gallops **swishing** through the air"). We singled out two imitative words, typical only for human beings, they are: *harla-* "to bellow, to cry, to go hoarse, to whimper" (The Khakass-Russian Dictionary, 1953, p. 277), *hathyr-* "to laugh loudly, to roar with laughter" (The Khakass-Russian Dictionary (KRD), 1953, p. 280).

The Khakass verb *harla-* corresponds to the Yakut onomatopoeic verb *harylaa* "to snore; to whimper feebly" (Kharitonov, 1954, p. 279). The basic sound for the verb *hathyr-*, which denotes laughter, bellowing, is mostly likely to be the sound "ha-ha". Traditionally, laughter in the Yakut language is denoted by a pharyngeal sound sequence "ha-ha". The letter *h* cannot stand at the beginning of a word; therefore, when creating a sound-imitating verb, it is replaced with a *s*, as in: *sahygyraa* "to laugh loudly, to bellow" (Kharitonov, 1954, p. 275).

2) Sound-imitating words, used to denoted sounds produced by animals are largely represented. In the Yakut epic, the following phenomena are depicted using sound-imitations: a mare (*tyrylachchy kisteebitinen* "with a loud horse laugh"), a crane (*chongkunachchy hahyytaabyt*

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[2] This classification of rhythmic and syntactic parallelisms used in the epic texts is presented in the article by U.P. Borisov [15] as well as in the dissertation devoted to the rhythmic and syntactic parallelism in the Yakut olonkho and Turkic-Mongolic epics [16].

"begins to clang nervously"), a Siberian white crane (*kyngkynachchy ytaabyt* "starts to mutter noisily"), an eagle (*chaachygyryyr taas tangalay, chuuchuguruur tuus tumus* "with a squaking stone-colored sky, with a clanging beak, as stiff as a mineral salt"; *kynattara kyhygyraan, hotoghoydoro kuhuguraan* "they flapped their wings with a loud rustle, so loudly, their feathers whistled". *Kistieie* "to roar with laughter (like a horse)" (Kharitonov, 1954, p. 269) is a wide-spread verb in the Turkic languages (Turk. *kishne*), the Khakass language is not an exception, the corresponding variant in this language is *kiste-.*

The sound-imitating adverb *tyrylachchy*, formed from the verb *tyrylaa* "to produce the *tyr* sound; to crack hollowly, to buzz" (Kharitonov, 1954, p. 278) in this case, does not represent an indirect imitation of a horse laughter, but serves as a characteristic of the produced sound. For this reason, including this word into this subgroup is strictly conventional, since the word itself can be used universally and it is suitable not only for animal sounds imitation.

In the Khakass language, the verb *tyrsla-* "to crackle, to crackle quietly, to crunch, to squeak" (Khakass-Russian Dictionary, 1953, p. 245) can serve as an equivalent to the word *tyrylaa*. The adverbs *chongkunachchy* and *kyngkynachchy* are formed with the help of the suffix -*chchy* from the sound-imitating verbs *chongkunaa* "to make a high-pitched, metal sound, to ring; to speak in a high-pitched, clear voice" (A Big Dictionary of the Yakut Language (BDYL), 2017, V.14, p. 177) and *kyngkynaa* "to make a thread sound, similar to the sound of a tight music string; to squeak, to squeak like a child" (A Big Dictionary of the Yakut Language, 2008, V.5, p. 279). The sound-imitating stem *chongk* corresponds to the Khakass root *song-*, which imitates the sound of a falling piece of steel (the verb *songla* is derived from it and it means "to make a ringing sound, to ring" (Khakass-Russian Dictionary, 1953, p.193)). The stem *kyngk* can be paired with *king*, which is the stem of the verb *kingre* – "to ring (used to talk about the dishes or voice)". The verbs *chaachygyraa* "to yell, to squeak, making a shrill and scratchy or rattling noise (used to talk about eagles, hawk, etc.)" (Kharitonov, 1953, p. 281) and *chuuchuguraa* "to make or to produce a loud clutter, crackle, to squak, to crackle (used to talk about a wild bird, for example)" (A Big Dictionary of the Yakut Language, 2017, p. 250) have a relatively narrow meaning and are typical only for sounds produced by large birds. The corresponding sounds in the Khakass language produced by large birds have a somewhat different graphic and phonological structure: *hort* – is a sound typical for a hawk, while *hurhyla* is a sound typical for the squawking sound of an eagle.

The latter sound-imitating verb occurred 5 times in the course of the Khakass epic text analysis. In four cases, this word was used to describe a raven and was translated as "to quack".

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| *Hara Hushun irgegi,* | *A Black Raven – male,* |
| *Ala Hushun tizizi polghan.* | *A Grey Raven – female.* |
| *Kunnig chirgie chitkelekkie* | *Not even having flown a day's distance,* |
| ***Hurhlap**, tizizi tapsap kiledir* | *The female raven **squawks** and says* |
| *(Kurbizhekov, 1997, p. 89)* | *(Kurbizhekov, 1997, p. 90)* |

It is worth mentioning that the lexical component *hara hus* can literally be translated as "a black bird" and stands for "an eagle" or it can be used to denote bird species which are of the falcon type. As for folklore and epic texts, it permissible to use the notion "raven", since the image of a raven is considered a sacred one in the Khakass folklore tradition (Burnakov, 2010). Hence, we find the explanation as to why the sound-imitating verb *hurhula-* is used to denote a raven, and not some other larger bird species.

The remaining onomatopoeic words related to this subgroup convey the sound of bird wings: *kuulie-* "to hoot" (Khakass-Russian Dictionary, 1953, p. 98) and *hoola-* "to hoot, to make noise" (Khakass-Russian Dictionary, 1953, p. 287), and have a fairly universal meaning; they can be used in relation to both human and non-human objects. There are no exact Yakut equivalents for these verbs, but in terms of their phonetic and semantic similarity, we can correlate them with the words kulugurie "to make a hollow sound; "to rattle, to knock" (Kharitonov, 1954, p. 270) and hologuraa (with the a-sound version - halygyraa) which means "to produce a series of pecks typical for small flat or hollow objects; to rattle, to strum, to chatter; to speak too loudly and too quickly" (Kharitonov, 1954, p. 280).

3) Onomatopoeic words containing the sounds made by inanimate objects are few in number in the Yakut epic text (*toluguraa* "to make, to produce a series of knocking or rattling sounds, to knock, to rattle, to beat against something" (BDYL, 2013, V. 10, p. 438); *haldzygyraa* "to make a quiet monotonous noise with a fast current (normally used to talk about a stream or a river), to whimper" (BDYL, 2016, V. 13, p. 234), etc.). Among them, there is a particularly interesting example:

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|---|---|
| *Kunu korso* | *Against the movement of the sun* |
| *Us togul ergiyen baran,* | *Making three full circles,* |
| *Dungurun us togul* | *And hitting her tamborine thrice* |
| ***"Dor"*** *gyna ohsor (Kyys Debiliye, 1993, p.252)* | *with a **"boom"** (Kyys Debiliye, 1993, p.253)* |

The onomatopoeic word "dor" has a non-changing form and means "imitation of a sound by producing rattling and trembling sounds" (Kharitonov, 1954, p. 159). This is the initial form of onomatopoeic words and is a direct sound imitation. Another such example, the only such case in the entire text of the epic, in addition to the one mentioned above, is the sound "chup" which means "imitation of the smacking or kissing sound".

An arrow (*Saazakh saplap, oh **koglebisken*** "The bow quivered and the arrow **hissed** flying through the air") and the kazan (a large cooking pot made of iron) (*Hylghalygh polghan hazannary / **Hagdyhtazyp** turchadadyr* 'The kazans with handles / **Tinkle** standing') were described in the Khakass epic using onomatopoeia. The verb koglie- has several meanings: "to have fun, to sing; to twitter, sing (about birds)" (The Basics of Khakass Grammar), i.e., in this case, once again, there is a case of personification: the arrow chattered. In the Yakut language, words that have a similar meaning have a completely different graphic representation and originate from completely different

sound stems: *bochuguraa*, byychygyraa, bychygynay, chyychygyraa "to twitter, to get whistle". The second verb in the Khakass-Russian Dictionary is indicated as *hyghdyra-* and has the meaning "to ring; to clap (like thunder), to strum, to clatter, to rattle, to shutter" (The Basics of Khakass Grammar). There were no correspondences to this verb founds in the Yakut language, although there are many verbs with a similar meaning, but with a different phonetic structure (*dyrylaa, halyrghaa, kylyrghaa*, etc.).

### *Image-imitating words*

The image-imitating words found in the epic texts of the Yakut and Khakass languages can be subdivided into the following subgroups: 1) image-imitating words of movement; 2) words describing the appearance of a person; and 3) words of visual perception (shape, light).

1) The subgroup of image-imitating words of movement includes words expressing movement in a broad sense (i.e., *ieghey* "to bend, to bend sideways" (Kharitonov, 1954, p. 288); *mondyl-* "to sway slightly" (KRD, 1953, p. 109)) , manner of walking (dzhabydiy "to ride straight forward quickly and awkwardly" (Pekarsky, p. 766); *ilbengnie-* "to roll over from side to side" (KRD, 1953, p. 57)).

In the Yakut epic text, this subgroup of onomatopoeic words is the most numerous. All grammatical and morphological variety of this vocabulary is presented here. The first thing that can prominently be seen is the abundance of imitative words proper that have a non-changing form and can also have a paired form: *badzhyr-idzir* "about a heavy walk", *uoku-suoku* "to barely walk, to walk reluctantly", etc. Additionally, there is a noticeable amount verbs of an instant one-time action type: *khoodzoh gyn* "to bend sharply to the side", *cholos gyn* "to sharply lift your head up high", etc.; these verbs were introduced into the speech using the notional verb *gyn-* "do". All these features make the epic text dynamic, intensive, and colorful.

In the Khakass epic text, there is, first of all, a small number of verbs formed using the verb-forming affix –na /-ne:

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| *Toske tarthan hollaa* | The saddle strap, tied up under the chest, |
| **Siltengnen** *parybyshan kiledir,* | Loosened up, it **dangles**, |
| *Han Mirgen, ir chahsyzy,* | Under the seat of the chosen one of all the people, Khan-Mirgen, |
| *Holtyh marhazy holbanghan* | |
| *Parybyshan,* | The button is at the arm-pit, **dangling** it hangs loose, |
| *Chaghaa hazaan marhazy* | The button is at the collar, |
| **Salangnan** *parybyshan kiledir.* | Hangning, it **dangles**. |
| (Kurbizhekov, 1997, p. 114) | (Kurbizhekov, 1997, p. 115) |

All these verbs have approximately the same meaning: "to dangle, to hang" (*siltenge* "to flutter freely, to dangle" (The Basics of Khakass Grammar), holbangna "to dangle" (Kurbizhekov, 1997, p. 428), *salangna* "to hang, to dangle" (KRD, 1953, p. 179)). The similarity in meaning and

approximately the same word forms are not accidental, since these verbs are part of a three-leveled rhythmic-syntactic parallelism, the essence of which is to describe one concept by repeating the same simple syntactic structures, which enhances the meaning of the described phenomena.

2) The subgroup of image-imitating words describing the appearance of a person includes words denoting facial expressions and the face itself (*ardziay* "to grind large and rare teeth" (BDYL, 2004, V. 1, p. 557; *myzay* "to smile slightly" (Chertykova, 2016 , p. 228), gaze (turuluchchu kor "to look closely, carefully, with wide-open eyes" (BDYL, 2014, V. 11, p. 171); *alarta kor* "to stare"; transferred meaning: "to give a wolf stare/look" (The Basics of Khakass Grammar)).

An example of the facial expressions made by Aan Akhtalyia, a female bogatyr, a positive character:

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|---|---|
| *Onuoha Aan Ahtaliya* | *Blinking with her thin eye-lids,* |
| *Charaas-charaastyk chapchyliyan,* | *At this Aan Ahtaliya* |
| *Minniyiges-minniyigestik **michiliyen*** | ***Smiled** with all his kindness [murmured] …* |
| *Kebihie-kebihie* | *(Kyys Debiliye, 1993, p. 199).* |
| *(Kyys Debiliye, 1993, p. 198).* | |

The verb *michiliy* is indicated in lexicographic sources as a verb with a neutral meaning, since it has lost its imagery due its frequent usage. The verb is formed by attaching the affix element *-ley* (-*liy*) to the verb <u>*michiy*</u> ("to smile slightly" (Kharitonov, 1954, p. 292)). The stem of the verb has a sound-imitating origin, due to a certain position of the lips and associated with the corresponding sound pronunciation. In the Khakass language, the equivalent of the verb *michiy* is the word *myzay* "to smile slightly (with only the lips)"; this verb appears twice in the epic text in the description of the dialogue between Hys-Khan and Khan-Mirgen:

| | |
|---|---|
| *Chabal syraylygh Khys Khan* | *The fierce-looking Khys-Khan,* |
| *Odyrghannang **myzay** turadyr.* | *Sat here, **smiling**.* |
| *Chachazy idi choohtap turghanda,* | *When the elder sister said this,* |
| *Khan Mirgen **myzaya** musken:* | *Khan-Mirgen **smiled**:* |
| *(Kurbizhekov, 1997, p. 182)…* | *(Kurbizhekov, 1997, p. 183)…* |

In the Dictionary of the Modern Khakass Language, we did not find the verb *myzay*. However, in her research paper "Verbs with the meaning of mental activity", M.D. Chertykova notes that this verb is not used in the modern Khakass language; the author has not found examples of its use. Perhaps the verb was replaced by the modern-existing verbs which convey the meaning of a smile and was included into the category of archaisms (Chertykova, 2016, p. 228). Therefore, we cannot argue that the verb *myzay* is an image-imitating one, but based on the analogy with the Yakut language, we can assume that it has a figurative semantic meaning.

It is also important to note that the onomatopoeic words of the Yakut language from the same subgroup most often than not become part of the proper names of the olonkho characters and are used as a characteristic feature of the characters' physical appearance. For example, in the name of the bogatyr Aan Daadar, the word *daadai* is used in the meaning of "to be, to seem to be wide-shouldered". Thus, the narrator achieves the effect of antonomasia, so that the image of the character immediately appears in the mind of the listener/reader.

3) This subgroup includes image-imitating words describing external features (*molboy* "to be, to seem big, to be rounded" (Kharitonov, 1954, p. 292); *igir* "curved, bent" (KRD, 1953, p. 55), light (*kuluburieie* "blaze, burn with bright light" (BRLDYL, 2007, V. 4, p. 612); *palangnaa* "sparkle" (KRD, 1953, p. 141)), size (*byshaldzhiy* "to be or to appear to be obese" (BDYL, 2005, V. 2, p. 756); *chalbach* "wide, extensive" (KRD, 1953, p. 309)) of various objects.

In the Yakut epic there are many instances of such words. Generally, they are used to describe the size of a country/land, tree shape, etc. Consider the following example of a tree description:

| | |
|---|---|
| ***Horpoghor*** *silistieieh, …* | *With the roots **a**-sticking out,…* |
| ***Hongkugur*** *tobolooh, …* | *With the its tree-top bending over,…* |
| *Kur teting mas, …* | *A tall and thin aspen stood* |
| *(Kyys Debiliye, 1993, p.118)* | *(Kyys Debiliye, 1993, p.119)* |

In the example above, with the help of the -gor / -gur affix taken from the imitative verbs *horpoy* (*hoppoy*) and *hongkuy*, the figurative adjectives are formed to describe various shapes and forms. *Horpogor* (*hoppogor*) means "to stick out above the surface, to be raised roundly, to be indented" (BDYL, 2016, V. 13, p. 592), *hongkugur-* "inclined, bent over by the upper part" (BDYL, 2016, V. 13, p. 578) In the Khakass language, the verb *hoppoy* can be translated as *tohpay* (or *toshpay*) "to swell, to be indented" (Basic Grammar of the Khakass Language). The verb *hongkuy* corresponds in meaning to the imitative verb *onkey-* "to bend down, to bend forward (body, chest)" (Basic Grammar of the Khakass Language), which is closest in meaning to the Yakut verb *təngkoy* "to bend down, to lean forward, to slouch" (BDYL, 2013, V. 10, p. 550).

Likewise, in the Khakass epic texts, the onomatopoeic words are also mainly used to describe lands/countries. Consider the following example:

| | |
|---|---|
| *Khanym synnyng ol sarinda* | *On the other side of the mountain [range] Khanym-son* |
| *Humnygh chazy saylal turadyr,* | |
| *Humnygh **chalbakh** chazyzynda* | *A sand steppe **spread wide**,* |
| *20 Hadarghan mal chaiyla tus parybyshan* | *On that wide sand steppe* |
| *(Kurbizhekov, 1997, p. 164).* | *20 The grazing cattle wanders about* |
| | *(Kurbizhekov, 1997, p. 165).* |

The adjective *chalbah* "wide, extensive" is formed from the imitative verb chalbai "to be flattened out" (KRD, 1963, p. 309) by adding the derivative of the affix -x (with its variation: *-yh*) (A Grammar of the Khakass Language, 1975, p. 86). This affix is used to form the adjectives from verbs that possess the meaning of a result of the action expressed by the basic grammatic form of the action (the result of flattening is a wide form). It is also worth mentioning, that the Yakut word *salbah* also has the following meaning: "the end or part of something broad and flat in shape, a blade" (BDYL, 2011, V. 8, p. 178) and originates from the root *sal-* in the semantic content of which "the idea about the configuration (shape) of the obbject associated with the expansion, extension in space and volume can be deciphered" (Kharitonov, 1954, p. 226). The root *sal-* is presented in the figurative verbs *sallay*, *saltay*, *saldzay/saldziy*, which represent images of a wide part of the body or an object.

**Conclusion**

Thus, having analyzed the sound and image imitating words in the Yakut and Khakass epics respectively, we can make the following conclusions. The lexical span of the word units used in the text is more prominently represented in the Yakut epic in terms of its quantity. There is a universal trend in the semantic features of the onomatopoetic words of the Khakass language; whereas the onomatopoetic words presented in the Yakut language express a rather specific meaning and their semantic relation to a definite object/person they refer to.

In the epic context, the Yakut sound and image imitating words may possess a "flexible" form and meaning, adjusting themselves to the sound and semantic lexical surroundings: ***cho**noyo-**cho**ngkunachchy, **kyt**alyk-**ky**ryia-**ky**tyytyn-**ky**ngkynachchy.* This confirms that onomatopoeic words in the Yakut language are spontaneously occurring lexical units. Another feature which is typical for onomatopoeic words in the epic genre is the proper names of the characters containing them within their lexical structure; these words express the appearance, walking manner, and personal traits of the characters.

In the course of our study, we revealed a range of interesting correspondences in the semantic and phonetic representation: *kiste-/kistee*, *harla-/harylaa*, *myzai-/michiy*, etc.; these correspondences were predominantly represented in the onomatopoeic words. This tendency confirms that there is a tendency in the Yakut and Khakass sounds perception and reproduction. The affixation principle of forming onomatopoeic verbs and adjectives also proved to be identical.

Further in-depth conclusions on the differences and similarities between the onomatopoeic words in the Yakut and Khakass languages require thorough studies held beyond the scope of one epic text.

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